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Dandy Socialism

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ABSTRACT. Eugène Sue has been a star writer of the 19th century bestsellers in form of novels – feuilletons during the period between two revolutions of 1830 and 1848. His first novel *The Mysteries of Paris* appeared in *Journal des Debats* in 1842-1843, and immediately became a sensation and food for thought, translated in many major European languages. Afterwards he was nearly forgotten and hardly mentioned in company of “serious” writers of elite fine art. His temporary fame was confirmed by response of Bruno Bauer’s group of young Hegelians which found in Sue’s literary attractiveness philosophical solution for all mysteries and conflicts of the period. Marx’s criticism of their philosophical and political position in *The Sacred Family* includes lengthy and thorough criticism of their “philosophical” readings of the novel, of the novel itself and of their and Sue’s understanding of new bourgeois reality. Can we, along with re-establishment of the context of *The Mysteries of Paris*, leave critique of ideology and literary critique of popular and mass culture behind to bring into the aesthetic field this melodramatic narrative of class society, and re-establish its politics of the aesthetic?

I. Introduction

I.I.

In *Peanuts* cartoons by Charles Monroe Schulz, on July 12, 1965, Snoopy started writing a novel on the top of his doghouse under slogan »Here is the World Famous Author writing« and from then on and on numerous occasions typed the first sentence of his novel-never-to-be: »It was a dark and stormy night.«

This is believed to be a quintessence of stereotyped melodramatic opening, but even such stereotype had to appear somewhere for the first time. In 1830, Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s novel *Paul Clifford* opened with “It was

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a dark and stormy night...”, and continued: “...the rain fell in torrents – except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the housetops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness.” (Bulwer-Lytton, 2009) In his later life, in the second half of the century, Lytton (as they usually shorten his name Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer – Lytton, 1st Baron Lytton), this artist of the first half of the 19th century became influential politician, including his post as a secretary of state for the colonies (1858-1859), and was in 1862 offered but declined to become king of Greece. Choosing to narrate on London’s criminal underground, he did not surprise his readership with *Paul Clifford*. He established his genre position before 1830 as a dandy writer who introduced new fashions into high society, for instance, with *Pelham* (1828) which stretched from initial *Bildungsroman* of a dandy to a final crime fiction. When we wear *black tie* as an evening dress code, we follow the fashion established by popularity of this novel. He was nearly completely forgotten until the end of the 19th century, and even now, who reads his novels anymore? This is not an occasion to present his literary skill anew. His fame lives now more or less just in “The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest” which awards the opening sentence into the worst of all novels annually. Let me just say that his hero Paul Clifford lives a double life, being high society member on one and participant in London criminal underground life on the other. Not that author’s intention amounts to something, but it is worth mentioning that in prefaces to 1840 and 1848 editions he insists that he wanted to stand up against severe sentences and against sending younger criminals to prison and through literary intervention influence a substantial reform in the system of punishment and in prison as institution. Needless to say, he was a follower of Bentham. At the start of his artistic career, he had to publish because he had to earn some money after he married - his mother withdrew her allowance because she did not agree with his marital choice. Later, however, he declined political career at first in favour of staying a writer, believing that popular writer has a better chance to change something in politics than a politician. He is the author of another popular stereotype saying that a pen is mightier than a sword.

So, Snoopy was not the first one, and he was also not the first one to

follow “*Paul Clifford*” style of opening. It was Eugène Sue who, after few instructions to the readership, opened *The Mysteries of Paris* (1842-1843) with “On the cold and rainy evening...” (as one of unreliable English translations goes, most of them even omitting the whole bunch of initial instructions), while it really starts with (and I hope that promised new translation of by Penguin this December will be more faithful to the original): “On December 13, 1838, on a rainy and cold evening...” (“Le 13 décembre 1838, par une soirée pluvieuse et froide,...”) and continues “...that a tall and powerful man, with an old broad-brimmed straw hat upon his head, and clad in a blue cotton trousers of the same material, crossed the Pont au Change, and darted with a hasty step into the *Cité*, that labyrinth of obscure, narrow, and winding streets which extend from the Palais de Justice to Notre Dame.” (“...un homme d’une taille athlétique, vêtu d’une mauvaise blouse, traversa le pont au Change et s’enforça dans la Cité, dédale de rues obscures, étroites, tortueuses, qui s’étend depuis le Palais de Justice jusqu’à Notre Dame.”) We are introduced to a man, later called Rodolphe who lives double life, being half of his time a member of society’s elite and another half wandering around Parisian underground among prostitutes and murderers as if one of them. Parallels between Bulwer-Lytton and Sue exceed the first sentence, but it does not mean that Sue is not original. He had Bulwer-Lytton as his initial guide, but his ambition exceeds that of Lytton because it led to reformist proposals which should change just emerging bourgeois society into a kind of socialism. The first sentence was not a stereotype in 1842 when *Les Mystères de Paris* started to appear on July 19, 1842, to be published by *Journal de Debats* until October 10, 1843 as one of the first serial novels or *feuilletons* and a starter of a genre of urban gothic. What both Lytton and Sue have in common is this man who lives both in the aristocratic salons and in the criminal underworld of the city: in aristocratic salons he is a dandy, and in the criminal underground he is a dandy in disguise. Both Lytton and Sue were dandies themselves, they knew each other and they belonged to the same circle, and might sometimes met in the same salon, that of connected French and English dandies. On the French side the link was Comte d’Orsay (Alfred Grimond d’Orsay, 1801-1852), an amateur sculptor and painter, and English link were Lord and Lady Blessington. The three of them attracted numerous dandies and artists from Byron, Dickens, Disraeli and Thackeray to

Alexandre Dumas, Emile de Girardin and Victor Hugo. Not all of them were active dandies, but they were all attracted by dandyism. Eugène Sue, however, was a model dandy during the first half of his adult life. Dandy is a special kind of anti-bourgeois bourgeois who instead of life concentrated upon making money chose to follow beauty. This included carefully established aesthetic presence and similar beautiful life of good company, passionate erotic life and sophisticated pastimes stretching from exquisite food to delicious taste for art and appearances. That, alas, could not last forever. Dandies usually inherited a fortune from their bourgeois families. Spending it for their way of life they inevitably ended broke and bankrupt. Charles Baudelaire was right to say that dandy is a man who elevates the aesthetic to a living religion. (Baudelaire, 1863) Baudelaire, himself a dandy in his youth, concludes that something more than a fortune and the aesthetic taste is necessary for dandy to emerge as a marginal but typical social figure, namely, a period of transition from aristocratic rule to democracy. But dandy's life usually had two parts, the first one when he has assets to indulge in arranging himself and his life according to the aesthetic religion, and the second one when he had to work for survival. To become an artist seemed the most acceptable option. Sue started to write, and made his name with novels – feuilletons, later in his life to continue with novels “à livraisons”, printed in prepaid delivered parts. Art had to follow dandy rules of aesthetic religion. If during the first part of his life Sue mastered his own appearance and his own life as a cult of beauty, during the second artistic phase he, as many other dandies, lived much more humble life of modern artist but believed to be his mission to profess his dandiest cult through art proposing the aesthetic arrangement of society. Bulwer-Lytton and Sue expressed Benthamism and socialism in their novels. Enough socialism was around then and of many different kinds, as we know from *The Communist Manifesto*, but dandy socialism is not mentioned there. Sue was diagnosed with Fourierism as much as Courbet was later diagnosed with Proudhonism, but the whole bunch of artistic utilitarians who claimed to use art as a tool for social change has been described by Théophile Gautier as a strange new sort of small mushrooms which sprang out on the territory fertilised with Saint-Simonian theories. (Gautier, 1834) Sue falls into Gautier's characterizations nicely as one of those who is responding to utilitarian demands and betraying the purely artistic

art for art's sake. Is his literary style Romanticist? Yes, if Romanticist melodramatic narrative may be at the same time an educational novel, or mass literature's *Bildungsroman* (novel of formation). Its formational intention is to arrive at a social state of beautiful morality and tasteful social manners, but his subscribers would then be those who need art to profess their opinions and proposals for social reform, and Sue of *The Mysteries of Paris* could be artist of the avant-garde as it was first defined by Saint-Simon. The successful performative of his novel, however, is that one can recognize what is good and right not by theoretical arguments but from the aesthetic attractiveness of it. Narrative does consist of numerous moral deliberations and suggestions, but it seems to confirm Pascal's saying in a different formulation: pray to the God of beauty and you will find what is morally right.

1.2.

What appealed to German young Hegelians around Bruno Bauer were *The Mysteries of Paris* as *Bildungsroman* through which the spirit of modern liberal age comes to its self-realization, revealing the mystery of modernity in its full sense. Anyway, that is what Szeliga developed in his article on Sue's novel. *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* was one of those short-living journals, published by Bruno Bauer and his group of young Hegelians from December 1843 to October 1844, just in time to publish Szeliga's critique of Sue's novel. Marx devoted to Szeliga's text an extended part of *The Holy Family* in chapters V. and VIII. which embrace another two chapters on Bruno Bauer (VI.) and on correspondence of the critical critique (VII.), and open the way to conclusion. Max Stirner (Max Schmidt) published a critique of Sue as well (Stirner, 1844), but not in Bauer's journal, which is most probably the reason why Marx does not even mention it. And, as we get to know from Engels's article "Rapid Progress of Communism in Germany" published by London journal *The New Moral World*, the burden of criticism was divided between German communist intellectuals: "On the other hand, a war has been declared against those of the German philosophers, who refuse to draw from their mere theories practical inferences, and who contend that man has nothing to do but to speculate upon metaphysical questions. Messrs. Marx and Engels have published a detailed refutation

of the principles advocated by B. Bauer, and Messrs. Hess and Bürgers are engaged in refuting the theory of M. Stirner: - Bauer and Stirner being the representatives of the ultimate consequences of abstract German philosophy, and therefore the only important philosophical opponents of Socialism – or rather Communism, as in this country the word Socialism means nothing but the different vague, undefined, and undefinable imaginations of those who see that something must be done, and who yet cannot make up their minds to go the whole length of the Community system.” (Engels, 1845) These vague, undefined and undefinable notions of socialism and communism are still with us, as we know very well, and so did Engels in 1845 writing for an official national English organ of Owenism fully titled *The New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society*, published by Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists. In Germany, socialism is vague, undefined and undefinable; in England, communism cannot be distinguished from socialism, but it can be presented as something acceptable and not too radical if it is linked with the idea of universal community. A war declared against Hegelian philosophers in Germany is also a war for self-understanding of communism which, from this time on and up to now has never stopped. *Manifesto of the Communist Party* from 1848 was the first footstone on this way, including critical relations articulated about different socialist and communist groups and ideologies. In 1845, we are still just at the start of this war, and in Germany it has to deal with specifically Hegelian legacy which turns everything concrete and practical into something abstract, purely spiritual and dogmatic. Szeliga is attacked because his treatment of Sue’s novel is a caricature, or, if you want, a farcical species of Bauer’s conservative Hegelianism, and because the essence he presses and crushes from Sue is such a typical concocted juice of empty activism. Its emptiness lies in the insistence on good soul and charitable deeds. In spite of all Szeliga’s misreading of Sue’s novel, this point is common to both: beautiful soul and charity can solve all social conflicts. The full frame of Szeliga’s interpretation is found at the beginning and at the end of the article, and in between is a journey from art to morality. At the beginning, he says axiomatically: “The art is free.” (Szeliga, 1847, 8) He explains that art has a nature of its own, religion of its own, legality of its own, truth of its own and love of its own. Being free, art can choose its objects freely on its own territory, free of politics, science and life which

have no jurisdiction over art's territory. In conclusion, Szeliga claims that the true object of art is what is eternal and absolute (*vollkommende*), but what it shows at its surface is contemporary and imperfect – and the terrain it covers that way is morality (*Sittlichkeit*). Marx does not discuss the status of art, leaving dandy combination of free beauty/autonomous aesthetic territory and its intrinsic morality aside. But in the third part of Chapter VII “Revelation of the Mysteries of Law” he opens fire upon proposed morality as a solution for all social troubles. His account is shown in a table which exposes two ways of confronting social evil, the first one with police force and another, Szeliga's and Sue's, with moral police forces. The first approach attacks evil with punishment, the second one attacks evil with reward which beautiful souls get from becoming subjects or objects of charity. Here is Marx's Table of Critically Complete Justice (Marx and Engels, 1845):

EXISTING JUSTICE	CRITICALLY SUPPLEMENTING JUSTICE
Name: Criminal Justice	Name: Virtuous justice
Description: holds in its hand a <i>sword</i> to shorten the wicked by a head.	Description: holds in its hand a crown to raise the good by a head.
Purpose: Punishment of the wicked – imprisonment, infamy, deprivation of life. The people is notified of the terrible chastisements for the wicked.	Purpose: Reward of the good, free board, honour, maintenance of life. The people is notified of the brilliant triumphs for the good.
Means of discovering the wicked: Police spying, <i>mouchard</i> , to keep watch over the wicked.	Means of discovering the good: <i>Espionage de vertu</i> , <i>mouchards</i> to keep watch over the virtuous
Method of ascertaining whether someone is wicked: <i>Les assist du crime</i> , criminal assizes. The public ministry points out and indicts the crimes of the accused for public vengeance.	Method of ascertaining whether someone is good: <i>Assises de la vertu</i> , virtue assizes. The public ministry points out and proclaims the noble deeds of the accused for public recognition.

<p>Condition of the criminal after sentence: <i>surveillance de la haute police</i>. Is fed in prison. The state defrays expenses.</p>	<p>Condition of the virtuous after sentence: Under <i>surveillance de la haute charité morale</i>. Is fed at home. The state defrays expenses.</p>
<p>Execution: The criminal stands on <i>the scaffold</i>.</p>	<p>Execution: Immediately opposite the scaffold of the criminal a pedestal is erected on which the <i>grand homme de bien</i> stands. – <i>A pillory of virtue</i>.</p>

To comment on this criticism of Szeliga's writings on Sue which is also a criticism of Sue's dandy *kalokagathia* socialism, there is no need to go into it too deeply. It is enough to mention contemporary civil society police which grew in the last decade in elite sport as its anti-doping system which includes a possibility of total surveillance of athletes in and out of competition, guided by "zero tolerance" and described as "a war against doping" and by perverted Magna Charta Libertatum principle which claims that those suspect of doping by the authorities have to prove their innocence. As this is not successful enough, and as it might fell under inspection of some human rights or supreme justice court, a supplement principle was added this year claiming that "the ultimate goal is to protect clean athletes." (Olympic Agenda 2020, 2015) This is a system typical of contemporary police which is partly privatized together with prisons, and partly de-etatized into civil society police as in the case of sport, and it typically has to cover its total surveillance ambition by proclaiming promotion of good over evil as its main cause, which turns totalitarian system of anti-doping surveillance into necessary supplement of justice. In Marx's Table of Critically Complete Justice, we still have state police on one and civil society moral majority police on the other side. In our time, the difference between legality and morality is blurred up to legalization of moral police, to sustain the system of surveillance and control. Moralization of social conflicts which adds reward for the good to the punishment of the wicked is one of the best ways to keep and maintain social inequality as it is. Wolfgang Welsch once said (in Ljubljana in 1998, to be precise) that art

started as an aesthetic activity of the nineteenth century, to become an ethical activity in contemporaneity, while sport started as an ethical activity, to become an aesthetic activity in contemporaneity. (Welsch, 2005) This sounds true enough, but sport spectacle, being an event to see and to be seen, is still a kind of struggle between good and evil if one takes sides. Rodolphe, Grand Duke of Geroldstein, has finally found an empire where Sue and Szeliga are represented as a rule of both legal system and moral surveillance. Metamorphosis of the Roman spectacular context of “to see and to be seen” (Tertullien, 1986, 286-287) into a struggle between good and evil is entertaining, and at the same time a perfect surroundings for total(itarian) police which includes reward as a kind of “positive punishment”. The struggle between good and evil organized as an artwork is – melodrama.

2. Melodramatic Fiction

The Mysteries of Paris is a melodramatic novel. Initially, melodrama was used as one of the names for musical drama – *opera in musica*. Rousseau gave it another meaning with *Pygmalion* where music comes as “pure music” in-between dramatic acts as a guide to initiate the correct emotional state of the spectators. The genre of melodrama was developed as a mass theatrical relative of Diderot’s and Lessing’s bourgeois drama, featuring everyday life of common people, charging and discharging strong passions with special attention for spectacular mass entertainment and moral struggle between good and evil in which finally good always prevails. Strict differentiation between elite and mass art was still not fully established (if it ever has been, really) in Sue’s time, neither in novel nor in theatre – Sue’s theatrical adaptation of *Mysteries* was put on stage in *Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin* devoted to Romantic movement’s drama and not in one of *Boulevard du Crime* theatres some of which were specialized in melodramatic productions, and where each night up to 20.000 people came for entertainment. Sue did not invent melodramatic novel, and he did not invent basic melodramatic narrative means, but he extended melodrama’s scope from domestic and private to social life, and promoted proletarian class of “people” into his leading character. This is, by the way, main difference between Sue’s *Mysteries* and Bruno Bauer’s social and political

philosophy in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*: Sue treats new urban masses as a mystery with obvious intention to reveal that their moral condition is at least potentially well above their social position; Bauer declares that masses have to be expelled from history because they poison its purpose. In her analysis of Sue's work, Cornelia Strieder puts melodrama and social criticism together to overcome prejudice against trivial literature on one, and prejudice against ideological use of literature on another side. It is interesting that Sue himself has put in his novel a passage admitting that it may be bad literature but has good social and moral intentions, turning literary criticism of the novel into a kind of participation and its counter-voice within the novel, and offering the reader who started to doubt that reading is entertaining enough another moral reason to continue. Strieder names four fundamental structural elements of his melodramatic narrative which certainly belong to melodrama as such and not just specifically to trivial literature's novel or even to Sue's "bad literature": stereotype, mystery, chance and antithesis. Following Walburga Hülk's dissertation, we should add physiognomics as a narrative strategy similar to the part music had in Rousseau's melodramatic *Pygmalion*: to introduce and induce reader with appropriate emotions and affects.

Novel's world is built on *stereotypes*, and stereotypes are not used in characters only but also in descriptions of natural, social and cultural context. The most important stereotype which makes the world of the novel possible is "beautiful soul" as a common source of the aestheticized ethics which is necessary for the constitution of the possibility of redemption which is again necessary to keep expectations concentrated on the flow of the narrative. Social evil, its counter-part, is not absolute but constructed condition, which makes possible another stereotype: change conditions and people will change. There is no question as that of Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach because presence of the "subject who is supposed to know" (Lacan, 1973, 232 and pass.) and "who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (*Revelations*, 12:5) is a precondition for a narrative of this kind, and this precondition is felt everywhere. A combination of exalted, emotional and melodramatic style with omniscient source of knowledge invited, on one side, a criticism of the literary abilities of the author, and, on the other side, reproach that the author, and old dandy and now pretentious dandy socialist, does not know anything about the reality of prolet-

arian life in Paris. This means attacking stereotypes with stereotypes, and opens a necessity to understand, first, the aesthetic features and politics of mass culture narrative, and second, to recognize that novel functioned so well with its contemporaries because in spite of all aesthetic, moral and emotional exaltations, it sounded true enough. Therefore, what contemporary urban mass is about was constructed by this kind of narratives to such an extent that even the object of Le Bon's science of the masses may be found in melodramatic narratives and not in documentary empirical reality. Stereotyped characters are not developing through the novel but announced as already complete, which makes it easier to construct the plot: change comes more from collisions of persons one into another than from their intrinsic change of direction.

Mysteries are many, and some of them are very complicated, even to the extent that their release and disentanglement comes sometimes simple and thin. Mysteries function in opposite direction as stereotypes: stereotypes stimulate the reader to feel safe, while mysteries make him (her) nervous and stimulate him (her) to continue reading to find a clue and solution. There is a strategy and tactics involved to organize a structure in which author and reader are on opposite sides of their dialogue, author having the whole insight into all mysteries and reader expecting to travel from mystery to revelation. In between are located inside mysteries or secrets known to one and not to another character. There is a difference between secret and mystery: fundamental mystery is the mass of poor people living in the same city as the happy few; secrets are just hidden and found, mysteries represent fundamental character of modern society and can only get revealed through author's voice in the narrative. But the reason that these revelations become attractive is not the desire for social (re)cognition, it is their aesthetization which, contrary to stereotype of the beautiful soul, produces an image of barbarians and primitives, an image which directly corresponds to fixation on the primitive Other who, in spite of being poor and culturally undeveloped, enjoys what the wealthy, obeying multiple social conventions and rules, cannot. Mysteries allow (as much as it can be suggested in that period) for perverse desire to have its way. This aesthetic lime-twig has an ideological grip: it enables that, together with sexual innuendos, excessive violence (especially towards children) and disgusting manners and language, the reader gets involved with a process which leads

from introductory image of mysterious mass of modern urban society to the final image of this mass individualized into an articulated and differentiated class, while its bourgeois and aristocratic social counterpart enters a similar process of individualization and division among good and bad, one side rewarded and another punished by life itself. Following the flow of narration one gets both confirmation and negation of author's introductory lesson on masses. Namely, before we are situated into "cold and rainy evening" we are introduced to *le tapis-franc* which in (now archaic) argot means a tavern where low-life persons come together and where police spies mingle. After short introduction to this public point of criminal and police communication, we are warned: "This beginning," writes the author, "is announcing the reader that he will have to get involved with sinister scenes; if he agrees to follow, he will penetrate horrible regions unknown to him..." This social ecosystem of "dirty cesspools" is filled up by types "like reptiles in a swamp". Then, we are offered an analogy between American Indians and lower classes of modern urban population. "The entire world has read admirable pages where Cooper, the American Walter Scott, describes wild customs of savages, their picturesque language, poetics, thousand cunning tricks which help them to escape or follow their enemies." But there is no need to look for savages elsewhere; they inhabit our own modern world: "We will try to demonstrate in front of readers' eyes a few episodes from the life of the other barbarians who, as much as savage tribes painted by Cooper, are beyond civilization. It is just that barbarians we are telling you about are among us..." These men have their own customs, their own kind of women, their own language – a mysterious one full of deadly images and disgusting bloody metaphors. Writing these pages, continues the narrator in his own voice, "we could not escape certain squeezing of the heart...we don't dare to say painful anxiety..." In spite of this horrible step into the swamp and sewage, the narrator counts on readers' "timid curiosity which terrible spectacles sometimes excite." But if the reader decides to follow the narrator to pay a visit the lowest level of social ladder, "the atmosphere will get more and more purified." (Sue, 1842-43– transl. L.K.)

For those who like to study French melodramatic style at its best, here is the original (Sue, 1842-43):

Ce début annonce au lecteur qu'il doit assister à de sinistres scènes; s'il y consent, il pénétrera dans des régions horribles, inconnues; des types hideux, effrayants, fourmilleront dans ces cloaques impurs comme les reptiles dans les marais.

Tout le monde a lu les admirables pages dans lesquelles Cooper, le Walter Scott américain, a tracé les mœurs féroces des sauvages, leur langue pittoresque, poétique, les mille ruses à l'aide desquelles ils fuient ou poursuivent leurs ennemis.

On a frémi pour les colons et pour les habitants des villes, en songeant que si près d'eux vivaient et rôdaient ces tribus barbares, que leurs habitudes sanguinaires rejetaient si loin de la civilisation.

Nous allons essayer de mettre sous les yeux du lecteur quelques épisodes de la vie d'autres barbares aussi en dehors de la civilisation que les sauvages peuplades si bien peintes par Cooper.

Seulement les barbares dont nous parlons sont au milieu de nous; nous pouvons les coudoyer en nous aventurant dans les repaires où ils vivent, où ils se rassemblent pour concerter le meurtre, le vol, pour se partager enfin les dépouilles de leurs victimes.

Ces hommes ont des mœurs à eux, des femmes à eux, un langage à eux, langage mystérieux, rempli d'images funestes, de métaphores dégoûtantes de sang.

...

Nous abordons avec une double défiance quelques-unes des scènes de ce récit.

Nous craignons d'abord qu'on ne nous accuse de rechercher des épisodes repoussants, et, une fois même cette licence admise, qu'on ne nous trouve au-dessus de la tâche qu'impose la reproduction fidèle, vigoureuse, hardie, de ces mœurs excentriques.

En écrivant ces passages dont nous sommes presque effrayé, nous n'avons pu échapper à une sorte de serrement de cœur... nous n'oserions dire de douloureuse anxiété... de peur de prétention ridicule.

...

Pourtant nous comptons un peu sur l'espèce de curiosité craintive qu'excitent quelquefois les spectacles terribles.

...

Le lecteur, prévenu de l'excursion que nous lui proposons d'entreprendre parmi les naturels de cette race infernale qui people les prisons, les bagnes, et don't le sang rougit les échafauds...le lecteur voudra peut-être bien nous suivre. Sans doute cette investigation sera nouvelle pour lui; hâtons-nous de l'avertir d'abord que, s'il pose d'abord le pied sur le dernier échelon de l'échelle sociale, à mesure que le récit marchera, l'atmosphère s'épurera de plus en plus.

The whole announcement is a contract, a promise and a bond between the narrator and the reader on crossing the line of abominable, invisible, pervert and *Unheimlich*. Both sides know that this is an equal exchange of mutual understanding: narrator will get more than just reader's attention, because the reader admits that he (or she) would never go across the line by himself (or herself) without a safe hand of narrator. This is a promise: the reader will be allowed to enjoy what he (or she) is otherwise unable to, if not forbidden, and he (or she) will get back from the other side of the divide without any harm, not losing face because of being indulged in perversities but, quite the contrary, getting his or her eternal moral cleansing and glory because of the aesthetic charity he was able to feel when confronted with the horrible Other of contemporary barbarians and primitives. And there is a bond: both sides agree that they will not tell about abominable, invisible, pervert and *Unheimlich* desire and enjoyment of their own, hiding it under purifying process using a spray of the beautiful charity: we immersed in evil and had a good time there, but it will remain covered by purely moral intentions.

The narrative is kept together by abundant use of *chance*, so that the reader gets used to it and is expecting that things just happen. This makes chance something expected and logical, as if there is some power behind the curtain which arranges things. This does not amount to anything metaphysical, it is just an invisible hand of modernity with an addition of a visible hand which comes as a German aristocrat connecting two worlds with his disguise and masquerades, to enable that at the end, this invisible hand guided by his visible hand of general manager leaves everything in perfect moral order. Modern social order needs an aristocratic conductor to make combined bourgeois and proletarian orchestra music beautiful and harmo-

nious. The chance, therefore, comes in duality. Social world is shown as a place of “deep play” – of irrational risk which one cannot avoid but for the apparition of *deus ex machina*, pardon, *deus ex Germania*.

The antithesis is used abundantly, but its fundamental structure may be reduced to confrontation between good and evil. The resolution of this antithesis is not Aristotelian purification but moral police decision: purification and happiness ever after is just a fake and an empty pretention. It is not right but nice, as in Bernard Shaw’s remark on what bothers aesthetically delicate souls in modern society: that there are so many poor and ugly people visible from their windows and their walks through the city that it makes them impossible to enjoy their good lives for real. Their socialism is, tells Shaw, in a wish to make lower classes appear clean, well shaven and nicely dressed – primitive but pleasurable barbarians.

The reason why the independent income-tax payers are not solid in defence of their position is that since we are not medieval rovers through a sparsely populated country, the poverty of those we rob prevents our having the good life for which we sacrifice them. Rich men or aristocrats with a developed sense of life – men like Ruskin and William Morris and Kropotkin – have enormous social appetites and very fastidious personal ones. They are not content with handsome houses: they want handsome cities. They are not content with bedaimonded wives and blooming daughters: they complain because the charwoman is badly dressed, because the laundress smells of gin, because the seamstress is anaemic, because every man they meet is not a friend and every woman not a romance. They turn up their noses at their neighbours’ houses. Trade patterns made to suit vulgar people do not please them (and they can get nothing else): they cannot sleep nor sit at ease upon ‘slaughtered’ cabinet makers’ furniture. The very air is not good enough for them: there is too much factory smoke in it. They even demand abstract conditions: justice, honour, a noble moral atmosphere, a mystic nexus to replace the real nexus. Finally they declare that though to rob and pill with your own hand on horseback and in steel coat may have been a good life, to rob and pill by the hand of the policeman, the bailiff, and the soldier, and to underpay them meanly for doing it, is not a good life, but rather fatal to all possibility of even a tolerable one. They call on the poor to revolt and, finding the poor shocked at their un-

gentlemanliness, despairingly revile the proletariat for its 'damned wantlessness' (*verdammte Bedürfnislosigkeit*). (Shaw, 1906)

What Shaw ridicules in "Preface to Major Barbara" is dandy socialism in its purest form. In addition to antithetical class confrontation one should add that Sue starts with transportation from Cooper's "Indians" to modern "proletarians" squeezing barbarians and primitives into one. Squeezing together two categories of progressive states of human development in time and in space, he represents modern masses at the same time as noble savages and as uncivil evil. On the other side, there are aristocrats (if not of title or blood then of the "beautiful soul") and bourgeois whose only link with the world of "the Others" is Rodolphe, German aristocrat excellent in British art of boxing, changing his attire from proper for his class to proletarian disguise to be able to communicate with the whole social world. With support of such an image of social totality, we get an equation between class and race.

Physiognomics supports two purposes. The first one is the same as that of music in Rousseau's melodrama: to make the reader aware of inner, moral fundament of described person, part of the city, or natural surroundings. The second one is to divide the species of modern society into racial types, and then to organize them into classificatory chart of orderly recognition. With the help of physiognomic descriptions which fill in nearly every intermission between actions and dialogues the reader is put into expected emotional state, and the taxonomic distribution of the moral value of persons, classes, manners and locations is mapped for the reader as his (her) literary Global Positioning System. This racism is social: different races are produced by the invisible hand of modern society which naturalizes its outcome into naturalized social taxonomy which, however, can be changed for the better one which will introduce aristocratic moral criteria for classification instead of modern social criteria.

3. Mortal Author and Immortal Narrator

But can we see Sue behind it as predecessor of Ruskin and Morris and Kropotkin? Of course we can. But the Sue as predecessor of the aesthetically delicate or dandy socialism appears in real political life as well. He

was elected a deputy of the French Assembly after revolution 1848. We should not equate this really existing Sue with the narrator of his novels. This Sue gets mentioned by Marx again both in *The Class Struggles in France (1848-1850)* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx, 1850; Marx, 1852) as a symbol of sentimental banalization of the revolution. Really? As a politician against his will, he was a supporter of abolition of the death penalty, of organization of labour, of state care for people's medical supply, of universal voting right, and of abolition of slavery in the colonies. His support for the socialist political camp by novels-feuilletons was strong enough that Bonaparte introduced a new tax on newspapers publishing novels-feuilletons which brought this kind of novel and this kind of the socialist propaganda to an end. Before he died in 1857, Sue published *The Mysteries of People*, a novel now appearing for subscribers in parts. In this last one, Sue put down a history of proletarian struggles for freedom and dignity from pre-ancient times of Gaul to post-revolutionary contemporaneity of 1848 aftermath which is narrated to give plebeian masses a history of their own and to articulate an appellation Shaw mentions as well: proletarians of the world, revolt! As it was widely accepted and used as a stimulus for proletarian self-consciousness, it might represent a new kind of myth.

Still, this is a mortal Sue and not Sue the narrator of his novels whom we can still meet if we open one of his books and start to read. The equation of author and his work could be criticized with Adorno's words as an abdication which turns an artwork into a document, as he mentions in the context of late style. "It is as if...the theory of art were to divest itself of its rights and abdicate in favour of reality." (Adorno, 2002, 564) The equation of author and his work could be denied its rights with a help from Bakhtin: "One can speak of a *pure* author as distinct from a partially depicted, designated author who enters as part of the work...This does not mean that there are no paths from the pure author to the author as person – they exist, of course, and they exist in the very core, the very depth of man. But this core can never become one of the images of the work itself. The image is in the work as a whole, and to the highest degree, but this core can never become a constituent figural (objective) part of the work. This is not *natura creata* or *natura naturata et creata* but pure *natura creans et non creata*." (Bakhtin, 1986, 109-110) Surprisingly, for ('pure') author's position in the

dialogical relationship with the reader, Bakhtin is using metaphors which brings Spinoza (*natura naturans, natura naturata*) immediately to mind, but his insistence on this metaphor and its formulations really belong to Johannes Scottus Eriugena (cca. 810-877) and his treatise *De divisione naturae* where he divides nature in four parts:

Talis itaque erit, ut opinior, supradicta universalis naturae quadri-
formi division in eam... quae creat et non creatur... quae et creatur
et creat... quae creatur et non creat... quae nec creat nec creatur...
(Scottus, 1838, 85)

This is, then, the division: nature which creates but was not created, nature which was created and creates, nature which was created but does not create, and nature which neither creates nor was created. The first and the fourth belong to God. The first one represents God at the beginning of creation, and the fourth represents God at its final stage. In-between are the second and third partition which belong to *saeculorum* or the earthly universe. The first and the fourth are above our ability to sense or comprehend, they are beyond our aesthetic or rational reach. For the reader, the author as real person is beyond reach, what he gets is an image of “pure” author. If we turn from this “pure” author to the real person, this person is not *natura quae creat et non creatur* but just an earthly nature which is created and creates. Consequently, in the field of the narrative, the author of the novel is like God: he is not created but he creates it all until the end of the novel when he, still not created, creates no more. The author as a real person is found before the narrative starts and after it is finished, but never in-between. Consequently, when the reader becomes a reader, i.e. when he (she) starts reading, he (she) is also created by the author if and when he (she) is following the narration and by that entering into dialogue with the author. The reader cannot confront the author in person and cannot comprehend the author otherwise but to follow the path of narration in full trust and confidence. When he (she) starts to interpret the novel he (she) steps out of dialogue and out of narration. The status of reader is that of the second part of nature: he (she) is created by the author, but he (she) creates as well. This relationship between the author and the reader is exactly what Sue is getting at initially, using direct dialogue with the reader on several other occasions during the narrative to bring the contract, the

promise and the bond with the “pure” author to memory. We can explain it once more: the contract - you will go beyond the reach of your senses and comprehension across the partition; the promise - you will get over your “*serrement du Coeur*” (tightening of your heart) and your “*doloreuse anxiété*” (painful anxiety) to experience the life of the damned Other you fear and admire at the same time; the promise - what you will see is horrible, violent, perverse...and you will enjoy it; the bond - nobody will see your perversion and your desire for horrible, violent, perverse. Your desire and your joy will be hidden and removed by continuous moral cleansing.

Thanks to Edgar Allen Poe, a contemporary of Eugène Sue, we do not need Adorno or Bakhtin to take *The Mysteries of Paris* from the critique of ideology and politics back to art and the aesthetic. Better part of Poe’s essay is devoted to mistakes in translation by C. H. Town, but in a short characterization of *Mysteries of Paris*, “a work of unquestionable power” he mentions three main artistic features. One, it is “the ‘convulsive fiction’” of a kind where “the incidents are *consequential* from the premises, while the premises themselves are laughably incredible. Admitting, for instance, the possibility of such a man as Rodolphe, and of such a state of society as would tolerate his perpetual interference, we have no difficulty in agreeing to admit the possibility of his accomplishing all that is accomplished.” He second characteristics which “distinguishes the Sue school, is the total want of the *ars celare artem*[art concealing its means]...The wires are not only not concealed, but displayed as things to be admired, equally with the puppets they set in motion.” This makes the world we are brought into a world of accessible and free manipulation, completely manageable world, which is an image of the world common not just to writers of melodramatic (or biomechanic) fiction but also to neoliberals, socialists and Hegelians. Thirdly: “The philosophical motives attributed to Sue are absurd in the extreme. His first, and in fact his sole object, is to make an exciting, and therefore saleable book. The cant (implied or direct) about the amelioration of society, etc., is but a very usual trick among authors, whereby they hope to add such a tone of dignity or utilitarianism to their pages as shall gild the pill of their licentiousness.” Typical for Sue’s “engrafting a meaning upon otherwise unintelligible” is this *ruse* as “an afterthought, manifested in the shape of a moral, either appended (as in Aesop) or dovetailed into the body of the work, piece by piece, with great care, but

never without leaving evidence of its after-insertion.” (all quotes from Poe, 1846) All philosophical, ideological, political and other aspects of a novel have to be taken and interpreted as literary means. In case of Sue, his tricks and ruses make the world of the novel as a puppet theatre where we can see the puppeteer and the strings – the “pure author” is not hiding behind the curtain as a wizard of Oz but stands in front of us and admits that he is a manipulator, announcing or interpreting his previous or next move. This creates a mythical situation, or better, a caricature of a mythical situation when and where Gods still walked around humans and made them visible. That way author invites the reader to take a place aside the author, watching scenes from modern life from the point a level above novel’s story, to get a perspective on the whole of society, and then pushes him (or her) back into seismic movements of the story itself. These movements are at the core of “convulsive fiction”, helping to make unfounded premises acceptable. The third Marx’s thesis on Feuerbach, therefore, does not apply on literary fiction. Here it is: “The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.” (Marx, 1845a) There is no need to educate “pure” author of the narrative. He comes complete and omniscient anyway. That is why art gets position of the avant-garde by Saint-Simon: no rational deliberation can bring out an instant break-through as efficiently. What is forgotten here is that it works only in fiction, and that in society where things have their mutual social relations instead of humans, humans have to get divided into two parts anyway. This is not fiction, but it is fetishism and mystification. Engels’s invention of “scientific socialism” to explain Marx’s position, if understood in positivist terms, transports us back to Sue’s puppeteer found by Poe. For Marx, science means overcoming the position of “*le sujet suppose savoir*” (subject supposed to know), a subject necessary for melodramatic fiction as well as for melodramatic socialism, and especially for police and moral police. The aesthetic regime of art can question the boundaries of art and life with the help of presupposed existence of *natura creans et non creata*, or *le sujet supposé savoir*. Socialisms would like to cross the line, first from life to art and then back. Following Bakhtin’s premises, they get stuck with art, unable to get out of puppet theatre, or

stuck with life, unable to escape scientific and positivist determinism. Not unusually, they get stuck with both.

4. Conclusion

Marx says that he learned more about French society from reading Balzac's novels in spite of his conservative ideology. With Sue, one may conclude that in spite of his socialist ideology, we can learn more about socialisms before 1848 than from *Manifesto*, *Civil wars in France* or *18th Brumaire*. Not because Sue's novel would be an aestheticization of his politics and/or ideology but because the means he is using to construct his narration are exposed in the open, making the pure author clearly visible, as he turns incredible premises into acceptable accomplishments. That is politics of the aesthetic: to turn incredible premises into acceptable accomplishments.

Poe's praise of the novel as "a work of unquestionable power" is no doubt serious, but he adds that it is "a museum of novel and ingenious incident – a paradox of childish folly and consummate skill." (Poe, 1846) This is a praise of novel's politics of the aesthetic which hints at the existence of its aesthetic police and divides the author and the reader "into two parts, one of which is superior" - "subject supposed to know" of the artworld.

Art is not ideology; art abducts ideas and their ideological systems to turn them into material for fiction organized as an exchange of pleasurable and attractive experiences between the author and the reader.

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