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In Section I of *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels argue that all societal history consists of class antagonisms and trace the development of the modern bourgeoisie towards its argued inevitable self-destruction and the corresponding rise of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie emerged through the destruction of the feudal system. Its existence is dependent on the continuous conquering and revolutionizing of new swathes of industry and means of production. Such a class entity inevitably collapses under the uncontrollable forces of its creation; its constantly revolutionizing character continuously creates crises, and the means to reconcile these crises are further stifled. The proletariat, meanwhile, becomes more unified. The cycle of continuous revolutionizing is aggregative in nature; it deteriorates isolation between proletarians, encouraging the development of proletarian intellectual and political subversiveness, a class consciousness Marx and Engels argue should be harnessed to enact substantive political change.

The introduction to the *Manifesto* opens with language that is mystical and supernatural: a “spectre” – Communism – is “haunting” Europe; the vestiges of old Europe form a “holy” coalition to “exorcize” this spectre (2). This writing is an ironic ridicule of and defiance against a depiction of Communism as an almost religious form of evil – an evil that is evil by axiom. Indeed, almost immediately afterwards it is noted that the Communists should counter the “nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism” (2) with the Communist Manifesto itself: the notion of Communism as inherently evil is a nursery tale, a fantastical form of fiction, to be countered by the real, the material. This language cannot merely be a coincidence of translation; it is deliberately religious, mystical, supernatural. This mystical language – while serving the immediate role of a dramatic, curtain-raising gesture – paves the ground for an overarching argument manifesting throughout the class that examines the epistemology, belief-system, and behavior of the bourgeoisie as particularly mystic itself. The key characteristic of mystic or

religious belief is the presence of what we may term ‘abstract axioms’ – principles of the good, bad, and truth of the world that must be accepted without critical interrogation. When the presence or truth of these abstract axioms is questioned, the mystic world built upon it collapses. Examples of abstract axioms include the existence of God, the holiness of the scriptures, the possibility of miracles, and so on. The bourgeoisie resides upon a mystic epistemic plane in which knowledge is largely comprised of (and behavior derived from) abstract axioms. The *Manifesto*’s narrated arc of class demonstrates the instability of such an epistemic system, which – by the guidance of abstract axioms – must emerge and deteriorate of itself. Moreover, such a reading of the mystic or religious language occurring throughout the text allows us to more fully understand the comparative ‘realness’ of the proletarian existence and experience.

Despite that the rise of the bourgeoisie has led to the trampling of religious passion and replacement of the “halo” of every workman with a monetary calculation (5), the bourgeoisie itself is described not as mechanical nor calculating, but rather – interestingly, and perhaps puzzlingly – as the “sorcerer” using “spells” to conjure “powers of the nether world” which he can control no more (8). In the context of folklore, a sorcerer is an almost wizard-like being that exercises and experiments with spells and potions. The sorcerer does not possess nor pursue a complete understanding of the magic he exercises, for otherwise, he would be a scientist. Instead, the sorcerer acts as a guide for the unexplainable forces and powers, a medium between man and the mystic. The sorcerer is a narrative character built upon abstract axioms – his spells and the miracles or evils they give rise to are undoubtedly existent but always unexplained and accepted. ‘Magic’ is a wide-reaching term allocated to explain phenomena that observers cannot comprehend. Likening the bourgeoisie to the sorcerer evokes an understanding of the bourgeoisie as a class constructed upon and driven by the circular pursuit of abstract axioms on the basis of the abstract axioms.

What are the abstract axioms, the ‘spells’ and the magic it conjures, of the ‘sorcerer’ bourgeoisie? At the core, it is that the means of production must constantly be revolutionized. The bourgeoisie come into existence not with, but by, the epistemologically adopted logic of expansion. This logic constitutes the very existence of the bourgeoisie; it is this logic that the bourgeoisie emerges from, rather than the bourgeoisie from which the logic emerges. Marx and Engels write that “...all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind” (6). The mystic, religious, holy existence of man upon the abstract axioms underlying the intellectual features of the feudalist system are swept away, and man confronts the material world – the ‘real’, the ‘sober’. Who is “man” here? It is not the bourgeoisie, nor is it truly *all men*; it is the proletariat alone that is cast into the material void. The bourgeoisie remains in a mystic realm that is, by the nature of its being, devoted to destroying the mystic realm of the feudal system with religious fervor; it is a systematic campaign of profanity that itself rests upon the abstract axioms of technological revolution.

Of all the parties in the *Manifesto*, only the proletariat is cast outside of the mystic circle, given no abstract axioms to grasp or to pursue, instead left in the state of the ‘real’, the ‘sober’. Even the bourgeoisie, which destroys the mysticism and tradition of the feudalist system, organize their destruction, their campaign to ‘profane the holy’, into a somewhat religious, mystic system of abstract axioms that exist of their own existence – moving forwards into their disintegration and awakening more of the proletarian class to the conditions of their labor and existence. The proletarian consciousness is near fully free from the mystic logics that govern the feudalist and bourgeoisie systems. Thus – as Marx and Engels go on to assert in later sections of the *Manifesto* – the proletariat is the most suitable agent to act in collapsing the class system itself.