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## **“Contrivances for superseding all human labour”: the work-abolitionist experiments of John Adolphus Etzler and their significance for contemporary post-work politics**

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**“Contrivances for Superseding all Human Labour”:  
The Work-Abolitionist Experiments of John Adolphus Etzler  
and their Significance for Contemporary Post-Work Politics**

by

James Evan McIntyre

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

at Loughborough University

May 2021

## Abstract

This thesis delivers a novel microhistorical study of the career and ideas of the nineteenth-century socialist and inventor John Adolphus Etzler. It traces the early development of Etzler's vision for the global abolition of work-based civilization through the substitution of human workers by purpose-built mechanical automata, and corresponding plans for the reorganisation of human community life around a network of utopian megastructures in which all necessities of survival and comfort, prepared and delivered automatically by the machines, could be freely enjoyed by a liberated humanity without any individual experience of material scarcity, economic duress or involuntary exertion.

Using copious newly-discovered primary evidence, it significantly augments existing accounts of Etzler's life and thought, uncovering hitherto entirely unknown phases of his early career, mechanical experimentation and formative political influences, and corrects several errors of fact and interpretation in prior Etzler scholarship, especially concerning the catastrophic failure of an 1845–1847 expedition by hundreds of British chartists to establish, on Etzler's blueprint, the first fully workless, mechanised human city in a remote tract of uninhabited Venezuelan jungle under the auspices of the Tropical Emigration Society.

It finds that the collapse of the TES scheme in South America owed more to internecine power struggles and the hazards associated with nineteenth-century transatlantic emigration generally than to flaws intrinsic to the fundamental Etzlerist programme of socialistic mechanical substitution of human workers. Building on this rehabilitation of Etzlerism as a coherent and plausible response to the depredations of capitalism, the thesis then evaluates the relevance of Etzler's career for the resurgent twenty-first-century scholarship of 'post-work' politics, a literature amongst which, despite substantial similarities of ideas and intent, the history of Etzlerism remains wholly neglected.

**Keywords:** utopian socialism, work, automation, capitalism, post-scarcity, post-work, future of work, end of work, abolition of work, emancipatory technology, technological utopianism, utopia, utopian studies, mechanisation, inventions, labour-saving technology, emerging technologies, mechanical automata, Fully Automated Luxury Communism, politics of technology, radical politics, solar power, renewable energy, mechanised agriculture, farm machinery, artificial island, floating island, seasteading, colonisation, home colonisation, experimental communities, intentional communities, John Adolphus Etzler, Tropical Emigration Society, history of Haiti, history of Trinidad, history of Venezuela, history of New Granada, abolitionism, chartism, microhistory

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In a similar vein, I am grateful to the Mumfords of New Harmony, Indiana (living relatives of the

Owenite chemist Dr Samuel Bolton, with whom Etzler conducted solar energy experiments during a flatboat expedition on the Wabash River in 1842), both for graciously answering my enquiries about their ancestor and for providing his photograph, which I have incorporated into this thesis.

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To my mother Sarah, I owe a profound debt of gratitude.

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*“Thou art but a link in the infinite chain of beings, and unable to comprehend  
the connexion.*

*Behold how all things in nature are connected:*

*The beings beget beings like themselves, and die. Canst thou comprehend why  
they do so, dying so soon, and living but for futurity they never see?*

*Thus the progress continues perpetually in nature, the beings of the present  
time living for other beings of futurity.”*

— John Adolphus Etzler



## A Stylistic Note on the Anglicisation of German Names

The *ad hoc* respelling of names was common among nineteenth-century German-speaking emigrants to the USA, with the intent to retain approximate pronunciation while eliminating then-difficult-to-reproduce German diacritics and special characters. Emigrants often appear under different names across different source material, depending either on language of source, chronological position of source in relation to migration, or both.

For the sake of consistency, I have favoured the application of Anglicised forms (except directly quoted text or bibliographic contexts) if an emigrant seems to have deliberately self-renamed, regardless of where my usage falls in the narrative history of that individual's life.

Since precise manner and degree of Anglicisation were sometimes more a matter of individual preference than hard-and-fast rules, I include here a table of Anglicised names used in this thesis alongside their German-language originals.

<i>German Name</i>	<i>Anglicised Form (used in thesis)</i>
Friedrich Christoph von Dachröden	Frederick Christopher Dachroeden
Martha von Dachröden ( <i>née</i> Ludwig)	Martha Dachroeden ( <i>née</i> Ludewig)
Johann Adolph Etzler	John Adolphus Etzler
Regina Karoline Etzler ( <i>née</i> Sörgel)	Regina Carolina Etzler ( <i>née</i> Soergel)
Heinrich Harseim	Henry Harseim
Ludwig Rehfuß	Louis Rehfuss
Georg Reinhold	George Reinhold
Johann August Röbling	John Augustus Roebling
Heinrich Rödter	Henry Roedter
Karl Gustav Rümelin	Charles Reemelin
Konrad Friedrich Stollmeyer	Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer

Principal Etzlerist Sites in the Caribbean

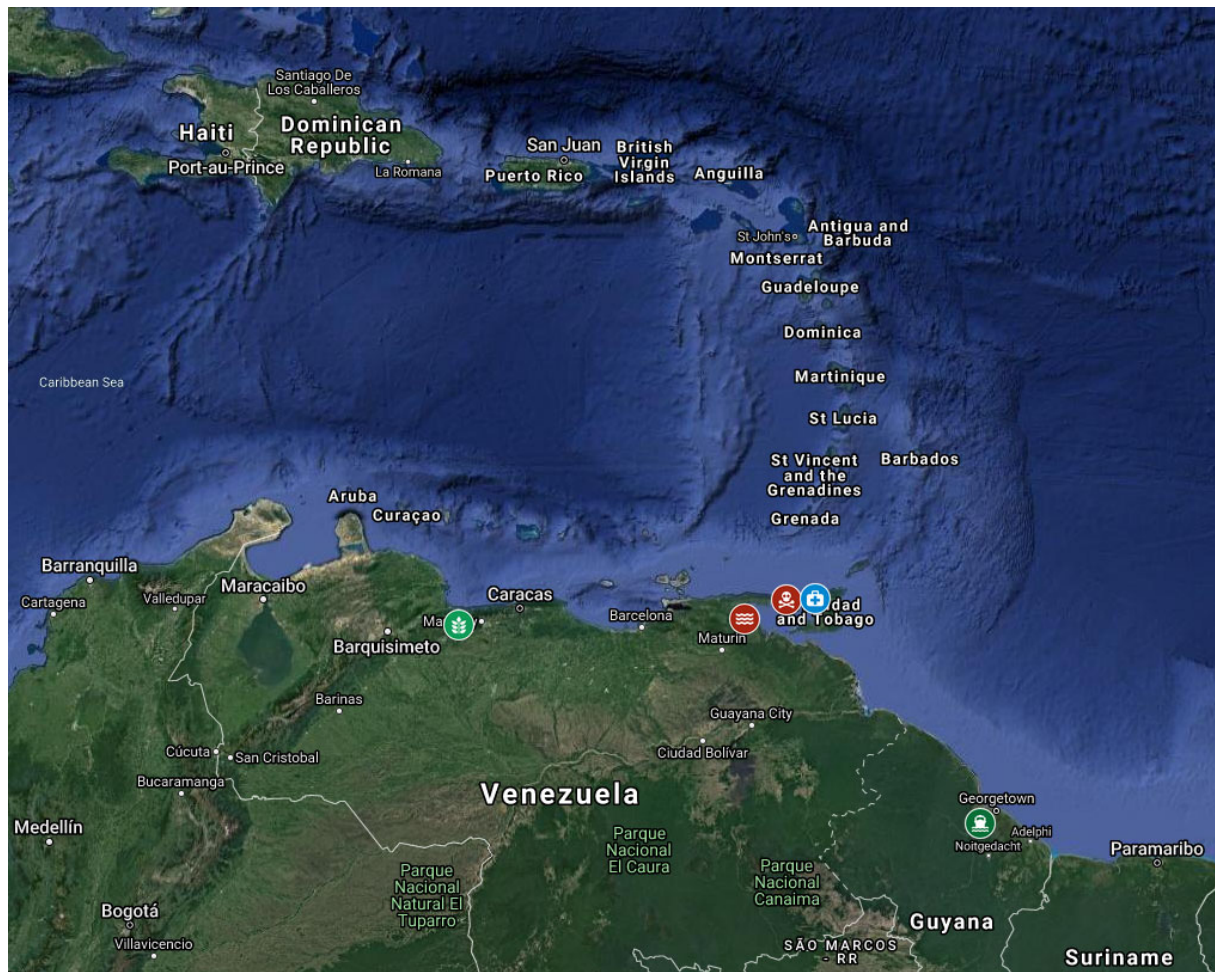







Fig. 1. Map of the locations inhabited or intended for habitation by Etzlerists between 1844 and 1847. Created by the author using GoogleMaps satellite imagery.

Legend

-  Guinimita Site (Venezuela)
-  La Unión Site (Venezuela)
-  Erthig Site (Trinidad)
-  Guataparo Site (Venezuela)
-  Essequibo Site (Demerara)

## Quick-Referencing Guide to My System of Abbreviation for Etzler's Works\*

\*(See Appendix 1 for a complete annotated Bibliography of Etzler's Works, including full bibliographic data for each of the document in this list. The table of abbreviations below has been truncated and alphabetized to aid the reader in quickly checking to which document a given in-text abbreviation refers).

<b>AAP</b>	<i>Address to All People who Desire to Free Themselves</i> [&c.] (1843)
<b>AAVSN1</b>	<i>Allgemeine Ansicht der Vereinigten Staaten</i> [&c.], 1 <sup>st</sup> edition. (1830)
<b>AAVSN2</b>	<i>Allgemeine Ansicht der Vereinigten Staaten</i> [&c.], 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition. (1831)
<b>ANT</b>	<i>Auswanderung Nach der Tropenwelt</i> (1847)
<b>ADS1</b>	First Pseudonymous Advertisement (25 September 1847)
<b>ADS2</b>	Second Pseudonymous Advertisement (30 October 1847)
<b>CL</b>	Caracas Letter (27 May 1845)
<b>DEP</b>	<i>Dialogue on Etzler's Paradise: Between Messrs. Clear, Flat, Duncie, Grudge</i> (1843)
<b>FTSAG</b>	'For the Society at Guinimita' (18 April 1846)
<b>DL1</b>	First Demerara Letter (14 May 1846)
<b>DL2</b>	Second Demerara Letter (30 May 1846)
<b>DL3</b>	Third Demerara Letter (30 May 1846)
<b>DOMAV</b>	'Description of Mechanism for Applying Motion of Vessels, &c.' (29 July 1843)
<b>DOTNA</b>	<i>Description of the Naval Automaton</i> [&c.] (1842)
<b>EJa</b>	<i>Etzler's Journal</i> [1 <sup>st</sup> Surviving Fragment] (25 March–28 April 1845)
<b>EJb</b>	<i>Etzler's Journal</i> [2 <sup>nd</sup> Surviving Fragment] (1 May–15 May 1845)
<b>EJc</b>	<i>Etzler's Journal</i> [3 <sup>rd</sup> Surviving Fragment] (23 May–14 June 1845)
<b>ETW</b>	<i>Emigration to the Tropical World</i> , [&c.] (1844)
<b>JAEMS</b>	<i>J. A. Etzler's Mechanical System, in its Greatest Simplicity</i> , [&c.] (1844)
<b>JL</b>	<i>Jamaica Letter</i> (1852)
<b>MHBP</b>	<i>Memorial to Both Houses of British Parliament</i> (16 September 1843)
<b>MOJAEa</b>	<i>Manifesto of J. A. Etzler</i> [Pt. 1] (19 February 1846)
<b>MOJAEb</b>	<i>Manifesto of J. A. Etzler</i> [Pt. 2] (19 February 1846)
<b>MOJAEc</b>	<i>Manifesto of J. A. Etzler</i> [Cover Letter] (19 February 1846)
<b>MPA</b>	<i>Maquina Para Aserrar</i> (1853)
<b>MPS</b>	<i>Maquina Para Sumar</i> (1853)
<b>NSL1</b>	First ( <i>Northern Star</i> ) Letter to Chartists (6 July 1844)
<b>NSL2</b>	Second ( <i>Northern Star</i> ) Letter to Chartists (27 July 1844)

<b>NSL3</b>	Third ( <i>Northern Star</i> ) Letter to Chartists (10 August 1844)
<b>NWOMS</b>	<i>New World or Mechanical System</i> , [&c.] (1841)
<b>NYDL</b>	New York Departure Letter (5 December 1843)
<b>PR</b>	‘Poetry of Reality’ (December 1844)
<b>PWR1a</b>	<i>Paradise within the Reach of All Men</i> , [&c.], 1 <sup>st</sup> edition [Pt. 1] (1833)
<b>PWR1b</b>	<i>Paradise within the Reach of All Men</i> , [&c.], 1 <sup>st</sup> edition [Pt. 2] (1833)
<b>PWR2</b>	<i>Paradise within the Reach of All Men</i> , [&c.], 2 <sup>nd</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> ‘British’) edition (1836)
<b>PWR3a</b>	<i>Paradise within the Reach of All Men</i> , [&c.], 3 <sup>rd</sup> (2 <sup>nd</sup> ‘English’) edition [Pt. 1] (1842)
<b>PWR3b</b>	<i>Paradise within the Reach of All Men</i> , [&c.], 3 <sup>rd</sup> (2 <sup>nd</sup> ‘English’) edition [Pt. 2] (1842)
<b>PWR4</b>	<i>Paradies für Jedermann Erreichbar</i> , [usw.] 4 <sup>th</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> German) edition (1844)
<b>TL1</b>	[Summary of] First Trinidad Letter (21 March 1845)
<b>TL2</b>	Second Trinidad Letter (4 April 1845)
<b>TL3</b>	Third Trinidad Letter (20 April 1845)
<b>TVJAE</b>	<i>Two Visions of J. A. Etzler: A Revelation of Futurity</i> (1844)
<b>TCL</b>	Transit Company Letter (16 January 1846)
<b>USP1</b>	US Satellite Patent 2396 (23 December 1841)
<b>USP2</b>	US Naval Automaton Patent 2533 (1 April 1842)
<b>VL</b>	Valencia Letter (11 October 1845)

# **Part One**

## Introductory Material

# **Chapter One**

## Preliminaries

## 1.1 Elementary Statement of Subject Matter

John Adolphus Etzler was a nineteenth-century socialist inventor who dedicated his life to devising and trying to implement novel systems of mechanical automata, powered entirely by the renewable energy of the sun, wind and tides, which he hoped could entirely replace human workers in the performance of all complex tasks requisite to producing and administering the necessities of survival and comfort. In conjunction with a socio-political reconstitution of society in order to assure unconditional and universal access to the productive output of the machines, Etzler hoped that the successful implementation of his plans would allow humanity to undergo rapid transition into a new form of post-scarcity utopian civilization in which employment and money would no longer figure as the main organising principles of human activity, and in which poverty and toil would cease to exist.

Born on 2 February 1791 in the German town of Mühlhausen (then part of the Kingdom of Prussia), in the early years of the 1820s Etzler emigrated for the first time to the United States, from which point forth he led an international existence, residing at different stages of life at a host of locales across North and South America, Europe and the Caribbean. From the late 1820s onwards, Etzler's single-minded focus was the promotion and further development of his work-abolitionist programme—presented in its most complete and widely-known form in his 1833 magnum opus, *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men, Without Labour, by Powers of Nature and Machinery*—for which he repeatedly sought collaborators, publicity, funding and resources by different means and in different venues over the next two decades, with mixed success.

After a series of unsuccessful attempts to organise associative groups capable of carrying out his ambitious designs throughout the 1830s and early 1840s, Etzler's relentless efforts culminated in a short-lived but sensationallly popular mass movement among British socialists disaffected by the setbacks and perceived shortcomings in the domestic chartist and Owenite radical scenes of the time. Between 1844 and 1847, the Tropical Emigration Society—an Etzlerist membership organization headquartered in London and attracting thousands of paying members across dozens of regional branches up and down the country—sent over two hundred of its activists, including Etzler himself, on a series of ill-fated expeditions to Venezuela (via Trinidad) with the intention of establishing a fully-automated workless city for themselves in the South American countryside. This metropolis, based on the blueprint of a vast, luxurious megastructure conceived by Etzler in the *Paradise*, supported by networks of self-propelled multipurpose agricultural vehicles called satellites, was to serve not only as a proof-of-concept for the Etzlerist model of socialism, but also as a base of operations for a fleet of habitable, mobile, mechanised artificial islands that would aid in the collection and transportation of subsequent waves of utopian colonists.

The catastrophic failure of the expedition *in situ* and supposed disappearance of Etzler shortly

thereafter appeared to consign the Etzlerist movement to a level of historical obscurity that was unusually severe given the extraordinary character of its goals and the dramatic circumstances of their attempted realisation, with the result that the Etzlerists and their ideas remain virtually unknown today even among contemporary scholars of labour history and radical political theory, much less to general audiences.

## 1.2 Structure and Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into three parts and comprises a total of nine substantive chapters.

Part One contains chapters One and Two, both of which familiarise the reader with a range of requisite information both about the subject matter itself, and about the current state of field. It is hoped these two chapters will illustrate some of the descriptive, interpretative, and methodological errors which the author has encountered in much of the prevailing historical literature on Etzler and the Etzlerist movement; errors he seeks to remedy at least in part by the presentation of a fundamentally revised history of Etzlerism in parts Two and Three of this thesis. The contextualising information relating to the state of the field which Part One is calculated to deliver is therefore indispensable in properly preparing the reader to evaluate whether or not the view of the author—that these portions of the thesis make an especially significant and original contribution to knowledge because of the challenge they pose to received histories of the affair—is justified.

Chapter One, ‘Preliminaries’ is further subdivided into five subsections. Each of these (‘Elementary Statement of the Subject Matter’, ‘Structure and Overview of the Thesis’, ‘Contributions to Knowledge’, ‘Methodology’, and ‘Literature Review’) serves the specific function suggested by its title, namely: to appraise (or remind) the reader of the most elementary facts of the subject matter by providing a concise synopsis; to explain the structure and give a general idea of thesis contents (this is that section); to specify the main contributions the author believes the thesis to make to the creation of new knowledge within the field; to explain, discuss and justify the choice of methodology; and to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the state of the field.

A word on the literature review, however: my approach to this section was necessarily dissimilar in some respects to a typical review of scholarly literature in that there is surprisingly little direct secondary literature on Etzler to review in the first place. On the level of historiography, Etzlerism is remarkable in that compared with almost all other social, political and technological phenomena enjoying a similar level of sensational international popularity<sup>1</sup> in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Etzlerism remains unknown to all but the most dedicated or serendipitous seekers

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<sup>1</sup> See Gregory Claeys, ‘John Adolphus Etzler, Technological Utopianism, and British Socialism: The Tropical Emigration Society’s Venezuelan Mission and Its Social Context, 1833–1848’, *English Historical Review* 101, no. 399 (1986): 351 for insight into the rapid success of the Etzlerist TES in Britain from its organisational inception in 1844.



of *outré* utopian materials. To illustrate the truth of this statement, it is perhaps sufficient to state that for the first six decades of the twentieth century, the fact that Etzler and several hundreds of his followers set foot in the Tropics to undertake the extraordinary purposes I have alluded to in my introduction at all was entirely unknown *to subject specialists who knew of and actively sought information about Etzler*. A significant portion of my literature review is therefore as much an inquiry into what is absent from prior relevant scholarship as it is into what is present there, a problem that is already suggestive of a fruitful research question I will have in mind, which is this: *how* does a historical amnesia so severe befall the posterity of so remarkable a series of once widely-known events? Where were the dead-ended alleys of historical transmission so Daedalian as to permit information of such importance and general interest to vanish utterly for so long?

Once I have taken the reader down some of these paths of collective memory loss, from the high-tide of Etzler's career down to the obscurity he suffers in the present day, I will discuss the necessity I have felt of returning stringently to the fidelity of primary evidence in the narrative that will follow in parts Two and Three. I will sketch what these materials are, and in some cases how I acquired and interpreted them, so that others can follow in my path if they wish.

Chapter Two, 'Welcome to the Future: A General Introduction to the Socio-Mechanical Systems of Etzlerism'—will offer readers unfamiliar with Etzler and his followers a working sense of a few of the daring civilisational transformations they hoped to accomplish, mostly recouring to his magnum opus, the *Paradise within the Reach of All Men*, with occasional supplementation by other texts to be evaluated in greater detail further on. The reader will, as the title suggests, meet a selection of the most important Etzlerist inventions and innovations, arranged in a non-chronological and non-exhaustive sequence, gaining a general flavour of the whole extraordinary thing so as not to be utterly lost in the in-depth historical chapters which follow.

The six substantive chapters which together make up Part Two and Part Three of the thesis will deliver a microhistorical study of the theoretical and practical development of the Etzlerist movement, following a chronologically continuous 24-year period of Etzler's career, with Part Two spanning 11 'early' years, from 1828 to 1839, and Part Three reprising with 13 'late' years, from 1840 to 1853. Both halves introduce a large quantity of new primary evidence, closing several significant gaps in knowledge, and also fundamentally challenging the two most widely relied-upon monograph-length treatments of the subject: the 1969 PhD thesis of Patrick R. Brostowin<sup>2</sup> and the more recent monograph *The Great Delusion: A Mad Inventor, Death in the Tropics, and the Utopian Origins of*

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<sup>2</sup> Patrick Ronald Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler: Scientific-Utopian during the 1830's and 1840's' (PhD thesis, New York University, 1969).

*Economic Growth*,<sup>3</sup> derived heavily in its central narrative and ideas from Brostowin's thesis by its author Steven Stoll. I will argue throughout that both Brostowin and Stoll have severely misinterpreted key strands of their own primary evidence, to which I return systematically in order to uncompromisingly evaluate both factual and interpretative errors in the treatment of Etzler and Etzlerism by these two authors. The purpose of my thesis is not merely to knock down the theories of others, however—in the process of showing what is wrong with the accounts supplied with Brostowin and Stoll, I will also be making use of primary evidence to supply a new one. Each of the six total chapters forming my historical analysis will cover its own chronologically sequential three-year phase of the total period studied, with the exception of Chapter Eight, which covers five years.

Chapter Three begins the recovery effort by relating Etzler's activities of the period 1828–1831, during which time he returned from the United States to his birthplace in order to commit himself to the planning and execution of an organised emigration scheme—the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* [i.e., the 'company of Mühlhausen']—led by the Prussian aristocrat and experimental chemist Frederick Christopher Dachroeden, and including the junior participation of the fêted engineer John Augustus Roebling (who later attracted fame as the architect of New York's Brooklyn Bridge). In this section, I use a range of newly-discovered German-language primary materials (including a 108-page pamphlet co-authored by Etzler himself) to fundamentally challenge prevailing accounts of the period, especially insofar as these relate to Etzler's early ideological influences, to the character of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* scheme, and to the respective roles, conduct and personalities of Etzler and Roebling during and immediately following the scheme, which I argue have been grossly misrepresented in existing scholarship.

Chapter Four covers the period 1832–1835, using new evidence from rare German-language expatriate newspapers of the period to offer a substantially augmented account of Etzler's whereabouts and activities immediately before and after the 1833 publication of PWR1a/b in Pittsburgh, the text for which he is best known. Identifying and correcting substantial errors in Patrick Brostowin's (and latterly Steven Stoll's) interpretation of the sources they use to discuss this period, I then use my newly-retrieved primary evidence to give the first ever scholarly account of a previously unknown Etzlerist movement, active from 1834 among German-speaking expatriates in Cincinnati, as well as the first documented field test of one of Etzler's machines, a likewise hitherto undiscovered satellite-prototype called the *Mammuth-Cultivator*.

Chapter Five discusses Etzler's intellectual and geographical movements from 1836–1839, including the discovery and early popularisation of Etzler's ideas in Britain by Robert Owen and other supporters. I trace the dissolution of the Cincinnati Etzlerist group and Etzler's subsequent emigration

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Stoll, *The Great Delusion: A Mad Inventor, Death in the Tropics, and the Utopian Origins of Economic Growth* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2008).

to the Republic of Haiti, using an exposition of the unique constitutional history of Haiti to offer a novel interpretation of Etzler's decision to move there, and discussing the likely influence that life in Haiti had on his later work and ideas. Through an improved understanding of the rationale behind his decision to emigrate to the first (and at the time only) free black republic in the western hemisphere, I also emphatically contradict some of Etzler's least charitable latter-day interpreters, who, I will argue, have baselessly sought to impugn him as a racist. With Etzler's residency in Haiti circa 1839, I will have reached the conceptual midpoint of my history of Etzlerism, concluding Part Two of the thesis.

Chapter Six opens Part Three of the thesis at the inception of the period I will characterise as "late" Etzlerism: it follows Etzler's return to the United States in the period 1840–1843, during which a series of fruitful encounters and friendships on both sides of the Atlantic led to a profound resurgence of general interest in Etzler's ideas. I recount Etzler's partnership with the anti-slavery campaigner Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer and his friendship with the American Fourierist Albert Brisbane, including a comparative analysis of the reception of Brisbane and Etzler's ideas among North American socialists and reformers. In examining Stollmeyer's Damascene conversion from Fourierism to Etzlerism, I draw some further useful distinctions between the two systems of thought, which have at times been confused by fellow scholars.<sup>4</sup> I also offer new detail of scientific and mechanical experiments undertaken by Etzler and his supporters during this period, particularly the invention of modern typing by the Etzlerist James Hadden Young, the hair-raising 1842 trial of Etzler's naval automaton, and the satellite Etzler built for Slovene mystic Andreas Bernardus Smolnikar's religious commune in 1843.

Chapter Seven, covering the period 1844–1847, charts Etzler's migration to Britain and then to Trinidad to superintend the activities of the Tropical Emigration Society, a British mass-membership organisation which sought unsuccessfully to build a mechanised Etzlerist settlement in Venezuela. By returning in faithful detail to the extensive (though only partially extant) periodical output of the TES and synthesising my findings with a range of additional primary evidence from diverse sources, I overturn prevailing secondary accounts of the affair, especially the narrative expounded in Steven Stoll's *The Great Delusion: A Mad Inventor, Death in the Tropics, and the Utopian Origins of Unlimited Growth*. At the end of Chapter Seven, I will assess the political implications of Stoll's account of the affair, arguing that they are pressed into service as parts of an anti-utopian parable, whose message, I will argue, is undermined by the historical unreality of some of its core supporting

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance Laurel Ann Kornhiser, who tells us of Henry David Thoreau "[a]ttacking J. A. Etzler's proposal for a machine paradise based on Joseph [sic] Fourier's principles". 'Junctions: the Railroad, Consumerism, and Deep Time in Nineteenth-Century Literature' (PhD thesis, Northeastern University, 2010), 66. An earlier example may be found in Richard Pankhurst, 'Fourierism in Britain', *International Review of Social History* 1, no. 3 (1956): 406.

claims.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter of Part Three, explores the aftermath of the TES expedition, including Etzler's own post-Venezuelan career. I will use my discoveries of new evidence about this period to trace Etzler's whereabouts, activities and ideas until 1853, thereby extending the known period of his career and life by seven years further than any previous scholar. I also summarise and evaluate some other available evidence that may be of use to future researchers who wish to pursue the factual course of Etzler's life still further.

Chapter Nine, the concluding substantive chapter of my thesis, builds on the transformed history of Etzlerism established in the preceding sections in order to draw conclusions of contemporary relevance by examining recent tendencies in twenty-first-century 'post-work' political writing, comparing the objectives and methods of these scholars and activists with those of the nineteenth-century Etzlerists, and suggesting that contributors to modern post-work political discourse (where Etzler remains almost entirely unknown) should engage in earnest with the history of Etzlerism. I will argue that besides merely presenting a study in the sorts of hazards which would-be architects of post-work utopias should know how to avoid, some parts of its history also offer positive examples of frameworks, attitudes and approaches that can be made useful to the practical furtherance of post-work utopian aspirations in the present day.

### **1.3 Contributions to Knowledge**

The first service to human knowledge performed by this thesis is its tightly-evidenced account of multiple previously unknown periods of Etzler's career, but it also generates new knowledge about known periods by contradicting major errors of fact and interpretation which prevail in existing scholarship on John Adolphus Etzler and the Etzlerist movement(s). It overturns prevailing theories about the development of Etzler's political and philosophical thought and his mechanical experimentation, using direct, meticulous analysis of rare archival materials, some of them newly-discovered by the author, to deliver a comprehensive microhistorical study which extends the outer boundaries of his known biography by several years in both directions.

In particular, it demolishes several currently-accepted theories about his activities, whereabouts and the development of his ideas between 1831–1839 and after 1846. It closes substantial gaps in existing knowledge of events, using its exhaustive retrieval of large bodies of previously ignored, unrecovered and misinterpreted evidence to provide reconstructed accounts of long periods of Etzler's productive activity whose existence has not even been suspected, much less understood or interpreted, by any previous researcher of the subject matter.

Contrary to the view of virtually all the major scholars of Etzler, it demonstrates that he neither died in the Tropics nor otherwise ceased his political and mechanical experiments after the TES expedition

to Venezuela. It is the first piece of scholarship to trace Etzler's life as far as 1853, identifying new inventions, new ideas and new attempts to create post-work utopias that took place well after the previously supposed outer bounds of surviving evidence, extending his known career by over 7 years.

It uses primary evidence from grey literature to demonstrate that, contrary to some scholarly accounts of the TES expedition, the hundred or so passengers who left Trinidad on the *Condor* in March 1846 did not die at sea, as is often supposed, but arrived safely in New Orleans.

It uses a transformed understanding of the facts of the expedition itself to advance the view that the collapse of the TES at the apogee of Etzlerism did not, as has been often argued, come about because it was foredoomed by Etzler's supposedly unrealistic utopian mechanical ideas from the beginning, but rather that the crisis of the TES was the product of specific obstinacies, miscommunications and sabotages on the part of individuals not even particularly interested in Etzler's ideas in the first place.

Because of its substantial discovery of material and its forensic approach to documentary evidence, it is also able to confidently classify Etzler's work, thought and organisational experiences into two distinct periods, enriching the current understanding of the development of his and his supporters' ideas over time. By comparing the 'early' and 'late' Etzlerisms theorised for the first time in this thesis, conclusions with contemporary relevance for the 'post-work' political literature are drawn: by taking into account the effect the organisational norms—and actual behaviour—newcomers to Etzlerism such as Thomas Powell had on 'late' period Etzlerism, it offers a constructive critique of the logic of 'utopian demand' popular in contemporary post-work literature—suggesting that by regarding the delivery of a mechanised post-work utopia as a formulable demand against a third party intermediary, rather than a collaborative scientific process in which utopians themselves must actively participate, the possibility of bringing a post-work utopia to fruition become more remote, an oversight which renewed study of historical Etzlerism can help to fill.

In addition to establishing and defending this interpretation about the relevance of the 'late' Etzlerist TES expedition to Venezuela to contemporary post-work politics, it also makes a substantial contribution to the recovery of 'early' Etzlerism. It is the first piece of scholarship to engage significant and previously unknown phases of Etzler's early career in the 1830s, including early mechanical experiments such as the *Mammuth-Cultivator* wind-powered farming machine, which predates practical trials of his other inventions by almost a decade and, through its differences to the mature satellite, reveals new insights about Etzler's design process and the changing state of his ideas about the capture, storage and transmission of energy at different points in his career. It is likewise the first to provide and interpret evidence for the existence of an organised Etzlerist membership group in America which similarly predated the British Tropical Emigration Society by a decade, and to identify and describe its leading members, advancing hypotheses about the reasons for their attraction to Etzler's ideas. It uses the evidence of these discoveries to provide an enriched account

of the development of Etzler's political, strategic, and scientific thought.

It provides the most complete bibliography of Etzler's own works ever compiled outside of his lifetime (see Appendix 1), disambiguating entirely unique texts which have been confused for mere reprints by previous researchers, as well as introducing substantial new texts that were incorrectly considered lost or, in some cases, not even known to exist by previous scholars of Etzler. It integrates the copious new material into a substantially revised account of several phases in Etzler's career over a 24-year period. Moreover, it uses a deep analysis of this newly-expanded corpus to develop previously unknown insights not only about the contents but also about the artefactual history of the books themselves. For instance, it supplies primary evidence that the third edition of Etzler's *Paradise within the Reach of All Men* (PWR3a/b) was the first book in human history that was prepared for publication by being typed out on a keyboard, and moreover that this fact was no mere coincidence, but a result of the politically-guided preoccupation of political activists (such as the inventor of the keyboard, James Hadden Young) with the Etzlerist application of labour-saving machinery to humanitarian social and political problems.

#### 1.4 Methodology

In marshalling the evidence and in executing the study itself, this thesis borrows heavily from the techniques of microhistory—which is to say that in the words of Carlo Ginzburg, it is concerned with what its predecessors “passed over in silence, discarded, or simply ignored”.<sup>5</sup>

It is necessarily oriented around a small unit of research, in the sense that it concerns itself principally with the activities, ideas and relationships of a numerically small and densely interconnected group of individuals whose ideas were in many respects disjointed and dislocated from the societies within which they lived. Yet at the same time, Etzlerism as a political philosophy dealt of necessity with matters which are “manifestly of paramount interest to every human being”<sup>6</sup>—the total abolition of money, work and material scarcity, the transformation of the earth into a general paradise, etc.

In the particular case of John Adolphus Etzler, the unifying figure around whose biography this microhistory is woven, the author does not expect to create grand historical narratives about the several different societies in which the individual lived, if only for the fact that, as far he was concerned, he barely lived in them at all: in his mind, he was profoundly disconnected from post-Napoleonic Prussia, the Antebellum United States, Victorian Britain, Post-Bolívarian Venezuela, etc., regarding himself instead as an untimely citizen of futurity; in spirit, a cosmopolitan time-traveller from an unrecognisably different utopian future which he believed it his solemn duty to try and create,

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<sup>5</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), xiii.

<sup>6</sup> PWR2, 206.

a future having very little in common with the chronologically local universes through which its architect moved. “Utopianism has always placed itself both outside time and in a prefigurative time of immediacy”,<sup>7</sup> and the chronological dislocation of Etzler’s ideas is an epitome of this mode of thought. A persistent feature running through much of his major work is that his thinking is in persistent dialogue with “beings of futurity”<sup>8</sup> from “a remote posterity [...] under circumstances and views of the world very different from ours”.<sup>9</sup> Etzler endeavours to speak as much to us as he does to the people of his own time, and in preparing this thesis, I have tried to listen. Some of those who have written about Etzler have thought that they “can read him to understand the practical and utopian aspects of economic growth in the [...] nineteenth century. He sounded like any political economist [...]”.<sup>10</sup> This is certainly not my position. Etzler was highly unusual in comparison to most, if not all nineteenth-century political economists. He agitated not only for the total and near-term abolition of capitalism, but of money and work themselves, and for the total transformation of human living arrangements, institutions and material culture. He rejected many of the fundamental assumptions of his contemporaries about the linearity of human progress and enlightenment.<sup>11</sup> He was a practitioner of *utopian thinking* in a Levitasian<sup>12</sup> sense. The post-work theorist David Frayne expresses sentiments equivalent to Etzler’s own when he says, channelling Levitas, that “[i]nstead of extrapolating from the present, utopian thinking prompts us to think first about where we might *want* to be, and then about how we might get there”.<sup>13</sup> This was how Etzler thought, and in order to understand him, I have endeavoured, to some extent, to think like him, and for this, nothing short of a microhistorical method will do.

The demanding nature of the source base further influenced my approach. Etzler remains obscure, even by the standards of nineteenth-century utopian socialists, so perhaps it was inevitable that if I really wanted insights about him and the movement he inspired I was going to have to dig, contending with large volumes of source material containing many different types of ephemera which, though interesting, might be vulnerable to complaint as too specific or inconsequential to generate useful historical insight.

There is a real risk, of course, in trying to tell a story through microhistory, that the author will be drawn by the siren songs of ever more parochial trivia into a position where they lose sight of the pursuit of any broader implications their work may be able to deliver.

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<sup>7</sup> Rhiannon Firth, ‘Afterword’, in *Journey Through Utopia: A Critical Assessment of Imagined Worlds in Western Literature*, by Marie Louise Berneri, ed. Matthew S. Adams (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2019), 331–92.

<sup>8</sup> TVJAE, 14.

<sup>9</sup> PWR2, 163.

<sup>10</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 20–21.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., NWOMS, 71.

<sup>12</sup> I.e., Ruth Levitas, *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society* (Basingstoke: Springer, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> David Frayne, *The Refusal of Work: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Work* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 235.

James Gregory is mindful of this when he states in the acknowledgements of his extremely capable biography of the Etzlerist James Elmslie Duncan that he feels himself “[w]ary of historical writing as a mere detective story, and the blunt appeal of the peculiar”.<sup>14</sup> I felt a pang of recognition on reading such a statement; I too have felt this temptation, but believe I have avoided it here.

It may be a methodological gamble taking such a deep dive into the life of so obscure a figure, but if so, then it is one I believe has paid off. After raptly surveying what scant literature exists on Etzler, and eager to know more, I resolved to return directly to the *Morning Star; or, Herald of Progression, and People’s Economist*—the periodical of the Tropical Emigration Society, preserved today as part of the *Rare and Radical Labour Periodicals of Great Britain* collection on microfilm at the British Library.

My discoveries there, which I did not initially expect, reinforced my methodological use of microhistory as an especially useful basis for making the arguments upon which I realised my thesis was likely to depend.

Having already delved quite thoroughly into the small secondary literature on Etzler, I was surprised to find, during my tentative expedition into the source base which these secondary texts—particularly Brostowin and Stoll’s—had ostensibly referenced so carefully, that important central aspects of the affair had been missed entirely, and still others had been colossally misrepresented. Finding that other parts of Etzler’s career had been misreported in various ways as well, I extended the microhistorical approach I found useful in handling the large and intricate source material of the *Morning Star* corpus (the authentic history of the affair is difficult to reconstruct because substantial chunks of the source were never committed to the microfilm; see my second appendix for an analysis of the incompleteness of the preserved text). Seeking evidence across a broader range of source types: shipping intelligence, passenger manifests, graves, public records and other grey literatures, etc., I found that my challenge to the claims of these texts amounted to more than just a prosaic or pedantic error-checking exercise; in fact, it would enable me to mount a serious challenge to the broader anti-utopian political and philosophical claims (both explicit and implied) inherent to both works. Stoll and Brostowin use the evidence of the past to attack Etzler’s future from their own ‘pragmatic’ presents. I will meet them in that past, inspect the weapons they have constructed there, and if I find that they have been calculated to inflict unnecessary destruction, I will stand shoulder to shoulder with Etzler in a spirited defence of this future that never was.

## 1.5 Literature Review

Despite the extraordinary character and ambitions of Etzler’s movement, its tremendous

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<sup>14</sup> James Gregory, *Politics and the Poetics: Radical Reform in Victorian England* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), xi.



international popularity in the 1840s, and the dramatic circumstances of its attempted implementation and collapse, scholarly and public memory of the affair and its leading figures suffered an unusually complete obscurity during the 175 years that followed.

Since one of the aims of this thesis is to test the integrity of received information that appears in Etzler's posthumous historiography, I have structured this portion of my literature review so as to first illustrate how knowledge of Etzler and Etzlerism was progressively muddled and lost in the years following the Caribbean expeditions of the TES, and how the informational voids opened by this process have shaped what little contemporary Etzler scholarship exists. Once an adequate sketch of this historiography has been established, I will then summarise the available (and newly-retrieved) bodies of primary evidence about Etzler's career which I have used to support my corrective history.

#### "Rare, Curious, and Valuable": Middle and Late Nineteenth-Century Memory and Periodic Rediscovery of Etzler

After the failure of the Venezuela expedition and the dissolution of the TES, sparse later-life recollections from contemporaries of Etzler who had either met, read or heard of him were committed to writing in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some of the most useful of these biographical fragments are from figures such as Charles Reemelin<sup>15</sup> and Andreas Bernardus Smolnikar<sup>16</sup> who at certain points worked directly with Etzler and his colleagues on experimental projects. Other less direct personal recollections are preserved in the writings of John Greenleaf Whittier, who briefly met Etzler in the 1830s,<sup>17</sup> and the diaries of the Reverend James 'Shepherd' Smith, who followed the progress of a pair of Etzlerist technicians in their bid to construct a working prototype of Etzler's seafaring naval automaton machine.<sup>18</sup>

The prominent British secularist George Jacob Holyoake volunteered a handful of late-life

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<sup>15</sup> To my knowledge, I am the first modern scholar to rediscover and translate Reemelin's reminiscences about his involvement with Etzler's early mechanical experiments, which he submitted in his mother tongue to an obscure local German-language newspaper as part of a larger obituary to Etzler's 1831 co-colonist John Augustus Roebling. See C[harles] R[eeemelin], 'John A. Röbling', *Deutsche Pionier* [Cincinnati, OH] 1, no. 7 (September 1869): 194–201; see also particularly subsections 4.2 and 4.3 of this thesis for my reconstruction of the events revealed by this source.

<sup>16</sup> Smolnikar was a millenarian religious leader heavily influenced by the incipient American socialist movement throughout the 1840s. In 1843, he commissioned Etzler to build an automated farming machine at his cult centre in Warren, PA. Smolnikar's (often fantastical and supernatural) memories of the encounter are dotted across several of his quasi-autobiographical religious tracts, the excessively long titles of which I have forced myself, for the reader's sake, to leave for now in my bibliography rather than reproducing their copious entirety in a single footnote. See subsection 6.4 for my detailed historical coverage of Smolnikar's experience with Etzler's machines.

<sup>17</sup> John Greenleaf Whittier, 'The City of a Day', in *The Prose Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*, vol. 2 (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1866), 228–96. Much later in life, Whittier would also work collaboratively with the (by then, former) Etzlerist leader Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer as a prominent member of the Universal Peace Union. See e.g., John G[reenleaf] Whittier, 'Diary of the Secretary', *American Advocate of Peace and Arbitration* 53, no. 7 (1891): 180–82. For further information on the mission and history of the UPU, consult Alfred H. Love, *A Brief Synopsis of Some of the Work Proposed, Aided and Accomplished by the Universal Peace Union, during Twenty-five Years, from 1866 to 1891* (Philadelphia, PA: Universal Peace Union, 1891).

<sup>18</sup> W. Anderson Smith, *'Shepherd' Smith the Universalist: The Story of a Mind* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1892), 215–216.

references to Etzlerism in a tone simultaneously nostalgic and embittered,<sup>19</sup> though his earlier editorship of the *Movement and Anti-Persecution Gazette*, which ran during the apogee of Etzlerism in Britain (i.e., 1844–1847), has proven a much more valuable resource to my task than these belated morsels. The veteran chartist Thomas Frost’s retrospective on his experience of the period is more substantial than Holyoake’s; it situates the Etzlerist Tropical Emigration Society within the organisational ecology of the broader British radical left of the 1840s, supplying useful first-hand detail.<sup>20</sup>

In the heyday of the TES, ‘Etzler’ was enough of a household name that it was frequently repeated in tangentially related general discussion of technology and society. Ralph Waldo Emerson could seamlessly refer the audience of his lectures to the “Etzlers and countless mechanical projectors”<sup>21</sup> of the age without first having to explain who Etzler was, and Charles Dickens acknowledged Etzler for “the establishment of a new mechanical principle”<sup>22</sup> in agriculture thanks to his invention of the satellite. A record of the patent documents for Etzler’s naval automaton and satellite inventions were often included without much comment in exhaustive bibliographies of materials relating to the progress of steam engineering and farming equipment for decades to come.<sup>23</sup>

Specialists of political economy and allied subjects contemporaneous with Etzler occasionally recorded his theories of industrial relations and automation in their syllabi and textbooks. One good example is the *Lehrbuch der Politischen Oekonomie* of Karl Heinrich Rau,<sup>24</sup> another is Émile Worms’ *Exposé Élémentaire de Économie Politique a l’Usage des Écoles*.<sup>25</sup> The French jurist Dom Hisoard’s *La Propriété et la Communauté des Biens depuis l’Antiquité jusqu’ à nos Jours* likewise contains a brief discussion of Etzler’s views on the future of money and property.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps justly, “Ettzler [sic]”<sup>27</sup> appears alongside Fourier, Owen and St. Simon in some mid-nineteenth century enumerations of the great utopians. The *MECW* corpus, however, is conspicuous for its total silence on Etzler—a

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<sup>19</sup> E.g., George Jacob Holyoake, *The History of Co-Operation in England: Its Literature and Its Advocates*, vol. 1 (London: Trübner & Co., 1875), 213–214; George Jacob Holyoake, ‘A Dead Movement Which Learned to Live Again’, *Contemporary Review* 28 (August 1876): 446.

<sup>20</sup> See especially Thomas Frost, *Forty Years’ Recollections: Literary and Political* (London: Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1880), 54–55.

<sup>21</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘The Young American’, Lecture read before the Mercantile Library Association, Boston, MA on 7 February 1844. A transcript of the speech may be read in *Prose Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* vol. 1, ‘new and revised’ edition (Boston, MA: James R. Osgood & Company, 1875), 197–213.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Dickens, ‘The Steam Plough’, *Household Words* 1, no. 26 (1850): 604–7.

<sup>23</sup> E.g., Woodcroft Bennet, *A Sketch of the Origin and Progress of Steam Navigation from Authentic Documents* (London: Taylor, Walton and Maberly, 1848), 135.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Heinrich Rau, *Lehrbuch der Politischen Oekonomie* vol. 1, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (Leipzig: C. F. Winter, 1863), 110. Incidentally, it is through Rau’s posthumous bequest to the University of Michigan Library that a surviving copy of the German 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Etzler’s *Paradise* has been afforded to posterity (a surprising custodial history for this text given that Rau taught at Heidelberg).

<sup>25</sup> Émile Worms, *Exposé Élémentaire de Économie Politique a l’Usage des Écoles* (Paris: Marescq Ainé, 1880), 190–191.

<sup>26</sup> Dom Hisoard, *La Propriété et la Communauté des Biens depuis l’Antiquité jusqu’ à nos Jours* (Berche & Tralin, 1869), 361.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Modern Metaphysicians’, *British Controversialist* 22 (1867): 241.

likely contributing factor to his latter-day obscurity. Perhaps Engels had the Etzlerists specifically in mind when he left it “to the literary small fry to solemnly quibble over these phantasies [i.e., utopias besides those of Fourier, Owen & St. Simon], which today only make us smile”.<sup>28</sup> In any case, the fact that Marx and Engels demurred to mention Etzler guaranteed that in contrast to Fourier and the other acclaimed utopians they explicitly engaged, the numerical majority of even reasonably well-read twentieth-century socialists—still reading predominantly within the tradition of Marx and his interpreters—would never see Etzler’s name in print.

Etzler’s ideas remained a regular recourse for explicit comparison whenever inventions with related functions or working principles were developed in the decades preceding his fame. 1851 reports on the invention of a new apparatus for filtering water, for instance, explained that “[l]ike Etzler who turned the natural power of waves to mechanical purposes, [the filter’s inventor] Mr. Foster [...] makes the power which propels the water through the main to force [the water] through [the filter]”.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, when an Ohio mechanic devised a “machine to propel steamboats without steam” in 1853, one commentator supposed that it might “beat all that Ericsson or Etzler ever dreamed of [sic]”.<sup>30</sup>

Still other passing recollections of Etzler are interesting more for their evaluative content than their descriptive clues about Etzler’s inventions. For instance, the fire-and-brimstone preacher Thomas de Witt Talmage opposed the secular, materialistic salvation of humanity on religious grounds—“mechanical forces can never recreate the world [...] Christianity will yet make the worst streets of our cities better than the best one now is”<sup>31</sup>—though he conceded that Etzler had produced “a book of much genius [i.e., the *Paradise*]”<sup>32</sup> in which there was “more reason [...] than in many of the [secular, socialistic] plans proposed”.<sup>33</sup>

Talmage was not the only preacher whose distant recollections of Etzler would stimulate later theological discussions. Gustav Adolphus Wislicenus heard of an early trial of Etzlerist machinery in the 1830s,<sup>34</sup> and in decades to come, his memory of this secular agricultural automaton resurfaced as

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<sup>28</sup> Friedrich Engels, ‘Socialism: Utopian and Scientific’, in *The Collected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, vol. 24, 281–326 (Moscow: Progress, 1989 [1880]), 290.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Miscellaneous’, *Leader & Saturday Analyst* 2, no. 44 (25 January 1851): 79. An identically worded passage is found in ‘Progress of Science’, *Critic: London Literary Journal* 10, no. 238 (1 March 1851): 115.

<sup>30</sup> ‘A Novel Invention’, *Plough, the Loom, and the Anvil* 5, no. 1 (January 1853): 64. The ‘Ericsson’ correlated to Etzler here is doubtless the Swedish-American inventor John Ericsson (1803–1889), for whom the Ericsson cycle in contemporary thermodynamics is named. A pioneer of screw-driven steam shipping, Ericsson, like Etzler, was also an early experimenter in the use of solar energy to power machinery. For further information on Ericsson’s life and work, see William Conant Church, *The Life of John Ericsson*, 2 vols (New York, NY: Charles Scribener’s Sons, 1906).

<sup>31</sup> T[homas] de Witt Talmage, *The Abominations of Modern Society* (New York, NY: Adams, Victor & Co., 1872), 285–86. For reasons unknown, the entire passage was completely expunged from the British edition two years later, leaving no trace of Etzler in the revised text whatsoever. See T[homas] de Witt Talmage, *The Abominations of Modern Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: R. D. Dickinson, 1874).

<sup>32</sup> Talmage, *Abominations* [1872 edition], 283.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>34</sup> See subsection 4.3 of the thesis for novel information relating to this previously unknown experiment.

he reflected on the theme of *die wahre Macht des Glaubens* ['the true power of faith'].<sup>35</sup> To many Christian commentators in the mid-nineteenth century, the ultra-materialist philosophy of Etzlerism, and especially its promise of a terrestrial paradise, served as a convenient foil against which to proffer the superior life of the spirit and its adjunct paradises in the hereafter; a juxtaposition I explore in greater depth in subsequent parts of the thesis.<sup>36</sup>

The cases of Wislicenus and Talmage are prototypical examples of some historiographic tendencies that have tended to erode and obscure information that would have been of service to later historical scholarship about Etzler. The first is conspicuous in Wislicenus who, writing in 1846, is ignorant of the British (and latterly tropical) Etzlerist movement: only the core ideas of the *Paradise* and the fact of the earlier experiment are transmitted at all to (in this case, German-speaking) posterity. Though writing decades after the TES expedition, for his part Talmage recalls the *Paradise* only as a set of theoretical proposals, giving no indication that he is aware of any attempt by organised adherents of Etzler to implement it. Talmage's greater offense, though, was to expunge all mention of Etzler entirely from his second (ergo likely to be treated as definitive) edition; only a researcher in possession of the earlier 1872 version learns anything of Etzler at all.

More punitive deletions and omissions than Talmage's, however, lie at the heart of the near-invisibility of Etzler's ideas to subsequent generations of utopian scholar and practitioner. In 1870, the unpublished notes of the Scottish Owenite A. J. MacDonald were compiled by John Humphrey Noyes, patriarch of the religious utopians at Oneida, into his 750-page *History of American Socialisms*.<sup>37</sup>

MacDonald, an enthusiastic ethnographer of utopian socialist communities, had travelled extensively across the United States throughout the 1840s, amassing copious notes on the scores of experimental utopian communities (both secular and religious) dotting rural America at the time. His untimely death from cholera in 1854 cut short the arrangement and editing of the notes for publication as a book, a project completed by Noyes after they fell into his hands some years later. Noyes' final output was in many respects a remarkable accomplishment and an indispensable resource for subsequent contributors to the field of utopian studies, but it was precisely the success of the volume, coupled with Noyes' editorial decisions, which exacerbated the subsequent *damnatio memoriae* Etzlerism endured from the early socialist canon.

In his preface, Noyes explained that the precise intentions of MacDonald (a secular communist) would not be honoured in the preparation of the manuscript:

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<sup>35</sup> Gustav Adolph Wislicenus, 'Die wahre Macht des Glaubens', *Kirchliche Reform: Monatsschrift für Freie Protestanten Aller Stände* [Halle], no. 6 (June 1846): 14–19.

<sup>36</sup> See especially my treatment of Etzler's faith-based critics in subsection 6.1.

<sup>37</sup> John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1870).

A large part of his collections we shall omit, as irrelevant to our purpose. [...] The plan and theory of this history are our own, and widely different from any that MacDonald would have been willing to indorse.<sup>38</sup>

In life, MacDonald had in fact known a great deal about Etzler, even seeking him out (without apparent success) during his travels. In the process he collected significant anecdotes about Etzler's experiments. In the aftermath of the TES expeditions of 1845–1847, he interviewed a veteran follower of Etzler, and chronicled the dramatic history of the Etzlerist movement in the tropics.

Yet Noyes, whose editorial aim was to demonstrate the superiority of religious (as opposed to secular) utopian socialism to the US public, had no interest in these discoveries:

[...] we put out of account the *foreign* Associations, such as the Brazilian and Venezuelan experiments. With these may be classed those of the Icarians and some others, which, though within the United States, are, or were, really colonies of foreigners [...].<sup>39</sup>

Upon publication of *History of American Socialisms* in 1870, Noyes deposited MacDonald's unpublished notes on the Etzler movement in Yale University Library, where they remained unread until the twenty-first century.<sup>40</sup> Little wonder, then, that subsequent key histories of nineteenth-century utopianism which depended on Noyes as a source remained utterly silent on Etzler<sup>41</sup>—or, if they mentioned him at all, were only able to consult his published work (usually the *Paradise*), and therefore knew nothing of the experiments, political movement and daring (mis)adventures his writings instigated, treating him instead as just one more unheeded author of a purely speculative utopia, of which there are plenty already. A scant selection of Etzler's published works was now the only substantial non-archival resource available to utopian researchers, and more often than not, even these specialists discovered Etzler by serendipity rather than citation, picking up the tantalising trail implied by the extraordinary claims of the *Paradise* only to follow it into a scholastic dead-end.

An early example of this type of isolated rediscovery may be found in an 1863 number of *Philobiblion* (a journal dedicated to the curation of 'Rare, Curious, and Valuable Old Books'), in which an initialized correspondent, "H.", is fascinated by the "ingenious" mechanical innovations

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 13 [emphasis in original].

<sup>40</sup> MacDonald's handwritten Etzler notes currently reside in Box 2, Folder 65 (ref: GEN/MSS/1394) of his eponymous collection at Yale's Beinecke Rare Manuscript Library. As far as I can tell, Stoll and I are the only two researchers in the intervening 150 years to have laid eyes on them. I am grateful to June Can of the Yale Beinecke staff for her assistance in accessing the relevant material during my research for this thesis.

<sup>41</sup> Gregory Claeys lists a few of these in 'John Adolphus Etzler, Technological Utopianism, and British Socialism: The Tropical Emigration Society's Venezuelan Mission and its Social Context, 1833–1848', *English Historical Review* 101, no. 399 (1986): 351, n. 1.

disclosed by his recently obtained 1836-edition *Paradise*. Even at this early period, the intuition that Etzler's ideas suffer an unduly meagre posterity is evident: H. is astonished that despite his enthusiasm for "the histories of those men who sought by their lives 'to leave this old world better than they found it'", he has "never before heard of Mr. Etzler or his book".<sup>42</sup> Frustratingly, his research into Etzler is fated to begin and end with the *Paradise*; H. concludes by imploring his fellow correspondents (presumably without success) for "any further information concerning Mr. Etzler's life or labo[u]rs".<sup>43</sup> Similar pleas by seekers of Etzler are scattered elsewhere. For instance, in 1851 the editors of *Scientific American* replied to unreprinted correspondence from a "W. S. of Ohio" with the matter-of-fact information that "Mr. John A. Etzler resided in Philadelphia at the time his patent was issued".<sup>44</sup> It is unclear whether this research bore more fruit than that of H., but in any case, the totalled efforts of would-be Etzlerologists in the latter half of the nineteenth century were insufficient to repair the historiographic damage already sustained.

The general silence of the late-nineteenth century about movement Etzlerism all but eradicated it from the historical record. As the lives of the last individuals who witnessed the exploits of the Tropical Emigration Society and earlier Etzlerist groups came to an end and the new century approached, *no published scholarship* recorded the existence of the TES or the earlier Cincinnati Etzlerist Mutual Aid group,<sup>45</sup> and very few sources recorded even the existence of Etzler.<sup>46</sup>

### Routes of Survival in Modern Scholarship: Thoreau Literature

Of all Etzler's direct interlocuters, Henry David Thoreau—who published a withering review of the second edition *Paradise* in 1843,<sup>47</sup> his only known interaction with Etzler—receives perhaps the most generous helping of present-day notoriety. The review and material associated with it were compiled

<sup>42</sup> H., 'The Paradise within the Reach of All Men [&c.]', *Philobiblion* 2, no. 14 (February 1863): 40–41.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>44</sup> 'To Correspondents', *Scientific American* 6, no. 37 (31 May 1851): 295.

<sup>45</sup> As far as I can tell, I am the first Etzler researcher to know anything of the latter group since the mid-nineteenth century; see subsections 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1 of this thesis for my novel reconstruction of its history from archival German-language periodical literature of the period. Its existence and activities were missed by Brostowin, upon whose work virtually all late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century Etzler research depended heavily for information on Etzler's career prior to the 1840s. See Patrick Ronald Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler: Scientific-Utopian during the 1830's and 1840's' (PhD thesis, New York University, 1969). For a more in-depth discussion of the errors which precluded Brostowin's discovery of this group and their experiments, see chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>46</sup> A handful of notable exceptions to this rule are discussed under separate subheadings below, namely the Thoreau literature, the Roebling literature, and the 'Atzlar' (steam-agriculture) literature. These three lineages of scholarship, mutually unknown to one another and derived from highly restricted and in some cases actually corrupted sourcebases, each preserved their own murky approximation of Etzler across the centuries in a manner akin to island miniaturisation and island gigantism in natural history: without augmentation by any new primary evidence and without interbreeding with one another, these three isolated notions of Etzler evolved in different directions, assuming bizarre new forms dissimilar to their historical ancestor.

<sup>47</sup> Henry David Thoreau, 'Paradise (to be) Regained', *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 13, no. 65 (November 1843): 451–63.

into many<sup>48</sup> posthumous collections and bibliographies of Thoreau's work, with the result that an outsize proportion of individual concordances of Etzler's name in twentieth-century academic literature are from contributors whose sole interest in (and knowledge of) Etzler is subordinate to the expression of Thoreau's own opinions in his review of the *Paradise*. Thoreau included his own (surreptitiously edited)<sup>49</sup> extracts of the *Paradise* within the body of the review, so in many cases, it is quite conceivable that Thoreau scholars have not found it necessary to so much as lay eyes on a copy of the original, much less discover anything else about its author.<sup>50</sup> The extent of Thoreau's butchery of the text is extreme, deliberate and motivated by a desire to portray Etzler in the worst possible light. Wendell Glick capably summarises the editorial vandalism which took place:

Throughout the review [...] his alteration Etzler's text continues. Sentences and portions of sentences are lifted out of context and transplanted into paragraphs from which originally they were separated by many pages. New paragraphs are arbitrarily constituted from excerpts drawn from widely separated sections of Etzler's book. Deletions are made with no indication of ellipsis. Thoreau gives the distinct impression that he was more interested in establishing a thesis of his own than in reviewing the book of another.<sup>51</sup>

An almost universal characteristic of the Etzler-Thoreau subliteration is that it is inevitably Thoreau's manipulated extracts, rather than Etzler's original, which form the contributors' entire basis for secondary reception of Etzler. By sheer quantity<sup>52</sup> this twentieth-century subliteration is one of the most abundant sources of incidental scholarly reference to Etzler, but there is little to say about it or take from it as a direct historian of Etzler: latter-day scholars of Thoreau are more interested in

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<sup>48</sup> E.g., H. S. Salt, ed., *Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers by Henry David Thoreau* (S. Sonnenschein & Company, 1890), 91–114; F. B. Sanborn, 'The Emerson-Thoreau Correspondence', *Atlantic Monthly*, no. 69 (May 1892): 577–96; Francis H. Allen, *A Bibliography of Henry David Thoreau* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908), 69; Kenneth Walter Cameron, ed., *Over Thoreau's Desk: New Correspondence 1838–1861, Edited with Notes and an Index* (Hertford, NC: Transcendental Books, 1965), 10, 70 [Etzler's middle name is misrendered 'Adelphus' here]; Jeffrey S. Cramer, ed., *Henry David Thoreau Essays: A Fully Annotated Edition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> For a summary of Thoreau's corruptions of Etzler's original text in service of his damning review of the *Paradise*, see Wendell Glick, 'Thoreau's Use of His Sources', *The New England Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1971): 101–9; Douglas A. Noverr, 'A Note on Wendell Glick's "Thoreau's Use of His Sources"', *The New England Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1971): 475–77.

<sup>50</sup> A notable exception is Lynn Badia, "'A Transcendentalism in Mechanics': Henry David Thoreau's Critique of a Free Energy Utopia", *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 36, no. 5 (20 October 2014): 405–19. Badia consults Stoll's *Great Delusion* for further information on Etzler, but she reproduces his uncharitable analysis without interrogating it, and, like her forbears in the Etzler-Thoreau literature, appears to work from Thoreau's edited extracts as opposed to Etzler's original in discussing the *Paradise*.

<sup>51</sup> Glick, 'Thoreau's Use of His Sources', 104.

<sup>52</sup> E.g., Henry Seidel Canby, 'Thoreau in Search of a Public', *The American Scholar* 8, no. 4 (1939): 431–44; Wendell Glick, 'Thoreau and the "Herald of Freedom"', *The New England Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1949): 193–204; Buford Jones, "'The Hall of Fantasy" and the Early Hawthorne-Thoreau Relationship', *PMLA* 83, no. 5 (1968): 1429–38; Steven Fink, 'Building America: Henry Thoreau and the American Home', *Prospects* 11 (October 1986): 326–65; Leon E. Trachtman, 'Etzler's Paradise Seen Through Thoreau's Eyes', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 10, no. 5–6 (November 1990): 298–300; James Moran, 'Thoreau's "Paradise To Be Regained"', *Philosophy Now* 70 (2008): 6–7; David B. Raymond, 'Henry David Thoreau and the American Work Ethic', *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* 17 (2009): 137–56.

what his review of the *Paradise* reveals about Thoreau's literary, aesthetic and philosophical thought, so have typically not ventured far beyond Thoreau's own words (and his unfaithful representation of Etzler's) to glean external information about the target of his derision. Moreover, since Thoreau's *only* exposure to Etzler was his review copy of the second edition *Paradise*—there is no evidence that he knew anything else of Etzler's life and career before or afterwards—later scholars who arrive at Etzler via Thoreau are invariably unaware that *any* political movement organised on an Etzlerist basis even existed in reality, much less that it numbered in the thousands, built the machines, went to the Tropics, was preceded and proceeded by numerous earlier and later attempts, and so on.

I have found it useful to refer directly to Thoreau's *Paradise* review at a few points in this thesis, but should make explicit before doing so that my comparatively minimal engagement with Thoreau's secondary commentators is not the result of negligence; it owes itself principally to their relative disinterest in, and ignorance of, the particulars of Etzler's life and thought.

#### Routes of Survival in Modern Scholarship: Roebling Literature

John Augustus Roebling, who would go on to become the principal architect of New York's Brooklyn Bridge, emigrated to the United States in 1831 as one of four directors of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*, the other three being Etzler, Frederick Christopher Dachroeden, and Henry Harseim. The scheme was a partial success: the travellers arrived safely, but the plan of settlement was not carried out. On arrival in the US, the 200 colonists of the MG had intended to create a proto-socialistic intentional community along the lines of Robert Owen's New Harmony, but Roebling and his brother Carl formed a small splinter faction against the main group and bought vast private estates for themselves instead, on the site that would eventually become Saxonburg, PA.<sup>53</sup> Roebling then made a fortune as an industrial capitalist through his ownership of a company that manufactured wire rope. The MG scheme was significant enough to have a few of its details recorded in a range of contemporaneous German-language literature concerning emigration schemes generally,<sup>54</sup> some of which survives to the present.

However, the existence of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* remained largely unknown in the Anglophone world until the early twentieth century, when posthumous interest in the figure of John Augustus Roebling took off in the United States, thanks in large part to a comprehensive history of

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<sup>53</sup> Roebling's son Washington gives an unsurprisingly sympathetic early English-language account of the founding of this enclave in Col. Washington A. Roebling, *Early History of Saxonburg* (Saxonburg, PA: Saxonburg Historical and Restoration Commission, 1924 [1975 reprint]).

<sup>54</sup> E.g., Karl Nicolaus Röding, *Columbus: Amerikanische Miscellen*, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Hoffman & Campe, 1830), 446–47; Ernst Ludwig Brauns, *Amerika und die Moderne Völkerwanderung: Nebst einer Darstellung der Gegenwärtig zu Ökonomie—Economy—am Ohio Angesiedelten Harmonie-Gesellschaft, und einem Kupfer: Georg Rapp, Leiter der Harmonie-Gesellschaft, Vorstellend* (Potsdam: H. Vogler, 1833), 293–94.



Roebing's family dynasty by Hamilton Schuyler.<sup>55</sup> This adoring biography, commissioned by the Roebings themselves, made (interested) use of extensive primary source material courtesy of its patrons.<sup>56</sup> In the years that followed, Schuyler's work would go on to spawn successive generations of increasingly fabulous and adulatory accounts of Roebing's emigration,<sup>57</sup> polluting objective recollection of Etzler's role in the scheme beyond recognition.

Since an entire section of my thesis is dedicated to unravelling fact from fiction in connection with this substantial and error-riddled subliterate, I will not expatiate on it further here for fear of being too prolix, but instead direct my reader's attention to Chapter Three (in Part Two), in which I subject the many indulgences of the Roebing literature to an exacting tribunal of primary evidence before supplying my own reconstructed account of events.

### Routes of Survival in Modern Scholarship: "Atzlar of America", and Other Atzlar

A parallel set of incidental references to Etzler solely in connection with his innovations in agricultural technology—without any apparent comprehension of their utopian intent—is scattered across the scientific, technical and literary journals posterior to his career, and persists well into the twentieth century.

Thomas Atkins, an engineer who worked with Etzler and the TES on the 1845 satellite prototype destined for Venezuela, continued to work independently on problems of agricultural automation during the 1850s.<sup>58</sup> As a result of imperfectly minuted comments given by him about the machine's history before a meeting of the Society of Arts in 1856, the muddled apparition of "J. A. Atzlar [sic], of America",<sup>59</sup> entirely voided of its utopian substance, was granted banal apotheosis as an undifferentiated member of various surname pantheons<sup>60</sup> denoting the countless incremental modifications to farm equipment which together comprised the mechanical transformation of mid-

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<sup>55</sup> Hamilton Schuyler, *The Roebings: A Century of Engineers, Bridge-Builders and Industrialists, the Story of Three Generations of an Illustrious Family, 1831–1931* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931).

<sup>56</sup> Including in particular the elder Roebing's diary of the trip: Johann August Röbling, *Tagebuch meiner Reise von Mühlhausen in Thüringen über Bremen nach den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika im Jahre 1831, geschrieben für meine Freunde* (Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1831 [2006 reprint]).

<sup>57</sup> E.g., Kathryn E. Harrod, *Master Bridge Builders: the Story of the Roebings* (New York, NY: Julian Messner, Inc., 1958); Alan Zelick Trachtenberg, 'Brooklyn Bridge, Fact and Symbol (1869–1930): A Study of an American Monument' (PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 1962); Alan Zelick Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); David McCulloch, *The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1972); Sharon Reier, *The Bridges of New York* (New York, NY: Quadrant Press, 1977); Margaret Lattimer, Brooke Hindle & Melvin Kranzberg (eds.) *Bridge to the Future: A Centennial Celebration of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York, NY: New York Academy of Sciences, 1984); Barbara G. Mensch, *In the Shadow of Genius: The Brooklyn Bridge and Its Creators* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2018), etc.

<sup>58</sup> His 1854 patent, for example, is a realisation of Etzler's own 1833 plan for the automatic fertilisation of crops onboard the Floating Islands and in the mainland botanical gardens of the *Paradise* (PWR 1a, 68). See Thomas Atkins, 'Apparatus for the Underground Circulation of Fluid Manure, &c.', British patent no. 1781, 16 August 1854.

<sup>59</sup> See 'Discussion', *Journal of the Society of Arts* 4, no. 167 (1 February 1856): 176.

<sup>60</sup> E.g., 'Steam Culture, as Exemplified at the Chelmsford Meeting', *Farmer's Magazine* 45, no. 4 (October 1856): 314.

nineteenth-century capitalist agriculture. This depoliticised ‘Atzlar’ continued to haunt much later potted histories of agricultural mechanisation<sup>61</sup> in a state of total detachment from its historical identity, invisible to all nineteenth- and twentieth-century researchers of utopianism; conversely disguised as unremarkable to all researchers of agricultural machinery. Only the exhaustive search-and-comparison capabilities of contemporary digital research methods have privileged me as the first to exorcise ‘Atzlar’ by reuniting this lonely shade with its more vibrant mortal reality.

Another latter-day ‘Atzlar’, however, appears in the as-yet untranslated 1967 monograph *العلاقات العمالية الانسانية في المجتمع الحديث* [al-‘*Alāqāt al-‘Ummālīyah al-Insānīyah fī al-Mujtama‘ al-Hadīth*, i.e., ‘Human Labour Relations in Modern Society’]<sup>62</sup> by the Egyptian political economist Labīb Sa‘īd, though this ‘Atzlarisation’ incident appears to have arisen independently from the preceding Anglophone errata as a consequence of Sa‘īd’s necessarily approximate transliteration of Etzler’s surname into (and then back from) the available phonetics of the Arabic *abjad*. Regrettably, a combination of the late discovery of the source and my inadequate facility with the Arabic language preclude useful discussion of Sa‘īd’s treatment of Etzler in this thesis, though I hope this discovery may aid in future research on the reception of Etzlerism in the Arabic-speaking world by those with the requisite time and capacities.

### Paradise out of Reach: The Oblivion of the Early Twentieth Century

Outside of the above-named exceptions, virtually<sup>63</sup> no memory of Etzler survived into the first decades of the twentieth century. Bernard Devoto’s 1936 article about Etzler in *Harper’s Weekly*<sup>64</sup> is a good example of the completeness of Etzler’s obscurity at the 100-year point: like the rest of his peers, Devoto knows nothing of Etzler beyond the fact that he wrote the *Paradise*. His only available route of secondary analysis is Henry David Thoreau, and his conclusions are as derisory as might be expected as a result.

Perhaps in response to Devoto’s article, sporadic interest in Etzler was shown again by a handful of commentators in the 1940s, although the investigations do not seem to have gone very far in recovering him. He receives a few paragraphs in the second volume of Dorfmann’s *Economic Mind in American Civilization*,<sup>65</sup> and Gertrude Eagle apparently had enough material on him for a master’s

<sup>61</sup> E.g., Colin Tyler, *Digging by Steam: A History of Steam Cultivation by Means of the Application of Steam Power to the Fork, Mattock and Similar Implements* (Model & Allied Publications, 1977), 166.

<sup>62</sup> Labīb Sa‘īd, *العلاقات العمالية الانسانية في المجتمع الحديث* (Cairo: M. al-Sa‘ādah, 1967), 160.

<sup>63</sup> There are a handful of exceptions I have found which do not fall into the three categories outlined above, but these are only passing repetitions of the most rudimentary bibliographical information. See e.g., John Spargo, *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (London: Macmillan, 1906), 227; Anton Menger, *The Right to the Whole Produce of Labour: The Origin and Development of the Theory of Labour’s Claim to the Whole Product of Industry* (London: Macmillan, 1899), 239–240.

<sup>64</sup> Bernard DeVoto, ‘What the Next Hour Holds’, *Harper’s Weekly Magazine*, no. 173 (1 June 1936): 109–13.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization 1606–1865*, vol. 2 (Viking Press, 1946), 681–84.

thesis in 1943,<sup>66</sup> though I was unable to locate an extant copy.

In the 1950s, W. H. G. Armytage published an article<sup>67</sup> disclosing certain rediscoveries about Etzler. Such had been the silence about Etzler (except in the limited spheres I have described above) that Armytage was at this point working virtually from scratch to re-establish basic details of his life and works. He was the first in almost a century to identify the person of Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer as a lead in understanding what happened, though he mixed up some detail (he placed Etzler's arrival in Britain three years too early<sup>68</sup>—in fact Etzler was at Peace Union Commune with the ghost-hunting cleric Andreas Bernardus Smolnikar at this time)<sup>69</sup>—and although Armytage correctly spotted James [Hadden] Young<sup>70</sup> as a witness to an Etzlerist experiment, he misapprehended this to mean that Etzler had travelled to France,<sup>71</sup> not realising that it was instead Young who had remained in England (without Etzler) during the first half of the 1840s and would shortly become a leading Etzlerist on the Scientific Committee of the TES. The most significant missing piece of the puzzle for Armytage was that he incredibly had no knowledge of the TES expedition at all—"From then [1845] on, Etzler vanishes"<sup>72</sup>—Armytage's blind spot here is testament to the indispensability of the *Morning Star* corpus to understanding the fullest history of Etzlerism. However, it is fair to say that Armytage's recovery work laid substantial foundations for the period of more complete rediscovery that would follow. For the first time since the nineteenth century, elements of Etzler's life such as Ham Common,<sup>73</sup> his partnerships with Stollmeyer<sup>74</sup> and Young,<sup>75</sup> were, albeit imperfectly, recognised as a means to generate new evidence for subsequent Etzler-seekers. Armytage is also notable for his reintroduction of DEP, TVJAE, and JAEMS into Etzler's known bibliography—texts that went unknown and undiscussed for a century prior—although JAEMS dropped back out of view again in the 1960s when Brostowin mistook it for a reprint of NWOMS.<sup>76</sup>

### Modern Interpreters of Etzlerism

The grander rediscoveries of the later twentieth century would transform the study of Etzlerism and lay in place the findings, assumptions and in some cases pitfalls that continue to define the state of

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<sup>66</sup> Gertrude Eagle, 'John Adolphus Etzler and His Plan for Paradise' (MA thesis, University of Miami, 1943).

<sup>67</sup> W. H. G. Armytage, 'Technology and Utopianism: J. A. Etzler in England 1840–44', *Annals of Science* 11, no. 2 (1955): 129–36.; republished the following year as W. H. G. Armytage, 'J. A. Etzler, an American Utopist', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 16, no. 1 (1956): 83–88.

<sup>68</sup> Armytage, 'Technology and Utopianism', 131.

<sup>69</sup> See section 6.4 of my thesis for coverage of this unusual episode in an already unusual life.

<sup>70</sup> See especially subsection 6.3 for information on Young.

<sup>71</sup> Armytage, 'Technology and Utopianism', 132.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>73</sup> See my subsection 7.1.

<sup>74</sup> subsection 6.1.

<sup>75</sup> subsection 6.3.

<sup>76</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 182.

the field today.

This process indisputably began with Brostowin, whom Claeys reckoned as “Etzler’s most careful interpreter”<sup>77</sup>—an assessment I intend to robustly test in my own thesis—but whatever else I may say about Brostowin’s work later on, it must be acknowledged that all who came after him in producing literature about Etzler owe him a tremendous debt of recognition for the scale and importance of his discoveries, and it was only under his impetus that serious study of Etzlerism as a movement (as opposed to merely of Etzler, the author of an unusual text) became possible again.

Brostowin, then a member of the English Department at Nassau Community College, NY, began his quest for Etzler as did some of his forbears—A. J. Macdonald, H. of the 1863 *Philobiblion*, and perhaps many others—with a curious request for miscellaneous ephemera about the author of the *Paradise*.<sup>78</sup> His results, four years later, were greater than the combined efforts of all those before him: he had reacquired the *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression*!, and *People’s Economist*; some 435 densely-composited pages of periodical grey literature disclosing the entire history of the Tropical Emigration Society. For the first time in perhaps a century it was recognised that not only had Etzler travelled to Trinidad, Venezuela and Demerara between 1845 and 1846, but so had over 200 British Etzlerists with the intention of building the *Structure for which We Have No Names Yet* (of PWR2, 68) in the lush and fertile countryside of South America, and of attending it with a fleet of satellites. There was yet more: these 200 were a tiny fraction of the thousands who had joined the Etzlerist body in Britain and were eagerly awaiting voluntary transportation aboard the mechanised floating islands the Society intended to build in short order to alleviate the exorbitant cost of traditional passenger shipping. A detachment of the colonists had departed too early for South America; several had died there; there were mutinies, intrigues, bitter recriminations on both sides of the Atlantic. The Etzlerists had constructed a naval automaton which sank dramatically in the Thames. They had built a satellite and tested its trundling orbit in the Oxfordshire countryside. Not a shred of any of this had been known to a single person for almost a hundred years; it must have been a thrilling find.

In addition to the main haul, for which Brostowin justly earned his doctorate, he accomplished some significant early recoveries as well. Working with the historian Karl J. Arndt,<sup>79</sup> he published new primary evidence of Etzler’s movements in the 1830s, unearthing some correspondence relevant to the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* phase of Etzler’s career.<sup>80</sup> I believe Brostowin’s interpretation of this source, in which he pits Roebeling the ‘pragmatist’ against Etzler the ‘prophet’, is fundamentally flawed. It permeates the account he gives of this period in his thesis as well, and I will offer some

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<sup>77</sup> Claeys, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 399.

<sup>78</sup> ‘News’, *Isis* 56, no. 2 (1965): 212.

<sup>79</sup> Karl J. R. Arndt and Patrick R. Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets: George Rapp and John A. Roebeling versus J. A. Etzler and Count Leon’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 52, no. 1 (January 1969): 27.

<sup>80</sup> See my Chapter 3 for some revisions to the standard retelling of this period.

frank rebuttals of his approach and findings when I treat the same material in Chapter Three. Nonetheless, Brostowin's publication of this correspondence was, if nothing else, an asset to future Etzler researchers.

Brostowin's main contribution to Etzlerology, his thesis, gave rise to a modest renaissance in the field. In 1977, Joel Nydahl of New York University published the first attempt at a *Collected Works of John Adolphus Etzler*,<sup>81</sup> together with an introductory chapter whose debt to Brostowin's insights is obvious. In Nydahl's introduction we see the first condensed summary of Brostowin's understanding of the *Morning Star* corpus in published form (Brostowin does not appear to have pursued a book-of-the-thesis, so for many non-scholarly readers, Nydahl's introduction was probably definitive until the publication of Stoll's *Great Delusion* in 2008). Nydahl's summary is polished and concise, but the information is second-hand: Brostowin's interpretation is already cooked into it, so anything that Brostowin got wrong (of which, regrettably, much), Nydahl does too. Minor errors, like Brostowin's misidentification of JAEMS as a second edition of NWOMS, solidify into concretised forms (for instance, in Nydahl, TVJAE and ETW are back to being "the last published works [Etzler] would produce" despite the rediscovery of later texts by Armytage two decades before).

The selection in general is very limited—6 unique items out of a potential 25 or so—and facsimiles of PWR1a/b are used as the definitive edition of the *Paradise*, obscuring the rich subsequent history of the text.

More significantly, some damning evaluations of Etzler creep in—the reader learns of "Etzler's authoritarian turn of mind", "bolstered by his Hegelian philosophy", how he was "a prophet who considered himself a scientist" and various other Brostowinisms. I will refrain here from a full treatment since I return amply to these themes in Chapter Three.

It was at around this time that the extant copies of the *Morning Star* were first committed to microform by Harvester Press. I have assumed that this was in consequence of their rediscovery by Brostowin, although I am unaware of the exact custodial history of the corpus. In any case, Brostowin's and Nydahl's digests enabled new generations of scholar to incorporate Etzler more readily into general discussions of utopias, without having to agonizingly extrapolate from the complex, tedious and in places even contradictory primary evidence. By permitting this through their work they partly mended the great injury that was done to Etzlerism by John Humphrey Noyes' chauvinistic 1870 excision of Etzler's unacceptably '*foreign*' scheme from the MacDonald notes. By a pleasing coincidence, this happened almost exactly on the centenary of the expungement. If the 1870s and 80s were something of a death-knell for Etzler scholarship, the 1970s and 80s were to be its revival.

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<sup>81</sup> Joel Nydahl, ed., *The Collected Works of John Adolphus Etzler: Facsimile Reproductions* (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977).

Since Brostowin's thesis was never turned into a monograph, Etzlerism could yet have remained shrouded in a murkier obscurity, were it not for Claeys' contribution to "amending popular ignorance of Etzler's views",<sup>82</sup> initially through a set of articles published in the 1980s,<sup>83</sup> and thereafter, since he would go on to become one of the great latter-day cataloguists of nineteenth-century utopias, Claeys' command of Etzlerist history would virtually guarantee that the subject was never again excluded from a digest of utopias worthy of the name.<sup>84</sup> His 1986 articles would also provide the necessary context to properly understand the rise of British Etzlerism specifically; Brostowin had viewed Etzler principally through a lens trained on American cultural and literary phenomena, which hampered his understanding of the unique interplay of chartist, Owenite and other British radical currents that conspired to permit the explosive success of the Tropical Emigration Society in mid-40s Britain.<sup>85</sup>

Claeys was also the first modern scholar of utopias to recognise the extraordinary foresight Etzler possessed for discerning so early the eventual "necessity of permanent, natural sources of energy instead of wood or coal", and also for the subtlety of thought "to look back and suggest the retention of earlier forms of technology, such as the windmill, while simultaneously inventing others vastly dissimilar from any then existing".<sup>86</sup>

From this point forth, largely as a result of Brostowin's rediscovery and Claeys' promulgation, Etzler would begin to put in far more reliable cameo appearances in monographs treating utopian themes.<sup>87</sup> A published monograph-length treatment dealing exclusively with movement Etzlerism or with Etzler himself was not yet forthcoming, however, until the 2008 publication of Steven Stoll's *The Great Delusion*, which seeks to establish Etzlerism as a cautionary tale about a porously-defined 'utopianism' of infinite growth which Stoll imputes as readily to Etzler as he does to Alan Greenspan<sup>88</sup> (never mind that Etzler desired the abolition of money) and this project—to warn against the insatiate and unsustainable logic of capitalist financial growth by insisting that Etzler is like a capitalist and then brutalizing Etzler—guides the entire course of the book. Stoll reproduces many of Brostowin's most significant interpretative and factual errors, but also introduces a few entirely his own.

At face value, to a reader learning about Etzler for the first time, *The Great Delusion* takes on the appearance of a conscientious and diligently-researched attempt to restore a lost history in a popularly digestible format through the expert interpretation and distillation of obscure source material. Citation

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<sup>82</sup> Claeys, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 351.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., but see also Gregory Claeys, 'Ecology and Technology in Early Nineteenth Century American Utopianism: A Note on John Adolphus Etzler', *Science & Society* 50, no. 2 (1986): 219–25.

<sup>84</sup> E.g., Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent (eds.) *The Utopia Reader* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999), 205.

<sup>85</sup> See Claeys, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 372.

<sup>86</sup> Claeys, 'Ecology and Technology', 221.

<sup>87</sup> E.g., Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cornell University Press, 1991); Howard P. Segal, *Utopias: A Brief History from Ancient Writings to Virtual Communities* (John Wiley & Sons, 2012); &c.

<sup>88</sup> *Great Delusion*, 123.

of the *Morning Star* corpus abounds (albeit unpaginated) in the endnotes, creating the impression of rigorous evidence. However, all of this belies the actual quality of the scholarship, which since my engagement with the *Morning Star* microfilms for myself, I have found to contain many gross distortions of fact and wilful misrepresentations of events, calculated to sufficiently obfuscate and disfigure the historical Etzler that the intellectually lazy association of his ideas with those of modern finance capitalists can be sustained to an unfamiliar reader without too much strain.

If I seem to be coming down rather hard on Stoll for this, it is because his is currently the *only* published monograph which purports to communicate a faithful non-fiction treatment of the Etzlerist movement and of Etzler's career more generally. For this reason, and especially because until now nobody has had the time, resources and inclination to properly avail themselves of the primary evidence, *The Great Delusion* enjoys widespread, unchallenged acknowledgement as a serious contribution to the subject, even in far more sober histories which have reason to mention Etzlerism,<sup>89</sup> and outside of these is widely relied upon as entirely authoritative,<sup>90</sup> resulting in the ceaseless replication and amplification of Stoll's half-truths, confusions and outright fabrications.<sup>91</sup>

A competent return to primary evidence is the only remedy. The principal archival sources indispensable to fruitfully studying the TES and Etzlerism more generally throughout the course of its existence are as follows:

The most important are of course the two volumes of *Morning Star; or, Herald of Progression* (from 1 no. 20 retitled as *Morning Star; and People's Economist*, which title it retains through the rest of its run). The corpus is stored on microfilm at the British Library. For my analysis of the (in)completeness of the preservation of the *Star*, see my relevant appendices. It ran between December 1844 and January 1847.

After the collapse of the *Star*, further news of the TES was carried for several months by arrangement with James 'Bronterre' O'Brien, an Etzler admirer and the editor of the *National Reformer, and Manx Weekly Review of Foreign Affairs*. The relevant bulletins occur on an almost weekly basis between nos. 94 (6 February 1847) and 110 (29 May 1847).

Other periodical literature supplies crucial clues about other periods of Etzler's career. The *New Age, Concordium Gazette, & Temperance Advocate*—a newsletter of the Ham Common Concordium experimental community in Surrey—is extremely useful since it covers the period during which Regina and John Etzler lodged there (for much of 1844) immediately after their wedding (and John's

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<sup>89</sup> E.g., Gregory, *Poetry and the Politics*, 62.

<sup>90</sup> E.g., Alexis Madrigal, *Powering the Dream: The History and Promise of Green Technology* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2011), 14.

<sup>91</sup> Robert Antoni's novel *As Flies to Whatless Boys* (Brooklyn, NY: Akashic, 2013) is an excellent example of the fruits of Stoll's labour. The Etzler of Antoni's novel is a cowardly, racist megalomaniac drawn straight from Stoll's imagination, and bears little resemblance to the real thing. See my full discussion of this chain of interpretation in subsection 5.3).

move to Britain following the Warren satellite trial).

Phalansterian/Fourierist periodical literature is also very useful for tracking both Etzler's movements and the reception of his ideas by an allied movement. Especially important is Hugh Doherty's *London Phalanx*, which details his own, James Hadden Young's and Stollmeyer's Etzlerist experimentation in Britain between 1840 and 1842, with Etzler himself still in the US. Albert Brisbane's New York *Phalanx* is also useful—Etzler lodged with (or at least near to) him in the run up to the British phase of his career, notwithstanding his consultancy period in Warren.

The chartist *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* provides one of the most quantitatively significant resources for the interpretation of British Etzlerism. Of particular importance are AAP and NSL1/2/3 (see my annotated bibliography of Appendix 1). Stollmeyer is also an extensive correspondent to the *Northern Star* during his British phase, and he provides a spirited and comprehensive defense of Etzlerist principles over the course of seven sequential essays all published within *Northern Star* 6, between nos. 297 and 310.<sup>92</sup> Stollmeyer's 'Paradise Letters I–VII' as I have been calling them in my head whilst writing this thesis are very likely the largest and most sophisticated exposition of Etzlerism written by anyone besides Etzler himself, though to my knowledge nobody has treated them particularly systematically in the Etzler literature. I will recount and evaluate some of their contents in Chapter Six of this thesis, although they are probably deserving of much more detailed analysis in their own right by another than myself. If I were ever to edit a *Selected Writings of the Etzlerists* or similar, this would undoubtedly be one of its most significant entries.

Other notable radical periodicals one can consult to discover Etzler's whereabouts, activities and reception at various times include Holyoake's *Movement and Anti-Persecution Gazette*, 'Shepherd' Smith's *Family Herald* (for a time composited by the Etzlerist James Hadden Young using his newly-invented keyboard), and of course Owen's *New Moral World*, which is particularly useful in reconstructing 'Early' Etzlerism (see for example my subsection 5.1).

For the American side of things, Channing's *Present* and the *Harbinger* of Brook Farm Phalanx are useful supplementary resources.

Most researchers of Etzler will already be familiar with most if not all of the above—however, I would add for the benefit of subsequent researchers that I have discovered substantial German-language periodical Etzler materials from the German expatriate communities of North America, especially in the 1830s. As far as I can tell, I am the first to unearth these, so for the benefit of a futurity I may never see, let it be known that the publications I have had the most luck with were the

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<sup>92</sup> Here is the full sequence: Letter I: NS 6, no. 297 (22 July 1843): 3; Letter II: NS 6, no. 298 (29 July 1843): 7; Letter III: NS 6, no. 300 (12 August 1843): 3; Letter IV: NS 6, no. 303 (2 September 1843): 4; Letter V: NS 6, no. 304 (9 September 1843): 7; Letter VI: NS 6, no. 305 (16 September 1843): 7; Letter VII: NS 6, no. 310 (21 October 1843): 2.



*Vaterlandsfreund und Westliche Beobachter* [Canton, OH] and *Deutsche Pionier* [Cincinnati, OH].

I deeply regret that I have been unable to locate extant copies of the *Pittsburgher Beobachter*, a German-language newspaper which Etzler founded and edited between 1831 and 1834 (see my subsection 4.1). Whoever manages to dig that up will doubtless have found an absolute trove of material on ‘Early’ Etzlerism; it would be one of the most significant rediscoveries of Etzler material since the *Morning Star*.

In terms of early European reception of Etzler, it may additionally benefit readers of German to know that the editors of the *Bohemia* [Prague], *Blätter für Literarische Unterhaltung* [Leipzig], and *Beiblatt der Sundine* [Straslund] kept their fingers generally on the pulse of Etzlerism during the 1830s and 1840s. Occasional French reception of Etzler can, expectably, be found in *La Phalange* and in Victor Considerant’s *La Démocratie Pacifique*.

The rest are for the most part too multifarious and inconsequential to recount here without risking boredom on the part of the reader—consult my bibliography for less significant periodical titles whose evidence appears incidentally in this thesis.

#### A Note on Etzler’s Works Themselves

I regard a significant proportion of Etzler’s surviving original works to have been missed, ignored or wrongly considered non-extant by most of the other principal scholars who investigated him; the only prior attempt at a *Collected Works*<sup>93</sup> is by my estimation missing at least 30%<sup>94</sup> of all unique material authored by Etzler. Of the approximately 25 discrete original writings of Etzler which I have identified and used to support my thesis, just six appear in Nydahl’s collection. Brostowin’s command of Etzler’s full corpus is similarly patchy: he mistakes new published material of Etzler’s for re-editions of earlier texts,<sup>95</sup> presumes key texts non-extant when in fact he could have learned of their survival,<sup>96</sup> and takes an unsystematic approach to Etzler’s correspondence which leads him to drastically misinterpret even the primary evidence he already has at his disposal, as will become clearer in my third chapter. Brostowin’s errors and omissions are then taken up and reproduced, often (though not always) in good faith by subsequent scholars of Etzler.

To interrupt their further onward transmission, I provide in Appendix 1 the most complete annotated

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<sup>93</sup> Joel Nydahl, ed., *The Collected Works of John Adolphus Etzler: Facsimile Reproductions* (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977).

<sup>94</sup> I base this approximation on the number of pages of published unique text (whether monograph, periodical or public correspondence) which are unaccounted for in Nydahl’s collection. As a proportion of missing individual titles, the prognosis is much more severe.

<sup>95</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 182.

<sup>96</sup> As I have recounted above, JAEMS was rediscovered as a unique text by Armytage in the 1950s, then ‘undiscovered’ again by Brostowin two decades later when he dismissed it as a second edition of NWOMS, without—it can only be assumed—ever troubling himself to open a copy of it. Its unaccountable exclusion from Nydahl’s collection despite the availability of known surviving copies at the time doubtless owes itself to this slip of Brostowin’s.

bibliography of Etzler's works ever compiled, together with the system of abbreviations I have contrived for it. To avoid further ambiguity of citation, misdating, conflation of texts, and so on, subsequent reference to individual texts and editions of Etzler's work in the thesis will be made using this system—refer to Appendix 1 for the annotations and full bibliographic data I have consolidated about each of Etzler's works, or to the truncated table of abbreviations and corresponding document titles on pages xi–x for quick reference.

It will be observed that except in cases where I am discussing a specific edition of the *Paradise* (hereafter PWR1a/b, PWR2, PWR3a/b, or PWR4), I have favoured the use of the 1836 Brooks 'first British' edition<sup>97</sup> (i.e., PWR2) as a general-purpose edition for much of my referencing. This is not accidental. Though I do not regard it as the most historically significant<sup>98</sup> edition, the decision has been taken purely on the basis that PWR2 is the only English-language edition to make use of continuous pagination; PWR1a/b and PWR3a/b both duplicate their pagination across two parts, which reduces their ease of scholastic use both for the reader and for the author.

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<sup>97</sup> For the bibliographic history of this 'pirate' *Paradise* edition, see subsection 5.1.

<sup>98</sup> To learn why I instead regard PWR3a/b as the most historically valuable edition of the *Paradise* in artefactual terms, see subsection 6.2.

# **Chapter Two**

Welcome to the Future: A  
General Introduction to Etzlerist  
Socio-Mechanical Systems

## 2.1 Satellite State

Even in rapidly industrialising Britain, agricultural labourers still represented between a quarter and a third of the workforce in the 1840s<sup>99</sup>; in most other countries the figure was far higher.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, whilst the productivity of British agricultural labour had certainly increased since the seventeenth century, virtually no actual displacement of living labour by machines had yet taken place,<sup>101</sup> with most increased productivity attributable to superior crop-management strategies such as the famous Norfolk four-course,<sup>102</sup> or to factors like the modest incremental improvement of hand tools and draught equipment.<sup>103</sup> The raw physical effort of massed human beings and draught animals in various states of coercion or captivity remained the prime mover upon which almost all food production ultimately depended; crusts were still eaten in the sweat of brows. In short, the abolition of work was unthinkable, in Etzler's time, without the total mechanisation of agriculture, which had yet to show much sign of taking place at all.

Accordingly, when Etzler came to Britain to promote his ideas there in late 1843, the mechanical flagship of his proposed system, to which many of his other innovations stood in relation as important but nonetheless dependent auxiliaries, was a multi-purpose land management vehicle called the satellite. The machine he devised went through several iterations of prototyping during the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>104</sup> It incorporated, with a rather awkward elegance, the functionalities of several agricultural and construction vehicles which did not yet exist but would in fact be perfected decades or even centuries later. It could perform autonomous ploughing and harrowing,<sup>105</sup> but was also what would today be called a combine harvester, designed to "reap any kind of grain or vegetable, thrash the seed out in the same time, [and] grind it to meal".<sup>106</sup> It was, moreover, a planter, deployable as much for sowing<sup>107</sup> as for tillage and harvest. Beyond the staple tasks of arable farming, satellites were also intended to be retrofittable for more primary land development purposes: they could be

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<sup>99</sup> Stephen Broadberry, Bruce M. S. Campbell & Bas van Leeuwen, 'When did Britain Industrialise? The Sectoral Distribution of the Labour Force and Labour Productivity in Britain, 1381–1851', *Explorations in Economic History* 50, no. 1 (2013): 22.

<sup>100</sup> In the United States for instance, where Etzler spent much of his adult life, around 63% of the 1840 workforce was agricultural. Fully a quarter of all working adults were chattel slaves, of whom the overwhelming majority were engaged in agriculture. See Stanley Lebergott, 'Labor Force and Employment, 1800–1960', in *Output, Employment and Productivity in the United States After 1800*, ed. Dorothy S. Brady et al. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1966), 119.

<sup>101</sup> Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy, 1500–1800*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 121–2.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 116–121.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>104</sup> Since much of the historical evidence for Etzler's pre-satellite designs exists only in German, the construction and failed trial of Etzler's early 1830s satellite precursor, which he dubbed the *Mammuth-Cultivator*, remained wholly unknown to Anglophone researchers of Etzler in the twentieth century. For my recovery of the history of this prototype, see subsection 4.3 of this thesis.

<sup>105</sup> PWR2, 62.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> NWOMS, 17–18.

adapted to become forestry harvesters which would fell trees and process them by sawing into logs or planks,<sup>108</sup> and would also be resorted to for major earthworks and landscaping projects, providing diverse functions such as levelling, excavation, grading and other feats of the genre populated in our own time by the work of bulldozers, backhoes and other similar contraptions. Satellites would “cut canals, ditches, ponds of any size and shape, raise dams, artificial level roads, walls and ramparts”.<sup>109</sup> They would additionally perform a miscellany of stationary quasi-industrial tasks: hammering,<sup>110</sup> notching rocks,<sup>111</sup> raising objects “high upon a particular spot”<sup>112</sup> like a fork-lift truck, and so on.

When Etzler began his efforts to devise an autonomous farming vehicle in the late 1820s, experimental steam cars such as Trevethick’s *Puffing Devil* (1801) and Hancock’s *Infant* (1829) had already tentatively demonstrated the feasibility of non-railed self-propelled vehicles, although the design brief of the satellite differed categorically from these prototypes in a number of fundamental respects.

For one thing, vehicles like *Puffing Devil* and *Infant* were built for carrying passengers and goods along relatively straight level surfaces, they had virtually no off-road capability,<sup>113</sup> and were not generally speaking expected to be brought to bear against the raw materials of nature. Etzler wanted more from his machines. The dominant feature of the satellite chassis in its 1841 design in NWOMS was a “pricked cylinder”<sup>114</sup> at the forewheels: a lugged traction mechanism which was supposed to permit it to better traverse the intrepid terrains implied by its diverse operational portfolio, especially in its forestry and landscaping functions. The application of steam vehicles even to strictly farm-based problems had lagged a few decades behind their use in haulage and passenger transport, so whilst the satellite was still ahead of its time in the specific context of its lighter agricultural functions, it was not outlandishly so. In 1850 Charles Dickens, recounting the historical development of the steam plough (though this was only one of the satellite’s many functions), described the Tropical Emigration Society’s 1845 satellite test as the “first trial [i.e., of a steam plough]”, and credited Etzler as having discovered “a new mechanical principle [...] thought impossible by many scientific engineers”.<sup>115</sup> Regardless of whether Dickens was correct that Etzler’s machine was truly a world-

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 20–21.

<sup>109</sup> PWR2, 61–62.

<sup>110</sup> NWOMS, 19.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 21.

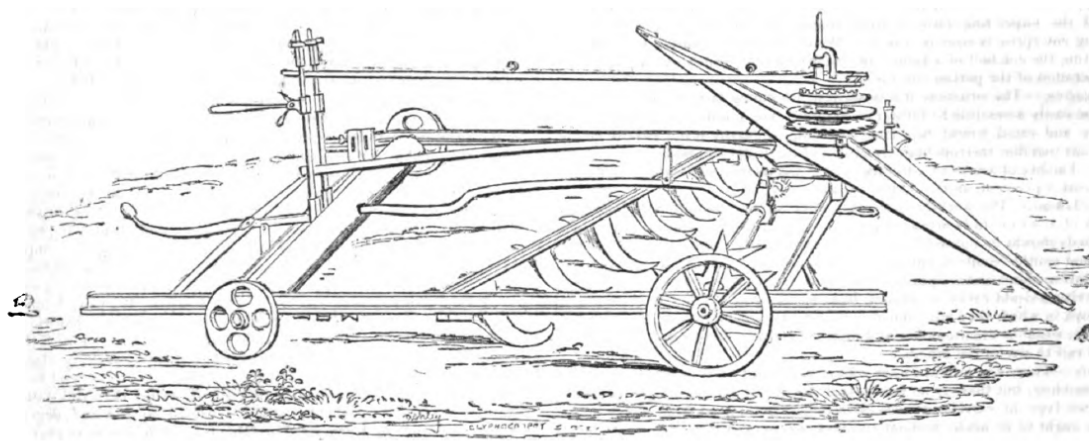
<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>113</sup> Sympathetic accounts of the *Devil*’s performance conceded that it was bested by “a steep and crooked road”. See Francis Trevithick, *Life of Richard Trevithick with an Account of his Inventions*, vol. 1 (London: E. & N. F. Spon, 1872): 120. Hancock’s *Infant*—the first non-railed self-propelled vehicle in history to commercially transport passengers—performed much better, but remained an endemically on-road vehicle, periodically suffering structural damage even from the “severe test” of suboptimally maintained roads. See ‘Mr. Hancock’s Steam-Carriage and ‘Automaton’, and Statement of his Late Traffic Between the Bank and Paddington’, *Mechanics’ Magazine* 25, no. 685 (24 September, 1836): 434–435.

<sup>114</sup> NWOMS, 56–57.

<sup>115</sup> Charles Dickens, ‘The Steam Plough’, *Household Words* 1, no. 26 (21 September, 1850): 605.

first, it certainly prefigured a flurry of agricultural steam experimentation in the 1850s which culminated in the promulgation of the first commercially successful steam plough by John Fowler, a system that indeed emulated certain mechanical principles of the satellite, though this fact is often unacknowledged.<sup>116</sup>



ETZLER'S SATELLITE.

Fig. 2. A satellite as it appears in *Artizan* no. 10 in October 1845, shortly after the Bicester satellite trial. It is likely that this drawing closely reflects the 1845 model's design—the result of over a decade of prototyping by Etzler and his colleagues.

Etzler's satellite was also distinct from other experimental nineteenth-century vehicles in terms of the expressly political significance bestowed on it both by its creator and by its intended end-users. Figures such as Trevithick, Hancock and Fowler, visionary engineers though perhaps they were, also remained at bottom profit-making entrepreneurs, and worked within a framework that presumed a degree of political neutrality: their machines were socio-politically sterile artefacts that resolved the strictly technical problems of their customers, from whom they might reasonably expect handsome pecuniary reward within the existing economic paradigm of Victorian industrial capitalism. Yet from the very beginning, Etzler and the TES activists who would eventually build the satellite consciously imbued the project, and the artefact itself, with profound social and political implications, and made conscious, selective design decisions that were informed by their socio-political commitments. Etzlerists were, in my view, proponents *avant la lettre* of what Murray Bookchin would later call the "liberatory potential of [...] technology",<sup>117</sup> especially as far as the satellite itself was concerned. The

<sup>116</sup> For the commercial success of Fowler's steam ploughs in the late '50s and early '60s, see L. T. C. Rolt, *Great Engineers*. (London: Bell & Sons, 1962): 150–151. Interestingly, Fowler's 1854 steam ploughing experiment, as described on 140 of the same, aped the working principle of the satellite—stationary power transmitted to the farming vehicle via connecting means—but Rolt credits it as an original idea of Fowler's. Rolt's ignorance of the satellite is understandable—as my literature review has shown, by the mid-twentieth century, all knowledge of the Tropical Emigration Society's activities had been lost—so he unsurprisingly, *pace* Dickens, misreported Fowler's 1854 experiment as "the first successful application of steam power to any land process" (Ibid., 140).

<sup>117</sup> Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1986 [1971]), 108.

satellite was not merely a superior piece of industrial equipment, to be bought by wealthy employers and inflicted on an impoverished workforce for the sake of increasing the profitability of private enterprises. It was to be wielded by the poor themselves—since “[a] steam engine works as well for a poor man as for a lord”<sup>118</sup>—in the levelling of existing human social and economic relations. The satellite was to be deployed in the context of a deliberate socialist land colonisation programme that would “let machinery work FOR instead of AGAINST the people”;<sup>119</sup> its designed features were the consequence of activist research. Industrial technologies rolled out by employers, Etzlerists argued, had the potential to gravely harm working people. In branches of production where “machinery has superseded to a great extent human labour”,<sup>120</sup> wrote one *Morning Star* columnist, depredation and misery arose systemically from the fact that “[i]t is against the true principles of the present arrangements of society, to distribute aught to the unfortunate men [sic] who are thus thrown on one side”.<sup>121</sup> Yet under a different set of principles—in which, as Etzler called for, the superabundant output of autonomous machines would be rendered “*gratis*, to be had by every member of the community”,<sup>122</sup> and decoupled from the conditionality of work—fleets of satellites sweeping across communally-held land would appear not as a threat to livelihoods, but as the physical manifestation of humanity’s decisive liberation from toil. The obsolescence of human labour—today referred to as technological unemployment—would be transformed by Etzlerism from a bane into a blessing. The work-based society of industrial capitalism would, under the judicious socialist application of labour-displacing machines, give way to a post-work, post-scarcity utopian order, utterly alien yet enormously superior to all previous epochs of human history.

Stollmeyer dramatised the satellite as a weapon “which in its multiplication will break the chains of human slaves, by superseding them”.<sup>123</sup> This sentiment was both figurative and literal, of course: to be a work-abolitionist was *a fortiori* to be an abolitionist of chattel slavery. When the agrarian slave economies of the Americas were competed out of existence by automated socialist machine agriculture, as many Etzlerists hoped, then “people of all climes and of all countries [...] may become one happy family of brothers and friends, having one common interest,—the welfare and happiness of each other”.<sup>124</sup> In its abolitionist connection, the satellite was nicknamed the *Iron Slave* by

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<sup>118</sup> This dictum of Conrad Stollmeyer’s became a frequent staple in early TES documentation. See e.g., *Morning Star* or *Herald of Progression* 1, no. 17 (3 May 1845): 132.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> A. A., ‘Modern Legislation and Social Science V’, *Morning Star* 1, no. 14 (12 April 1845): 105.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> PWR2, 139.

<sup>123</sup> Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, ‘The First Anniversary of the Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 1, no. 41 (18 October 1845), 324.

<sup>124</sup> Toast of Thomas Marshall & Henry Spooner, delivered 12 October, 1845, quoted in Thomas Powell, ‘First Anniversary of the Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 1, no. 41 (18 October 1845), 327.

Stollmeyer.<sup>125</sup> The imagery of artefactual ‘slaves’ relieving human slaves (and workers more generally) from their posts amounted to a subversion, perhaps knowingly, of the cruel jest by Aristotle that “if each tool had the power to work on command, or to anticipate by itself what work to perform [...] then foremen would have no need of workers, and despots no need of slaves”.<sup>126</sup> What had seemed laughable to the slaveowners of the third century BC however, now confronted those of the nineteenth AD in earnest. Stollmeyer had campaigned for years as an abolitionist on the executive committee of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society;<sup>127</sup> it seems he saw in Etzler’s machines the possibility of abruptly extending manumission to the whole of the United States, overpowering the enormous slave economies of the antebellum South in a technological *force majeure* at a time when legislative reform efforts had enjoyed only limited success.

Before turning to the satellite’s wide-reaching humanitarian implications as hoped for by its designers and proponents, it is worth remarking that another substantial technical difference between the satellite and any other nineteenth-century steam vehicle—besides its diversity of function, expected operational environment, etc.—lay in the particulars of its power supply. Like their railed counterparts, the experimental free-ranging steam vehicles of the nineteenth century depended on the combustion of a finite onboard fuel supply in order to supply motive force, placing a fixed absolute limit on their duration of continuous operation, and besides that, incurring a continuous material cost in the form of consumed fuel: absent coal, the most magnificent self-propelled steam engine was a lifeless hunk of cold iron. The rejection of coal as a fuel source was associated with a design feature that would put Etzler’s blueprints centuries, as opposed to mere decades, ahead of their time: the fleet of satellites that would labourlessly procure the substances of human life was to be powered by what we would now call *renewable energy*—the vast untapped energy of the sun, winds and tides,<sup>128</sup> captured and then transmitted uniformly into each machine from central accumulators. It was from this mode of energy distribution that the satellite took its name: the vehicles would orbit these accumulators—which Etzler termed *stationary powers*<sup>129</sup>—in an adjustable circuit pattern, drawing inexhaustible motive power from whichever type of renewable energy was being channelled by the corresponding stationary power to which each satellite was attached. Once established, each satellite, calibrated to its desired task, would automatically traverse its ponderous circuit indefinitely under indirect solar, aeolic or tidal power until redirected towards something else, requiring only relatively trivial human superintendence.

<sup>125</sup> Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, *The Sugar Question Made Easy* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1845), 18.

<sup>126</sup> “εἰ γὰρ ἡδύνατο ἕκαστον τῶν ὀργάνων κελευσθὲν ἢ προαισθανόμενον ἀποτελεῖν τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔργον [...] οὐδὲν ἂν ἔδει οὔτε τοῖς ἀρχιτέκτοσιν ὑπηρετῶν οὔτε τοῖς δεσπόταις δούλων” (*Arist. Pol.* 1253b).

<sup>127</sup> Review of *The Sugar Question Made Easy*, by C. F. Stollmeyer, *British & Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter* 6, no. 11 (28 May 1845), 105.

<sup>128</sup> PWR2, 4.

<sup>129</sup> E.g., NWOMS, 26–27.



## 2.2 Power Moves

In Etzler's own account of his creative process, the invention of specific "adapted tools or machines for application"<sup>130</sup> was of secondary importance to finding an adequate energy source to actuate them. To this end, he designed all of his systems to take advantage of the "chief inanimate powers of nature"<sup>131</sup>—the sun, winds and tides—powers of a magnitude "greater, at the lowest estimation, than all our united efforts of nerves and sinews could effect".<sup>132</sup> It was the harnessing of such powers themselves, as opposed to the individual machines in their final application, that formed, in Etzler's self-perception, the truly novel conceptual "basis of [his] vast proposals". Etzler's attempt to develop "contrivances for superseding *all* human labour"<sup>133</sup> was inseparable from his intention "to render these powers [of nature] perpetually and uniformly operative"<sup>134</sup>—satellites and other machines like them should function as the intermediate transmission infrastructure between "imperishable, indefatigable"<sup>135</sup> energy sources like sunlight, and the burdensome tasks of human subsistence. The coal-dependent steam technology of other nineteenth-century engineers then, regardless of whether or not its specific mechanisms had labour-displacing potential, categorically failed to satisfy the technological imperatives of Etzlerism, which had, at least in its fully-realised form,<sup>136</sup> more stringent requirements in its selection of an energy source.

Though Etzler's fixation with sustainable energy and corresponding disinterest in coal at such an extraordinarily early juncture in the history of mechanical engineering may pique the interest of environmentally-minded readers in the twenty-first century, during which the urgency of remitting the combustion of fossil fuels increasingly dominates the horizon of human possibility, it is perhaps worth outlining how his exact underlying reasoning necessarily differed somewhat from the motives of contemporary ecology, though certain prototypical concepts of environmental preservation were by no means unknown at the time.

By the standards of the era, Fourierist contemporaries of Etzler such as Albert Brisbane superficially appeared to have a sophisticated general view of the potential for human economic activity to catastrophically damage the biosphere. "Man has neglected and degraded his terrestrial abode; he has left upon it [...] sources of atmospheric perturbations and diseases",<sup>137</sup> wrote Brisbane in 1840. The

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<sup>130</sup> PWR2, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>135</sup> NWOMS, 1.

<sup>136</sup> The satellite test of 1845 appears to have used a coal-fire in substitution of a stationary power, the vehicle itself being the only component that had actually been built by the Scientific Committee of the TES. See e.g., Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, 'Satellite', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 40 (11 October, 1845): 317.

<sup>137</sup> Albert Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man, or, Association and Reorganization of Industry*. (Philadelphia, PA: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1840), 266.

Fourierist group at the Brook Farm Phalanx, a North American contemporary to the Etzlerist settlements attempted in the Tropics, likewise deplored the “[n]eglect and ravage of the earth’s surface and derangement of climate”<sup>138</sup> in the pages of their periodical. *Derangement of Climates* was identified as one of the so-called “Seven Scourges”<sup>139</sup> of Civilization in the Fourierist system of thought, which meant that adherents even went as far as to correctly recognise it as an anthropogenic phenomenon—as one of the “results of incoherent, repugnant industry”<sup>140</sup>—which should be halted or even reversed by organised political and technical efforts. Criticism of additional types of human-caused biospheric damage, such as “destruction of forests”,<sup>141</sup> “ruin of fisheries”<sup>142</sup> and other depletions of nature caused by “conflict of the individual with the collective interest”<sup>143</sup> further attests to what may perhaps be called the environmental sensibilities of the American Fourierists. These lines of thinking were very politically proximate to the Etzlerist movement, and there was evidently a mutual exchange of ideas. Brisbane’s *Social Destiny of Man* was published by the leading Etzlerist Conrad Stollmeyer in the same year that the latter first met Etzler, and it has been suggested that Brisbane was reciprocally “influenced by Etzler [in looking] forward to machines powered by solar and wind energy”.<sup>144</sup> Brisbane himself described Etzler as “a man, unknown and neglected, who is one of the greatest mechanical geniuses [...] that the world has produced”.<sup>145</sup>

However, whilst the American Fourierists amongst whom Etzler lived in the late 1830s and early 1840s showed a glimmer of awareness about the potential disharmony between human activity and the non-human world, there remained a wide gulf between their thoughts and a truly modern scientific understanding of ecology. This was perhaps most evident in their proposed solutions to the correctly identified crisis of *climate derangement*: for the amelioration of the earth’s climate, Brisbane and his colleagues advocated “general and integral cultivation of the earth’s surface”<sup>146</sup>—transformation of the planet into what would amount to a giant arable farm—and, in a particularly striking inversion of contemporary climate science, they hoped to “increase the warmth towards the poles”<sup>147</sup> so that, in keeping with the objective of general planetary agriculture, humanity might remedy the “uncultivated state of the earth towards the North pole”, where “vast accumulations of ice” had “allowed the polar

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<sup>138</sup> ‘Organization of Labor’, *The Harbinger* 3, no. 10 (15 August, 1846): 158.

<sup>139</sup> See ‘Seven Scourges’, *The Harbinger* 4, no. 15 (20 March, 1847): 236–237. The precise number of such scourges was not always agreed upon, for instance Brisbane counted nine (*Social Destiny of Man*, 82).

<sup>140</sup> Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man*, 25.

<sup>141</sup> ‘Organization of Labor’, 159.

<sup>142</sup> Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man*, 195.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Pamela Pilbeam, *Saint Simonians in Nineteenth-Century France: from Free Love to Algeria* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 100.

<sup>145</sup> Albert Brisbane, ‘Mr. Etzler’, *Charles Fourier’s The Phalanx or, Journal of Social Science* 1, no. 2 (November 1843): 30.

<sup>146</sup> Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man*, 73.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

regions to extend their frigid domain far south of their natural limits.”<sup>148</sup> Though its emphatic purpose as a fulcrum of work-abolition was at significant variance with the Fourierist doctrine of attractive industry, the satellite’s overall plan of use was nonetheless certainly one of *general and integral cultivation*. It would, in its creator’s words, cut swathes through the “hideous wilderness”,<sup>149</sup> transforming “unproductive woods and prairies, [...] dismal swamps and ponds, [...] mountains and vallies [sic] [...] into a general paradise”.<sup>150</sup> It is little wonder, then, that other proponents of general cultivation such as Brisbane, even if they were not strictly work-abolitionists, would nonetheless see a kindred spirit in the inventor of the satellite. Etzler, unlike Brisbane, did not specifically advocate the deliberate melting of the poles,<sup>151</sup> although he did not categorically “exclude the polar regions”<sup>152</sup> from the possibility of eventual human habitation. In any case, the outlandish climate amelioration proposals actively called for by Brisbane do give a reasonable litmus for the general tenor of ecological sentiments among socialists of Etzler’s generation. It is important to bear this in mind when assessing the reasons for the latter’s advocacy of renewable energy.

Etzler himself knew nothing, as we do today, of coal combustion’s disastrous causal role in *climate derangement*. As a pioneer of solar and tidal power generation he was therefore only an accidental ecologist; his rejection of coal stemmed from other, though perhaps no less noble commitments. The society around him, in assessing the value of a particular technology, tended to be inclined “to estimate every thing [sic] by the price of money”,<sup>153</sup> but Etzler reckoned the costs and dividends of machinery by a different, humanitarian standard: economy of human effort. The following extract is an exemplary exposition of his insistence on a calculus of least work, as applied to the question of power sources for emancipatory machinery:

no machine affords any advantage, except by saving labour [...] [but] we have to find the power to compel the machine to work. Now, if labour of men is required to procure that power, and labour of men to make the machine, and then men to attend that machine in its operations, we have first to balance the account of the expenses, that these labours and materials will cost, with those of common manual labour to the same effect, in order to find out which affords the best advantages, the machine or the manual labour, to do the business proposed.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>149</sup> PWR2, 126.

<sup>150</sup> NWOMS, 1.

<sup>151</sup> Etzler was amenable in principle to the eventual utopian climate transformation of extreme habitats such as deserts, but thought it premature when far more fecund territories, largely unexploited by human agriculture, already awaited in the tropics. See ETW1, 7–8.

<sup>152</sup> PWR2, 14.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>154</sup> NWOMS, 47.

In short, a labour-saving machine that created *more* labour elsewhere—such as in the procurement of a perishable fuel source—was in reality no such thing. Herein lay the real genius of powering a steam engine by the rays of the sun or by the motion of the tides, as Etzler saw it: “[e]ach of these powers requires no consumption of materials, but [...] for the construction of the machineries”.<sup>155</sup> This design principle would recur time and time again in Etzler's inventions. An *initial* dividend of constructive labour and material was an obvious prerequisite for the establishment of any subsequently work-abolishing mechanical infrastructure, but once set up, it should run, as closely as possible, without *continuous* labour inputs, and without material inputs that required labour further up the process chain, “forever until the machinery be worn out at length”.<sup>156</sup> Labour-intensive coal mining, for example, would become a thing of the past once Etzler and his team had perfected “the means for the application of the immense powers of nature for substituting all human labours”.<sup>157</sup>

By far the most potent energy source that could supply a stationary power in place of solid fuels was the Sun, the ultimate origin of virtually all energy on the Earth. In the *Paradise*, Etzler expounded a version of the since well-validated principle of Concentrated Solar Power (CSP). By cumulatively redirecting the rays of the sun onto a single focal point, he observed, “the heat may be increased to any required or known degree; nothing else is required but a sufficient number of looking-glasses, or reflectors of any material, to produce any heat”.<sup>158</sup> An array of reflective surfaces, properly configured by “an adapted contrivance for fixing every piece, and turning it until its reflection meets the destined spot”,<sup>159</sup> could, Etzler correctly surmised, be kept in heliostatic alignment—“its proper stand opposite the sun, which may be kept either by a machine, or by a man, in moving the mirror to the sun's motion for casting its concentrated reflection or focus”.<sup>160</sup> Since modern CSP stations operate within the context of established electrical power infrastructures, they are configured so as to direct the focal point of reflected sunlight onto working fluids such as molten salts, the movement of which can then be used to generate electricity for storage and subsequent downstream consumption. The application of electricity as a municipal energy transfer medium was unknown in the 1830s—the pioneering work of Thomas Edison, Charles Brush and other luminaries in this department would not take place for another half-century—so instead of a system optimised to turn electrical generators, Etzler's CSP ensemble was effectively a novel form of steam engine, with solar-heated (as opposed to fuel-heated) water as its working fluid, the latter being one of the few terrestrial substances of which it could conveniently be said that “there is no want any where [sic] [...] [it being] co-extensive

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<sup>155</sup> PWR2, 4.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> PWR2, 65.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

with the whole world”.<sup>161</sup> This arrangement would meet the work-eliminating requirements of Etzler's design philosophy on multiple counts: “no material is consumed, consequently, no expenses and no labours for preparing and carrying the same to the spot of use are required; moreover, no labour for keeping the fire is requisite”.<sup>162</sup>

Thus, as long as mechanical (as opposed to manual) heliostasis of the reflectors could be achieved, the finished system would be a truly autonomous, work-abolitionist power supply: “[t]he machinery may be contrived so that it operates of itself, whenever the sun shines, without even as much as a superintendence of men”.<sup>163</sup> His 1833 account of a CSP steam engine did contain two slight misjudgements—by themselves probably not fatal to the overall feasibility of the project—which he would likely however have been forced to revise had his solar experiments proceeded further. Firstly, the fact that the reflectors in his design required “no curbature [sic] of their surface”<sup>164</sup> would have rendered the efficiency of the system significantly suboptimal; a paraboloid surface of equivalent size would have correctly focussed far more sunlight onto the working fluid. While a large enough number of small, flat reflectors might have approximated a parabolic curve with sufficient accuracy to reach the boiling point of water, the waste of energy implied by Etzler's reflector design would have limited the system's useable power output and probably would have required modification. Secondly, his confidence that mechanical heliostasis “requires no laborious computation or preparation”<sup>165</sup> was somewhat misplaced. In actual practice, heliostatic solar tracking involves a set of non-trivial—albeit now thoroughly resolved—computational problems. The first working fully autonomous heliostat was probably the one described and constructed by Curt Finster in 1962 at the University of Santa Maria in Brazil.<sup>166</sup> Unlike heliostats in the twenty-first century, which typically rely on electrical circuits to digitally compute the Sun's position, Finster's machine was “completely mechanical”<sup>167</sup>—a sufficiently skilled chronometrist of the early nineteenth century might in principle have been able to deliver a similar apparatus without transcending their own state of art, had the TES managed to recruit one. It is perhaps especially fitting that a mechanical heliostat meeting the parameters of Etzler's CSP system was first deployed on the South American continent, as intended by the Etzlerist colonists of the TES, though it unfortunately came over a century too late to support their efforts to abolish human work.

Complementing the Sun in Etzler's intended arsenal of energy sources for stationary powers was

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 35–36.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Curt Finster, ‘El Heliostato de la Universidad Santa Maria’, *Scientia* 119 (1962): 5–20.

<sup>167</sup> Hossein Mousazadeh et al., ‘A Review of Principle and Sun-Tracking Methods for Maximizing Solar Systems Output’, *Renewable & Sustainable Energy Reviews* 13 (2009): 1802.

the ebb and flow of the ocean tides. Scattered evidence of rare, geographically specific civil engineering projects that exploited the movement of tides for the deliberate application of mechanical force, typically for milling purposes, dates the practice back many centuries.<sup>168</sup> However, it appears that Etzler was unaware of these, since the only examples of tidal power he gave in illustration of the principle were those that had occurred “by mere accident”<sup>169</sup> such as the use of tides to raise grounded ships that would otherwise require tremendous effort to put back afloat. The system he proposed imitated the action of a vessel being raised and lowered in this manner: a buoyant, weighted “chest or box”<sup>170</sup> would transfer energy ashore by being tidally raised, suspended and then lowered again whilst drawing on an onshore pulley system once the water level had receded. Although a single box raised and lowered in this manner might not generate a particularly impressive power, Etzler hoped that either larger, heavier boxes, or large arrays of such boxes installed along extensive stretches of coastline would create a more appreciable cumulative effect. Modern tidal installations such as the Rance Tidal Power Station in Brittany do reliably generate significant power, although this is usually accomplished by the sluice-mediated exchange of large volumes of water between the sea and a purpose-built or selected lagoon or estuary. It is unclear how useful Etzler's tidal box system might have been by comparison, since unlike some of his other inventions, there is no evidence that the construction of a working model was ever attempted, by him or by anyone else.

Another source of energy for transfer into a stationary power, for which a far greater precedent already existed in Etzler's time, was the wind. In various specific forms, Etzler noted,<sup>171</sup> wind power had been used by humanity since antiquity, especially in maritime navigation, but also more recently through the construction of windmills. Conceptual innovation on a number of fronts differentiated Etzler's intended use of wind from prevailing nineteenth-century applications. The first was the use of a vertical as opposed to horizontal axis, which Etzler believed would allow for the construction of a wind-capturing apparatus of gargantuan scale. In Etzler's design, a central upright mast, two hundred feet high, would be rotated like an immense spinning top by four “wings”,<sup>172</sup> the surfaces of which would, depending on their position relative to the direction of the wind at any given time, flutter open or shut like the slats of an enormous Venetian blind in order to optimise the whole surface for wind capture. Hundreds of such behemoth windmills could then be arrayed at an appropriate distance from one another so that they would not obstruct or interfere with each other's wind flow.<sup>173</sup> Though they are comparatively rare, functioning vertical-axis windmills do exist. The first successful

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<sup>168</sup> For a survey of these, see Walter Edward Minchinton, ‘Early Tide Mills: Some Problems’, *Technology & Culture* 20, no. 4 (1979): 777–86.

<sup>169</sup> PWR2, 21.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–8.

<sup>172</sup> NWOMS, 12.

<sup>173</sup> PWR2, 12–13.

electricity-generating windmill, built by James Blyth in 1887,<sup>174</sup> had a vertical axis similar to the one designed by Etzler, and even taller vertical-axis windmills such as the 360-foot tall *Éole* installation in Quebec<sup>175</sup> have since been raised. It appears that Etzler never succeeded in constructing his own (comparatively modest) 200-foot version. However, there is evidence, newly discovered by the author, that Etzler built and tested a much smaller wind-based multi-purpose farming machine that operated on different principles as early as 1834. A previously unknown anecdote of Ohio State Senator Charles Reemelin, published in the German-language *Deutsche Pionier* periodical in 1869,<sup>176</sup> recounts the public trial of “a machine [...] through which all agricultural work should no longer be taken care of by people, but by wind power”<sup>177</sup> by Etzler in Cincinnati. Reemelin's description of the apparatus indicates that rather than channelling the output of a windmill uniformly as a stationary power into a separate machine (such as a satellite), this earlier prototype—the *Mammuth-Cultivator*—applied wind power in a more direct manner: a series of kites were attached to the mechanism itself. As the kites were drawn by the wind, they would “pull on a gear train that could move a plough, a flail, a chaff-cutter or even a wood-splitter”.<sup>178</sup> However, in Reemelin's recollection there were critical design flaws in this early model:

In short, the machine and the wind could not be made to work together in the necessary manner. At first, the machine was too heavy for the wind, but as the wind became stronger, there was a scene like the one described in Schiller's *Pegasus at the Plough!* [i.e., the machine itself flew away]<sup>179</sup>

This previously undiscovered source allows us to trace the development of Etzler's mature *stationary power* concept over time, and show how it emerged and was refined in direct response to the shortcomings of his earlier practical experiments. The term ‘stationary power’ is entirely absent from the *Paradise* (1833), though the problem that the stationary power system was supposed to solve was already prototypically identified there in the following passage:

nature plays with these mighty powers before our eyes in the most irregular way. To apply them immediately upon machineries for certain final purposes, would subject the latter to great irregularities and interruptions<sup>180</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Massimo Guarnieri, ‘Blowin' in the Wind’, *IEEE Industrial Electronics Magazine* 11, no. 1 (2017): 64.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>176</sup> C[harles] R[emelin], ‘John A. Röbling’, *Deutsche Pionier* [Cincinnati, OH] 1, no. 7 (September 1869): 194–201.

<sup>177</sup> “[...] eine Maschine [...] durch welche alle ländliche Arbeit nicht mehr durch Menschen, sondern durch Windkraft besorgt werden sollte” (Ibid., 199).

<sup>178</sup> “[...] diese [Drachen] zogen an einem Räderwerk und dieses bewegte den Pflug, oder Dreschflügel, oder die Futterschneid-Maschine, oder auch einen Riegel-Spalter” (Ibid.).

<sup>179</sup> “Kurz, die Maschine und der Wind waren nicht in das nöthige Zusammenwirken zu bringen. Anfangs war die Maschine zu schwer für den Wind und als der Wind stärker wurde, gab es eine Scene, wie Schiller sie im *Pegasus am Pfluge* beschreibt!” (Ibid., 199–200).

<sup>180</sup> PWR2, 47.

Etzler's 1834 Cincinnati experiment, as described by Reemelin, suffered precisely this problem—the wind was always either too weak or too strong—and since the kite-based design transmitted power directly to the final application, the apparatus had no way to cope with natural variation in the strength of the gusts. Enter *stationary power*, a term which Etzler first introduced in 1841 in the *New World or Mechanical System*.<sup>181</sup> The major improvement of Etzler's designs as described in the latter text was to interpose a regulating “reacting or secondary power”<sup>182</sup> between the primary power source (e.g., a windmill, a burning mirror, a tide box, etc.) and its final application (e.g., a satellite).

The worked-out example that Etzler used for the illustration of this principle in the *New World or Mechanical System* positioned hydropower (via a reservoir-fed waterwheel) as the secondary power, and wind (via windmills) as the primary power. Stationary windmills would use the irregular power of the wind to fill the reservoir in a piecemeal fashion, the contents of which would then drain over the waterwheel in order to supply regular power to the corresponding fleet of satellites.<sup>183</sup> The specific components of this particular stationary power system were to serve as examples only; they would be wholly interchangeable with the other renewable energy sources already identified by Etzler. The specific choice of one or another primary power would not adversely impact the uniformity of power output at the other end. Etzler's system of stationary power therefore represents a remarkable early attempt to achieve the type of interoperability and regulatory function that would eventually be attained by the gridded electrical systems of the twentieth century—a tremendous advantage of mains power being its uniformity at the point of output regardless of the source which originally generated it—but Etzler's system was designed without the slightest knowledge that electricity could (and eventually would) be used as an energy transfer medium in precisely this manner.

### 2.3 Concrete Goals

Although the full mechanization of agriculture by the renewable-powered satellite fleet could save a dramatic amount of human labour by itself, Etzler anticipated that his work-abolitionist design methodology would need to be applied in many other additional contexts if humanity were to approach genuine liberation from toil across the board. It was insufficient for a fully-automated countryside to merely supply goods to cities, streets and houses built on their existing pattern; the “filthy lodgings”<sup>184</sup> that currently passed for human habitations were themselves sites of tremendous

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<sup>181</sup> NWOMS, 26–27.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 10–11.

<sup>184</sup> PWR2, 174.



drudgery, despotism, ill health and unhappiness. “It would be folly itself”, Etzler advised his followers, “to live in buildings of our present make, which require now so much ado, and are, after all, comparatively speaking, but poor contrivances”.<sup>185</sup> All parts of the urban environment could do with a root-and-branch redesign in order to render them capable of genuinely meeting the needs and desires of all occupants. “The dwellings”, he suggested,

ought to be also very different from what is known in that kind, if the full benefit of our means is to be enjoyed. They are to be of a structure for which we have no names yet. They are to be neither palaces, nor temples, nor cities, but a combination of all, superior to whatever is known.<sup>186</sup>

Each designed element of these habitable megastructures would be deliberately optimised for the fulfilment of the central social and political objectives of Etzlerism: the abolition of human work and the free, unconditional and automatic provision of all comestibles and consumer goods.

These paramount factors would be operationalised from the very outset of the project, guiding both the manner of construction and the selection of materials. The future homes of post-work humanity would need “to be erected in a most simple way, without expense or labour, with but little time, after the first simple tools are made”.<sup>187</sup> They would also need to be built to last, so that they could as nearly as possible persist indefinitely “without ever requiring any further labour”.<sup>188</sup> The conventional building materials and methods of the early nineteenth century would be unable to meet this design brief, so Etzler resolved to integrate what was then a cutting-edge, emerging technology in order to reduce the prospective outlay of labour, both during and after construction: Portland cement—the most important constituent of modern concrete—of which a precursory form had been discovered and patented by Joseph Aspdin in 1824,<sup>189</sup> just nine years previous to the first publication of PWR1a/b. Etzler’s statement that “[s]and and stones ground to dust may be turned into glass [sic] or vitrified substance of the greatest hardness and cohesion, by great heat”, despite its imprecision of terminology, is an evident description of clinker sintering, the crucial cement-production step pioneered by Aspdin. Yet while most of the experimental *cimentiers* of the period, Aspdin included, had little obvious incentive to contemplate anything besides solid-fuel kilns for the pyroprocessing of clinker, Etzler’s principled opposition to the labour-intensive extraction and preparation of fuels led him to propose a forward-thinking alternative: “burning mirrors of proper size”<sup>190</sup> would be

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 126–127.

<sup>186</sup> PWR2, 68.

<sup>187</sup> PWR2, 77.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>189</sup> John H. Sharp, ‘Surely we Know all about Cement—Don’t we?’, *Advances in Applied Ceramics* 105, no. 4 (2006): 163–164.

<sup>190</sup> PWR2, 63.

arranged so as to concentrate sunlight to the required temperature onto the raw materials, in what would today be called a solar furnace. As extravagant as the idea must have seemed to his contemporaries, this working principle of Etzler's (i.e., the sintering of cement clinker by the direct application of reflected sunlight) was in point of fact vindicated in practice only as recently as 2019 by Oliveira et al., at CIEMAT's SF40 solar furnace in Almería, Spain.<sup>191</sup> Etzler sometimes imagined himself as "but a link in the infinite chain of beings [...] dying so soon, and living but for a futurity which they never see [...] the progress [of which] continues perpetually in nature, the beings of the present time living for other beings of futurity".<sup>192</sup> The poignancy of these sentiments seems compounded as complicated solar experiments from which Etzler could derive "no enjoyment, but only pain and vexation"<sup>193</sup> are at last realised by unseen *beings of futurity* across a gulf of 186 years.

Though his solar sintering conjectures would remain unproven until long after his death, Etzler's enthusiasm about the concrete itself was more commensurate with the expectations of other nineteenth-century technologists. The 3D Printing of its day, advancing concrete technology in the mid-nineteenth century seemed to augur a transcendence of the restrictive limits of brick-based construction geometry, enabling architects to pour solid, durable masonry into virtually any shape they desired with comparatively little exertion. The concrete hype of the nineteenth century was, in a fairly narrow technical sense, largely justified: mastery of Portland cement concrete would indeed go on to completely transform human architecture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Many of the modern world's most iconic buildings—the Sydney Opera House, the Pentagon, the Tate Modern, the Burj Khalifa—many of its most useful built structures—the Panama Canal, the Grand Coulee Dam, the Danyang-Kunshan Bridge, the Channel Tunnel, the Large Hadron Collider—as well as much of the grandest ornamental statuary yet contrived by humanity—from Rio's *Christ the Redeemer* to Stalingrad's *Motherland Calls*—all of these would depend pivotally for their successful execution on the unique properties of concrete. The definite shapes of these undreamt marvels were invisible to Etzler as he fumbled to articulate the potential future applications of concrete from behind the opaque veil of time. Yet their dim outlines, the general possibilities afforded by emerging concrete technology, were apprehended and incorporated into his projections:

we may mould and bake any form of any size, entire walls, floors, ceilings, roofs, doors, channels for canals, ditches, aqueducts, bridges, pavement of walks and roads, chimneys, hollow cylinders for machineries [...] pillars, columns, balustrades, statues, postaments, and other ornaments, figures of any description, reliefs, sculptural works [...] and numberless other things, of

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<sup>191</sup> Fernando Oliveira et al., 'Portland Cement Clinker Production Using Concentrated Solar Energy—A Proof-of-Concept Approach', *Solar Energy* 183 (2019): 677–88.

<sup>192</sup> TVJAE, 14.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

all shapes, sizes, colours, fashions, and fancy; in short, any thing of hard material.<sup>194</sup>

The highly adaptable and potentially work-reducing characteristics of concrete would, he hoped, enable his followers to construct a vast hive-like arcology quite unlike any previous urban environment. It would aim to strike an appropriate balance between private and public luxury, so as to render the lifestyles of its occupants as agreeable as possible whilst also maximising opportunities for the free, labourless fulfilment of their material, social and cultural needs and eliminating, by passive design, potential vectors for various types of conflict, discrimination and oppression: a lived environment in which, as nearly as possible, “no dispute, or disorder, or despotism, can ensue”.<sup>195</sup> The floor plan of the megastructure itself would abolish the patriarchal family home by default, so that nobody, regardless of sex or kinship, would ever be “compelled to live constantly together under various disagreeable circumstances”.<sup>196</sup> Instead, “[e]very adult member of either sex [was] to have an apartment for exclusive use, consisting of several rooms, such as for sleeping, bathing, dressing, and parlour”.<sup>197</sup> Even romantic couples would thereby suffer “[n]o compulsion to live and have intercourse together against their inclination”.<sup>198</sup> Instead, men and women, “[i]ndependent in their respective situations”, could freely choose to “come together but for pleasant conversation and mutual pleasure”, leaving only the genuinely uncompromised consent of both parties as the sole criterion for whether “to visit and to admit each other, every male and female adult having an apartment by itself [sic]”.

The yoke of compulsory parenthood, too, would be lifted in part by the physical design of the building itself, and in part by the social arrangements therein. Children could be crèched together in large dormitories separate from the adult apartments in order to spare their parents the hassle of looking after them, although no such arrangement would be mandatory: they “may also lodge with their parents, if desired”.<sup>199</sup> Whilst crèched children might receive some degree of collective “special care and instruction [from] certain appointed persons”, the character of post-work pedagogy would be sufficiently different from the present that the whole business of the crèche would not need to be nearly as organised as *schooling*. Since the necessity of preparing children for a life of work would be totally obsolete, there would, after all, be “no laborious study or occupation”,<sup>200</sup> instead, learning and personal cultivation would more likely become a perennial and fairly low-stakes endeavour,

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<sup>194</sup> PWR2, 63.

<sup>195</sup> PWR2, 179.

<sup>196</sup> PWR2, 178.

<sup>197</sup> PWR2, 70.

<sup>198</sup> PWR2, 179.

<sup>199</sup> PWR2, 70.

<sup>200</sup> PWR2, 87.

prosecuted “but by amusement, by gratifying the curiosity natural to man and child”.<sup>201</sup> Indeed, it was anticipated that with so much extra time on their hands, adults and children alike could theoretically, if inclined, “learn thus more, and in a more impressive manner, than what the most learned men at present have acquired with the most laborious study”,<sup>202</sup> although in keeping with the laid-back ethic of Etzlerism, such prodigious research should only ever be undertaken “without disagreeable exertion, without compulsion”.<sup>203</sup> As for the basics, “[w]hatever is to be known of man, children may have learned at the age of eight to ten years, by mere beholding, handling, and examining the things exhibited to them”.<sup>204</sup>

It is noteworthy that the Etzlerist position on the care of children dissents markedly from that of Fourierism. Fourier’s “little hordes” of grubby children, cajoled into disgusting and menial odd-jobs around the phalanstère, and tricked into “being productive and profitable while they think they are just enjoying themselves”,<sup>205</sup> would have been notions quite repugnant to Etzlerist sensibilities. Under no circumstances should the post-work colonists’ children, by contrast, be trained up “in dirt and rags, to toil and hardships”,<sup>206</sup> when they could instead appear “most cleanly and beautifully dressed, and exhibiting thus to the eyes of their parents the lovely attributes of angels”.<sup>207</sup>

The *Paradise Structure*, had one ever been completed, would have been an edifice of truly imposing proportions. Individual one-story bachelor(ette) pads—with a generous 2000<sup>2</sup> feet of private floor space per person—would be arrayed in long terraces, externally fronted by colonnaded galleries, and internally bisected by spacious corridors.<sup>208</sup> A single terrace, containing 40 units per floor and rising 10 stories into the air, bookended at each extremity by the multi-story crèching facilities, would form one immense wall of the overall structure, this pattern then being iterated three more times at 90 degree angles so as to form a monolithic square with sides 1250 feet long and 200 feet high, the whole building accommodating up to 1600 adults if each side of terraced apartments were filled at its maximum capacity,<sup>209</sup> as well as an indeterminate number of children in each of its four 10,000<sup>2</sup>-foot (per floor) dormitory corner towers. The generous design affordances of concrete would allow all interior corridors to boast “commodious stairs” although these would be rendered immediately redundant by an elaborate system of mechanical elevators—“boxes, which are moveable up and down”—in which colonists would freely traverse the entire vertical extent of the building “like birds,

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<sup>201</sup> PWR2, 87–88.

<sup>202</sup> PWR2, 88.

<sup>203</sup> PWR2, 89.

<sup>204</sup> PWR2, 181.

<sup>205</sup> Charles Fourier, *The Theory of the Four Movements*, trans. Ian Patterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1808]), 14.

<sup>206</sup> PWR2, 180.

<sup>207</sup> PWR2, 181.

<sup>208</sup> PWR2, 70–71.

<sup>209</sup> PWR2, 71.

in perfect security, and without exertion”.<sup>210</sup>

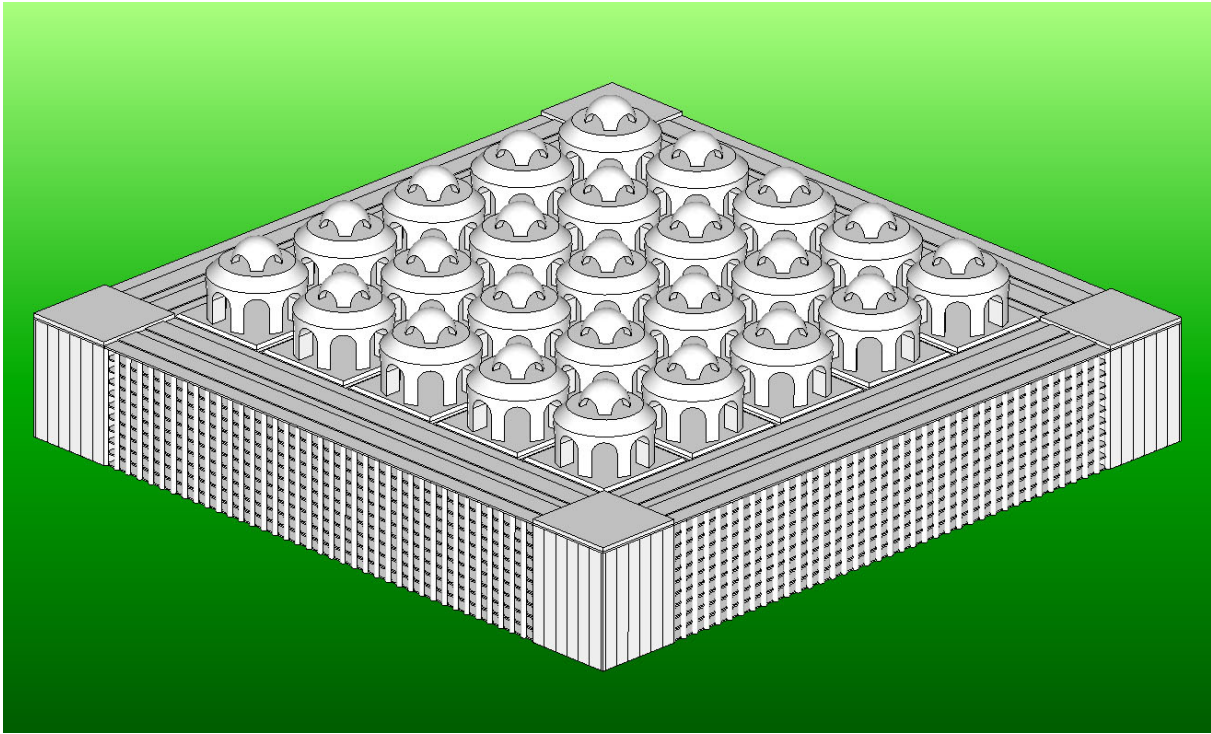


Fig. 3. The exterior design of the *Paradise* megastructure, rendered by the author in FreeCAD 0.17 using the architectural dimensions specified in Etzler’s descriptions (PWR2, 70–72). No previous image of the building is known to exist.

Each individual apartment within the complex would be plumbed with pipes for hot and cold water, although occupants would also be able to bathe themselves “in steam, or in some artificially prepared liquor for invigorating health”<sup>211</sup> if they preferred, through corresponding parallel systems of plumbing. Each apartment was to be fitted with mechanical contrivances “for tempering the air in rendering it cooler or warmer, just as the inmate desires”<sup>212</sup> and for “caus[ing] at any time an agreeable scent of various kinds”.<sup>213</sup> The ability to boil water using reflected sunlight would already be *fait accompli* as an energy source for the satellite and as a clinker sintering method, but by 1841, Etzler was proposing a separate friction-based heating system<sup>214</sup> specialised for domestic heating; the complimentary operations to *cool* air and water for end-use inside the colonists’ apartments would be achieved “with large ice-cellars”.<sup>215</sup>

## 2.4 Food for Thought

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<sup>210</sup> PWR2, 78.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>214</sup> NWOMS, 53.

<sup>215</sup> PWR2, 76.

Unlike the Fourierist phalanstère with its regimented and highly-structured conventions of massed communal dining, the Etzlerist *Paradise* building was designed to facilitate, if and when preferred, private eating within the comfort of one's own quarters, although public space would also be available for this purpose to be used at the discretion of the occupants. Beyond minimizing human work and unconditionally providing goods to meet all basic needs, an additional key priority of Etzlerist architectural design, in contrast to earlier utopian blueprints, seems to have been to maximise the functional ability of individual members of the population to choose and implement the exact detail of their habits according to taste, and to act freely on the basis of their own inclination rather than meeting a set of rigidly predetermined political expectations. As a general rule, Etzler's proposals were calculated to expand the range of activities and choices on offer for each individual rather than legislate specific patterns of behaviour and consumption.

A mechanized, containerized food delivery system able to cater to individual convenience whilst still benefiting from economies of scale was therefore envisioned, which would be seamlessly adaptable to a range of different consumption patterns, both public and private. Centralised “stores of prepared and unprepared victuals”,<sup>216</sup> derived from the “unparalleled great quantity of [...] most luxuriant crops”<sup>217</sup> already sown, harvested and processed by satellites and delivered labourlessly into the building would then be “subdivided into chambers and moveable boxes”<sup>218</sup> each of which was “to contain one portion of one kind of victuals for one meal of the community”. On demand, each box containing one such modular meal component would “empt[y] itself into the vessel ready for reception and final preparation in cooking or baking”, thereafter being transported “into the dining hall, or to the respective private apartments, by a slight motion of the hand at some crank”.<sup>219</sup> Besides the obvious labour-saving dividends of this arrangement, Etzler also expected the system to allow more stringent food hygiene standards and efficient management of waste to be maintained throughout the supply chain. By passing through the mechanized production line, each ingredient could be “most cautiously, as far as science teaches [...] selected, prepared, and purified, before it comes to [the consumer's] enjoyment [...] so that all admixture of any injurious stuff is made impossible”.<sup>220</sup> Any “remaining victuals”<sup>221</sup>—should it happen that too many were prepared by accident—could, subject to freshness, be restored back “into the store of prepared victuals”<sup>222</sup> for subsequent use. Provision for the automatic sanitisation of used vessels, utensils and surfaces “by streaming water” and “the washing of other stuffs by steam” would complete the food-preparation

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<sup>216</sup> PWR2, 72.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 72–73.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

cycle.

The main mechanized food delivery system of the building was intended to provide a minimal baseline, rather than a fixed upper limit, with respect to the capacity of the occupants to eat in the manner of their choosing. Above and beyond the automatically-delivered meals, any additional “extraordinary desire of any person” could still be freely “satisfied by going to the place where the thing is to be had”<sup>223</sup> in the building’s collective storage. Likewise, anybody wishing to carry out their own personal preparation of food, either for pleasure or in order to obtain results substantially different from the automated output of the main system would by no means be prevented from doing so: “any thing that requires a particular preparation in cooking or baking may be done by the person who desires it”. The purpose of the system was therefore not to forcibly prohibit private, personal food preparation activities, but rather to render them genuinely optional—to provide a reliable, useable alternative to their obligatory performance—so that nobody would ever find themselves *having to* cook their own food. Nor was the *capacity* for private mechanized room service expected to entirely abrogate the practice of dining in company.

## 2.5 All Night Long

On the contrary, whenever the colonists felt the urge to hold public meals or events, the large square void inside of the four inhabited terraces would play host to facilities that could support “a continual feast” or else discrete “parties of pleasures”<sup>224</sup> according to the whims of the hour. The mechanized kitchen and stores, too, would be situated within this enormous internal public space—revellers would not have to wander far in order to avail themselves of necessary supplies at any hour of the day or night. The most desirable party destination, however, would be the enormous flat roof terrace of the building, where amidst an “infinite variety of grand, beautiful, and fanciful objects and sceneries, radiating with crystalline brilliancy of all colours [...] by the illumination of gaslight”,<sup>225</sup> colonists would dance the night away to “the sweetest and most impressive harmony of music, produced by song and instruments partly not known yet”.<sup>226</sup> These pounding beats of post-work pop would blast through the night air in amplified form, across the entire 1,562,500<sup>2</sup> foot expanse of the roof, with the aid of artificial sound-systems, “the songs reverberating with increased sound [...] by vaultings that are moveable into any shape at any time”. Optical contrivances would simultaneously broadcast “theatrical scenes of a grandeur and magnificence and enrapturing illusions unknown yet, in which any person may be either a spectator or actor” in a stunning audiovisual spectacle that would “thrill

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

through the nerves, and vary with other amusements and delights”.

Yet colonists would not have to subsist on rooftop dance parties alone; the public innards of the *Paradise* building would cater day and night to every possible taste in diversion, education and the voluntary creative activity of the arts and sciences. Any would-be superstar of a future rooftop concert, seized by the inspiration of the preceding night’s performances, could alight to hi-tech studios, where “instruments and means are at his disposal unknown yet; and his compositions may be repeated and multiplied by mechanical plays and machines”.<sup>227</sup> Individuals already “gifted with talents for drawing, painting, sculptures, &c.”,<sup>228</sup> or wishing to cultivate such gifts, could, besides conventional techniques, likewise avail themselves of entirely novel creative methods whereby the artist could “make one model of every figure, and it may then be multiplied to any desired number, by moulds, etching and printing machines”.<sup>229</sup> Artists and mechanics alike would be equally able, by means Etzler was sure would soon exist, but could not quite articulate, “form models and moulds, and see the objects multiplied for use and show to any extent, without any further trouble”.<sup>230</sup>

The non-residential interior of the *Paradise* building could be partitioned, Etzler suggested, into twenty-five or so internal subdivisions, so that these public spaces could be lit during the day by ensembles of reflectors arrayed within “twenty-five cupolas, each upwards of 100 feet in diameter”<sup>231</sup> on the roof. Sunlight could thus stream down inside the building, shining brightly on libraries, laboratories, botanical gardens, museums to the old way of life, and many other installations geared towards the edification, entertainment and enjoyment of the colonists.

## 2.6 Online Learning

Humanity would, if it chose, no longer have to endure the collective paucity of understanding caused by the system of education in which “[o]nly a few professional men of learning occupy themselves with teaching natural philosophy, chemistry, and the other branches of the sciences of nature, to a very limited extent, for very limited purposes, with very limited means”.<sup>232</sup> With the shackles of work broken at last, and with the help of ample publicly-accessible equipment and facilities, scholarly endeavours of every variety could transform from elite, exclusive pursuits into popular affairs enjoyed by the entire community. The arts and sciences would then flourish “not merely among a small, fortunate class of men, as hitherto, but throughout the mass of the people, who are no more under the ignominious yoke of hard labour for their subsistence”.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 84–85.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 134–135.



Extraordinary prodigies of novel technology would enrich the newfound learning environment in unprecedented ways. Geographers could expedite their study by surveying “landscapes and prospects of foreign countries [...] represented in their natural size and appearance, by large camera obscura and clara”.<sup>234</sup> The historically-minded could rapidly compass materials “from the remotest antiquity down to our time” with the help of vast banks of information arranged “by a certain system of signs [...] at one glance”.<sup>235</sup> Colonists could otherwise turn their attention to astronomy or biology, with equal freedom and capacity to scrutinise “the visible universe of millions of worlds at night, beheld through mighty telescopes and [...] the worlds of beings presented to the eyes by microscopes”.

The whole ensemble would moreover be networked by a rapid communication system of telegraphic lines with special terminals, described by Etzler as

[a] tachigraphy, with peculiarly adapted characters, and lithography [...] and printing establishments, by which the composing of words may be effected as quick as one speaks, and the copies multiplied without labour.<sup>236</sup>

Etzler proposed this system in 1833, and Etzlerists such as James Hadden Young worked on similar concepts during the coming decade; an eventuality that would lead to the invention of the alphabetized keyboard,<sup>237</sup> and by extension to the modern concept of word-processing (i.e., through typing with alphabetized keys).

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>237</sup> For my treatment of this historically significant moment in print technology, see section 6.3 of the thesis.

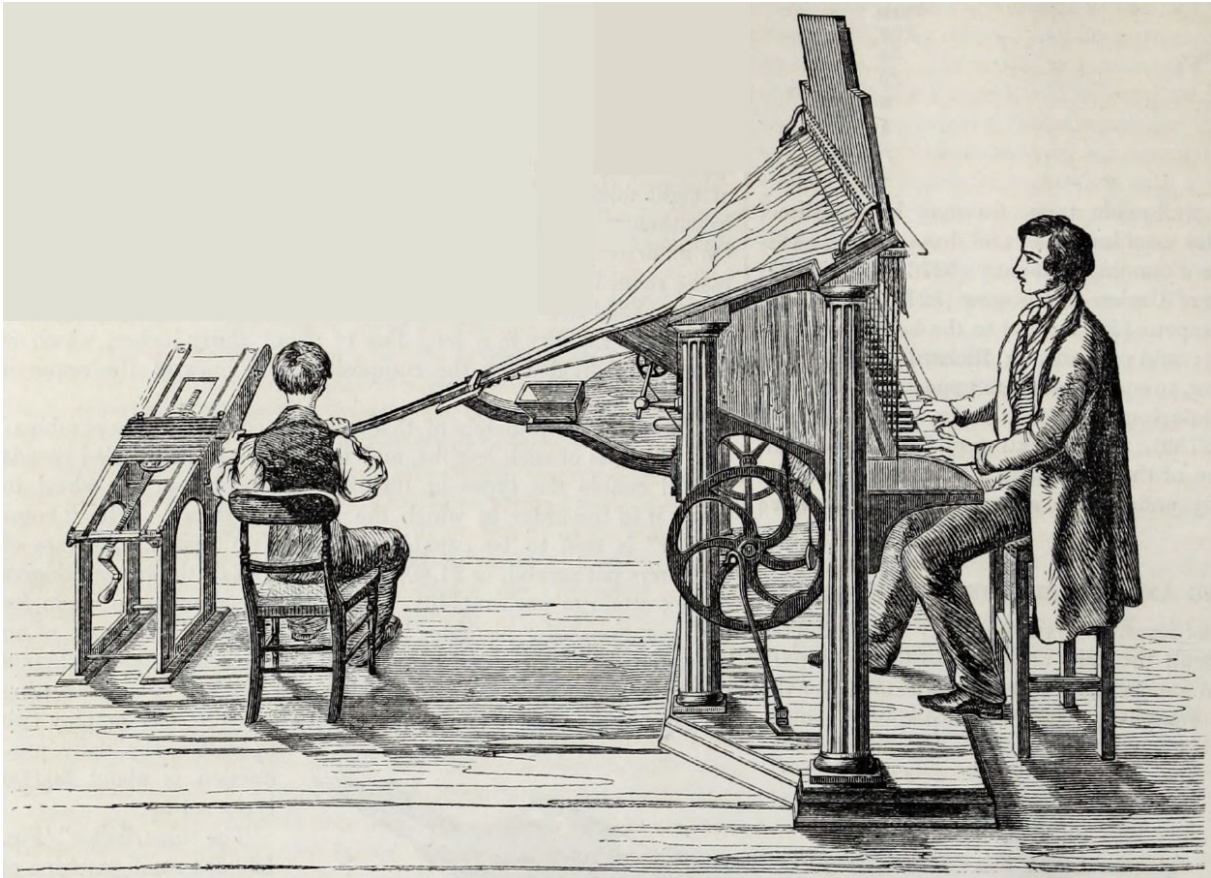


Fig. 4, The Etzlerist inventor James Hadden Young developed this patented type-composing machine in 1840,<sup>238</sup> the first of its kind, and a device which revolutionised the Victorian printing industry. A set of alphabetized keys allowed the compositor to arrange letters for printing as quickly as human speech, eliminating the gruelling and tedious manual placement of types. It was the first commercially useable keyboard in human history, and the first book Young typed on it—reflecting the deep intertwinement of his political beliefs with his technological experiments, was PWR3a/b—the first book in history to be typed on a keyboard—the third edition of Etzler’s *Paradise*.<sup>239</sup> Young subsequently became a leading member on the Scientific Committee of the Etzlerist TES, and assisted Atkins and others in the construction of the 1845 satellite.

Users of these mechanical terminals would be able to occupy some of their freshly-emancipated free time by browsing and sending one another “an endless variety of highly instructive, useful, and amusing objects [...] presented for one’s gratification”. They could equally use the special terminals for “reading the news of every day from all parts of the world”,<sup>240</sup> or disseminating the output of the scholarly and cultural pursuits undertaken within each building. Thus the network itself would become part of the supporting infrastructure of “a general spirit of investigation”,<sup>241</sup> by which the sum

<sup>238</sup> This image is derived from Robert Mallet, ed., *Record of the International Exhibition, 1862* (Glasgow: William McKenzie, 1862), 388.

<sup>239</sup> See my section 6.3 for a more detailed history of the machine.

<sup>240</sup> PWR2, 86.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

total of human understanding and technical mastery might multiply itself far more rapidly than in any previous period of history. “What would be the increase of knowledges,” asked Etzler rhetorically, “if a large community, with unlimited means, might follow the natural impulse of curiosity in investigating nature?”<sup>242</sup>

Adherents like James Hadden Young,<sup>243</sup> Hugh Dougherty<sup>244</sup> and Conrad Stollmeyer<sup>245</sup> would take this aspect of Etzlerist utopianism very seriously, not only endeavouring to build emancipatory technologies themselves, but also trying to convince others of their ability to do so. Etzlerism was at its very best when this DIY spirit of technological curiosity by self-trained and largely self-directed utopian engineers showed itself most prominently. This ideal, I will argue, was conspicuous for its absence during the phase of the Tropical Emigration Society’s Venezuelan expeditions, in which the disgrace, downfall and disappearance of Etzlerism took shape. I will relate the loss of such ‘middle Etzlerists’ as Doherty and Young and their replacement by individuals not actuated by the same philosophy to the internecine power struggles which would go on to utterly dismember the TES *in situ*.

## 2.7 Naval Gazing

Etzlerists saw no reason that the activities of future humanity should be confined to dry land, and the consequent construction and permanent habitation of gargantuan artificial floating islands had been a staple of Etzler’s thought from the very beginning. Reemelin’s recollection of his early encounters with Etzler in Cincinnati confirms the scheme as a cornerstone of the latter’s programme even during the 1830s. As Reemelin told it, Etzler importuned a group of German expatriots living in Ohio to help him “construct a manoeuvrable artificial island a mile in circumference in front of a seaport, build a hotel on top of it, sow it with trees and plants, grow vegetables on it, and then pilot it towards some healthy part of the ocean in the Summer”.<sup>246</sup> Reemelin’s account also shows us that Etzler saw the specific technology of the island project not as a totally novel departure, but rather as indicative of a general existing trend towards increasingly large shipping without the use of conventional sails, notwithstanding, of course, its additional connection to a programme of radical social change. Reemelin attributes the following statement to Etzler: “the world has no idea yet, of the size of vessels that will soon traverse the ocean without sails. From 2,000 tons we will quickly

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>243</sup> See subsection 6.3 of this thesis.

<sup>244</sup> See both subsections 6.2 & 6.3.

<sup>245</sup> See subsection 6.1.

<sup>246</sup> “[...] eine künstliche bewegliche Insel, von dem Umfang einer Meile, vor einen Seehafen zu bauen, daraus ein vollständiges Hotel zu errichten, sie mit Bäumen und Gewächsen zu bepflanzen, Gemüse darauf zu bauen und während der Sommerzeit damit nach irgend einer gesunden Gegend im Meer zu fahren” (R[emelin], ‘John A. Röbling’, 199–200).

move to 5,000, from 5,000 to 20,000, so that my floating island, which currently amazes you, will not seem all that big 20 years hence”.<sup>247</sup> Though he and his fellow German Cincinnatians would eventually fall out with Etzler,<sup>248</sup> Reemelin himself, reflecting on the idea 35 years later, was forced to concede, “the *Great Eastern* is proof that Etzler’s prophecy has at least partly come true”.<sup>249</sup>

As the second movement dedicated to executing Etzler’s plans sprung up around him during the first half of the 1840s, the priority of human colonisation of the ocean only grew in importance. A parallel organisation to the Tropical Emigration Society, running under the name *Venezuela Transit Company*, had as its major purpose the “great desideratum”<sup>250</sup> of perfecting floating island technology in order to transport the colonists across the Atlantic, since this would obviate the tremendous expense of dispatching pioneers by means of conventional passenger shipping. Though it nominally operated as a separate entity for the sake of trying to secure investors and attract share capital, the VTC can from a historical perspective be understood as effectively a subsidiary of the TES. It held separate meetings and elected its own officers in order to maintain its legal identity—Stollmeyer superintended it for most of its existence<sup>251</sup>—but it was in reality entirely embedded within the organisational ecology of the Etzlerist movement: its putative commercial activities, beyond the actual construction of a floating island, were entirely coextensive with the plan to send waves of TES members to Venezuela to construct the *Paradise* Structure,<sup>252</sup> and all of its proceedings were reported in the *Morning Star* alongside those of the Society proper—its differentiation from the TES was for the most part a flag of convenience.

The floating islands of the Etzlerist grand plan sought to provide “every commodity and security for their inhabitants as may afford the dry land.”<sup>253</sup> Thus, in the first instance, any such craft should replicate much of the major infrastructure of the land-based *Paradise* building, although certain additional innovations would be needed in order to supplement the vessel’s capacity to support a population at sea. “[R]ivulets of sweet and wholesome water”,<sup>254</sup> for instance, could be procured for the passengers by using burning mirror arrangements housed within seawater desalination stations aboard the craft. Steam distillation in this manner would generate a product “surpassing in salubrity

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<sup>247</sup> “Von der Größe der Fahrzeuge, die in Bälde den Ozean ohne Segel beschiffen werden, hat die Welt noch gar keinen Begriff. Von 2,000 Tonnen wird man schnell zu 5,000, von 5,000 zu 20,000 steigen und meine Insel, welche Sie jetzt staunen macht, wird in 20 Jahren nicht mehr so allzugroß erscheinen” (Ibid., 199).

<sup>248</sup> See subsection 5.2 of this thesis for the first full history of this dispute to ever be published in English.

<sup>249</sup> “Der Great Eastern ist Beweis, daß Etzler’s Weissagung wenigstens theilweise [sic] in Erfüllung gegangen ist” (Ibid.).

<sup>250</sup> Charles Cross, ‘To the Members of the Venezuela Transit Company’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 10 (14 March 1846): 78.

<sup>251</sup> See the editorial note of *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 10 (14 March 1846): 78–79.

<sup>252</sup> Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, ‘To the Shareholders and Friends of the Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 8 (1 March 1845): 62.

<sup>253</sup> PWR2, 25.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 44.

the best spring water”.<sup>255</sup>

Floating islands would also depart from conventional ships in their method of propulsion. The naval automaton mechanism, by which Etzlerist floating islands were supposed to be propelled through combined wind power and wave power, was patented by Etzler—then still in the United States—in April 1842.<sup>256</sup> Across the Atlantic, Etzler’s colleagues Conrad Stollmeyer and Hugh Doherty began building an experimental prototype based on Etzler’s designs in the same year with the intention of crossing the English channel in it; Stollmeyer was almost drowned and “had to jump for his life”<sup>257</sup> when the vessel sank during testing. Yet it was hoped that floating islands would eventually achieve superior safety features to conventional ships, and these would be inherent the structure of the floating island itself, since “such an island need not be composed of vessels; it may be constructed of solid logs of wood, which is specifically lighter than water, and which, therefore, can never sink”.<sup>258</sup> The plantation of trees on the island would serve more than an ornamental purpose, it would actually be calculated to enhance the safety of this arrangement still further by using an architectural biotechnology method: individual trees would be “reared so as to interweave each other and strengthen the whole”,<sup>259</sup> contributing to integrity of the whole island. This extraordinary technique, though its maritime functionality apparently remains untested, certainly has terrestrial analogues in the present day. Patrick Dougherty’s *Just Around the Corner* sculpture, completed at New Harmony in 2003,<sup>260</sup> perhaps affords a glimpse of what the decks of Etzler’s island could have looked like.

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>256</sup> USP2.

<sup>257</sup> William Anderson Smith, *‘Shepherd’ Smith the Universalist: the Story of a Mind* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1892), 216.

<sup>258</sup> PWR2, 31.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>260</sup> Patrick Dougherty, *Stickwork* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010), 98–103. [Patrick Dougherty is no known relation to Hugh Doherty].



Fig. 5. *Just Around the Corner* by Patrick Dougherty is a living sculpture at New Harmony, Indiana, part of his *Stickworks* collection.<sup>261</sup>

Dougherty has grown the saplings of various hardwood trees into a remarkable ‘street’ of houses on the former site of Robert Owen’s famous colony, which Etzler himself visited on a number of occasions. Though Dougherty’s installation seems primarily artistic, Belgian architectural engineers at the University of Liège have since “proposed the development of a house [...] [which] grows, builds, and repairs itself; changes with the seasons; uses the forces of nature and is in harmony with its environment; [...] [is] low cost and does not require considerable workforce or industrial material”,<sup>262</sup> because it would utilise the growth of trees and other vegetation as core structural elements.

## 2.8 Seeing Like an Etzlerist

A coherent set of what may be called design principles persist across the various diverse innovation contexts to which Etzler and his collaborators directed their attention, as surveyed above, and these are identifiable as the direct and conscious consequence of the political commitments of the Etzlerist movement. The most fundamental, of course, was that at every stage, any designed element must

<sup>261</sup> See <https://www.stickwork.net> (accessed 2019-05-25).

<sup>262</sup> Thomas Vallas & Luc Courard, “Using Nature in Architecture: Building a Living House with Mycelium and Trees”, *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 6, no. 3 (2017): 318.

minimize the need for human work. This constraint, as I have shown, was multi-dimensional: it applied not only to intended end-user outcomes (e.g., consumption-ready food becoming available “by a slight motion of the hand at some crank”<sup>263</sup>), but significantly influenced factors further up the supply chain and design process (for instance, it guided the selection of power sources for the satellite—renewable “powers of nature” were chosen in part because they rendered labour-intensive solid fuels obsolete). Etzler recognised a distinction between, on one hand, the initial outlays of human work required to establish their machineries and other contrivances, and on the other, inputs of *continuous* work “the same ever-repeating mechanical motions or labours [...] ten thousand times repeated”.<sup>264</sup> It was this latter set of inputs—the inefficient and oppressive fabric of the work-based society itself—that were the priority target for elimination, although design decisions could recommend themselves on the basis that they would reduce the initial outlay of human work as well (e.g., the movement’s intention to exploit the labour-saving properties of concrete as opposed to conventional construction methods).

Etzlerism was a feminist movement, which unambiguously classified stereotypically feminized domestic tasks as *work*: the physical layout and infrastructure of the *Paradise* building was calculated to destroy the patriarchal tyranny of the nuclear household and absolve men and women from obligate exertions of any kind in equal measure, regardless of whether the specific task fit into stereotyped masculine or feminine gendered roles. For instance, the *Paradise* building’s mechanical and organisational countermeasures against obligate childcare, cooking and cleaning—all heavily stereotyped as the exclusive duty of women in the prevailing culture of the 1830s and 1840s—were as much a part of the Etzlerist anti-work design ensemble as contrivances that obviated stereotypically masculine industrial tasks. The Etzlerist inventor James Hadden Young’s Type-Compositing Machine, the first commercially used keyboard system,<sup>265</sup> was ergonomically designed in a way that revolutionised the printing industry by not only reducing the drudgery, but also levelling the gender balance of compositing, which had until that time been an overwhelmingly male-dominated industry.

Balanced against the Etzlerist movement’s signature work-abolitionism in the contexts of *production* and *reproduction* was its focus on unconditional free access at the point of *consumption*. The overarching principle of distribution was that all consumer goods capable of being produced should be available “*gratis*, to be had by every member of the community”,<sup>266</sup> a political commitment that Etzlerism shared with many of the more prominent nineteenth-century socialisms. However, in order to distinguish the particular character of Etzlerist attitudes towards manner of consumption,

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<sup>263</sup> PWR2, 73.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>265</sup> See 6.3 of this thesis.

<sup>266</sup> PWR2, 139.



some further elaborations can be made. In contrast to earlier blueprints for radically different norms of consumption, which were often retroactively criticised for their arbitrary rigidity, a persistent hallmark of Etzlerism as a design philosophy was an insistence on flexibility in the exact manner of consumption—a desire to maximise something akin to *consumer choice*, albeit entirely divorced from any notion of a *market*—time and time again, Etzler stresses that the blueprints he offers are “merely [...] the outlines of a plan here for attaining these great ends, leaving it to the option of others to finish the sketch at their pleasure”.<sup>267</sup> There appears in Etzlerism a mature anticipation of the wide lability of human preference in consumption habits, the perceived absence of which frequently attracted retroactive criticism of more prominent early socialisms (especially Fourier’s system), and of course would go on to form a major premise of anti-utopian criticism during the twentieth century. The clearest operationalisation of the Etzlerist commitment to consumer choice is perhaps in the design of the *Paradise* building’s food systems: they were to be maximally flexible towards different dining preferences, rather than prescribing, either through their designed features or *de jure*, any particular *one best way* to take one’s meals. “There is no variety of opinions to be dreaded”, Etzler proclaimed, “let there be as many and different opinions as you please, there will be no compulsion; every one may live as he pleases”.<sup>268</sup> The bottom-line *meeting of needs* remained front and centre within Etzlerist designs—“a perfect harmony of means and wants must dictate all the contrivances to be made”<sup>269</sup>—but this priority was consistently augmented and refined with remarkable prescience by considerations of *preference* and *convenience*: Etzlerists were concerned to design novel social and technical systems that could specifically meet needs “without causing inconvenience to any of the inhabitants, and with every thing [sic] for their enjoyment within their reach at any time, without trouble”.<sup>270</sup> The proliferation of meaningful choice over a range of lifestyles, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach, seems to have been a recurring theme of the Etzlerist design philosophy: the objective being to provide workable alternatives and a maximum range of options, as opposed fitting utopian subjects to the Procrustean bed.

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 70.



# **Part Two**

## Early Etzlerism

### (1828-1839)

# Chapter Three

Etzler's Experience  
and Influence in the  
*Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*

(1828-1831)

### 3.1 G.W.F. Who? Some Fact-Checked Fantasies of Etzler the Hegelian Freedom-Fighter

My revised history of Etzlerism opens *in media res* with respect to the life of its founder, already on the cusp of 37 as the narrative commences. I begin not with his birth but with the earliest surviving primary evidence of Etzler's quintessential research outputs: his plans for the reconstitution of society, and his labour-saving mechanical and scientific experiments. This rationale would once have indicated 1833 as an obvious starting point,<sup>271</sup> to coincide with the publication *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men Without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery*, hitherto believed to be Etzler's earliest surviving written work, and certainly his best known.

However, in the course of my research, I obtained and translated from the German an extant copy of *Allgemeine Ansicht der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika für Auswanderer, nebst Plan zu einer gemeinschaftlichen Ansiedelung da selbst*<sup>272</sup> (1831), a 108-page pamphlet co-authored by Etzler in support of an earlier German emigration scheme from his birthplace, Mühlhausen, to the United States. Prior commentators who knew of Etzler's involvement in this earlier scheme have invariably supposed the pamphlet lost.<sup>273</sup> Since this thesis will be the first piece of scholarship to incorporate the copious new material, special attention to the period of its creation and its implications for the early development of Etzler's ideas is desirable. The fortuitous discovery of another novel (though much less substantial) primary source pushing the earliest firm evidence of Etzler's mechanical experimentation back 5 years to 1828<sup>274</sup> enables me to fully circumscribe the period of the Mühlhausen emigration scheme, thereby neatly providing an outermost wingtip for this pre-*Paradise* period.

A further and perhaps more significant consideration guides my choice of chronological entry point. Not only is 1828–1831 now the earliest period for which definite primary evidence of Etzler's political and mechanical thought is available, it is also the earliest period wherein I have identified really substantial bodies of persistent error in the prevailing history of the subject matter.

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<sup>271</sup> For a characteristic example of this convention applied to Etzler, see e.g., Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization, 1606–1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1946), 681.

<sup>272</sup> The title may be rendered in English as *General View of the United States of North America for Emigrants, with a Plan for a Collective Settlement There* [translation mine]. Note that all subsequent quotation and reference to this text is directed at my working translation of the second and more complete 1831 edition (AAVS2), unless otherwise expressly stated.

<sup>273</sup> E.g., “[*General View of the United States*] has not survived, but we can judge its contents and its tone by Etzler's utopian tract, *The Paradise within [the] Reach of All Men [...]*”, Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 46; “there is no extant record of this pamphlet in either Germany or the United States”, Patrick Ronald Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler: Scientific-Utopian during the 1830's and 1840's’ (PhD thesis, New York University, 1969), 7, n. 13; “[...] The pamphlet is not extant [...]”, Karl J. Arndt & Patrick R. Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets: George Rapp and J. A. Roebling versus J. A. Etzler and Count Leon’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 52, no. 1 (January 1969): 8, n. 7.

<sup>274</sup> The discovery incidentally refutes Stoll's assumption—by which he licenses much of his unevincenced speculation about Etzler's beliefs and disposition during this period—that “Etzler recorded nothing of these years, and no one recorded anything of him. But it's clear what he was thinking” (Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 25).

A host of confusions, flattering (or malicious) exaggerations, fabrications of convenience, and far-reaching mistakes of interpretation have accreted, often reinforced by near-unanimous repetition in citation, within the relatively narrow literature on which posterity depends for virtually all purported detail of the Mühlhausen scheme (and by extension, of the immediate context for the early development of Etzler's ideas). I am intent on using the newly available source material to produce an accurate history of Etzlerism that clearly demarcates and amends these deeply entrenched errors, and insists on fidelity to primary materials.

This task is rendered unusually challenging because of one notable co-participant in the Mühlhausen emigration scheme, the celebrated engineer John Augustus Roebling, whose subsequent entrepreneurial success in the United States, particularly his pivotal role in the construction of the Brooklyn Suspension Bridge,<sup>275</sup> would later guarantee his apotheosis as an icon of the American Dream.<sup>276</sup> The existence of a distinct twentieth-century Roebling literature<sup>277</sup>—not primarily concerned with Etzler, but rather with the legacy of his co-emigrant—amounts to a double-edged sword for the Etzler researcher. Roebling's fame has preserved lines of recovery to valuable caches of historical information that might otherwise have submerged irretrievably in the stream of time. Nonetheless, the overriding orientation of Roebling's eulogists towards his lionization and aggrandizement, amounting to his posthumous reconstruction into a mascot for some of the most cherished ideological staples of American culture, has also perpetuated some quite extraordinary distortions of fact about his early life. This phenomenon has exerted a disastrous collateral effect on historical understandings of Etzler's activity and thought during this period, as I will endeavour to

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<sup>275</sup> Roebling went into business as a manufacturer of steel cable, an indispensable precursor to the construction of suspension bridges. His preliminary work on the Brooklyn Bridge was his mortal undoing and he never lived to see the final product of his designs; after an incoming ferry fatally wounded his foot during a survey of the riverbank, the task of completing the bridge fell to his son, Washington Augustus.

<sup>276</sup> Given the relatively bland genre (albeit indisputable utility) of Roebling's professional accomplishments, his memory enjoys a surprisingly prolific and diverse portfolio of heroic representations in popular US media, ranging from self-help courses to motion picture drama. The interactive audiobook product *Neuropsychology of Self-Discipline: the Master Key to Success* (Newark, CA: Sybervision Systems, Inc., 1985) places Roebling and his son among a pantheon of historical personalities its inductees must emulate in order to "ignite and harness the fire within to achieve [their] goals and dreams", whilst *Roebling's Bridge* (directed by Christopher Carson Emmons. Brooklyn, NY: Ithaca Pictures, 2017) won *Best Editing* and *Best Narrative Short* at the 2018 New York Film Awards.

<sup>277</sup> Landmark contributions to this literature include: Col. Washington A. Roebling, *Early History of Saxonburg* (Saxonburg, PA: Saxonburg Historical and Restoration Commission, 1924 [1975 reprint]); Hamilton Schuyler, *The Roeblings: A Century of Engineers, Bridge-Builders and Industrialists, the Story of Three Generations of an Illustrious Family, 1831–1931* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931); D. B. Steinman, *The Builders of the Bridge: the Story of John Roebling and his Son* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945); Kathryn E. Harrod, *Master Bridge Builders: the Story of the Roeblings* (New York, NY: Julian Messner, Inc., 1958); Alan Zelick Trachtenberg, 'Brooklyn Bridge, Fact and Symbol (1869–1930): A Study of an American Monument' (PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 1962); Alan Zelick Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); David McCulloch, *The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1972); Sharon Reier, *The Bridges of New York* (New York, NY: Quadrant Press, 1977); Margaret Lattimer, Brooke Hindle & Melvin Kranzberg (eds.) *Bridge to the Future: A Centennial Celebration of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York, NY: New York Academy of Sciences, 1984); and Barbara G. Mensch, *In the Shadow of Genius: The Brooklyn Bridge and Its Creators* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2018).

show. Cumulative layers of misinformation must be traversed with some care in order to trace the real development of Etzler's ideas from inception to maturity.

Among the most unanimously-entrenched falsehoods obstructing a clear view of this process are the following: that Etzler and Roebling were close childhood friends,<sup>278</sup> or indeed had any significant personal relationship outside the brief period of their involvement in the scheme;<sup>279</sup> that Etzler and Roebling were the principal architects of the Mühlhausen scheme, or even that Roebling alone was its leader<sup>280</sup> and mastermind;<sup>281</sup> that the scheme was realised through a series of daring conspiratorial manoeuvres, under conditions of desperate haste and meticulous secrecy<sup>282</sup> in order to evade detection and totalitarian repression by the Prussian state;<sup>283</sup> that as exemplary proof of the latter, Etzler was jailed for counselling emigration to his peers;<sup>284</sup> that Roebling (or Etzler or both, depending on the source) was inspired to emigrate to America mainly by fanatical devotion to the doctrines of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel;<sup>285</sup> that Roebling in particular not only knew Hegel, but received direct, profoundly transformative mentorship from him in an unusually close personal capacity,<sup>286</sup> in recognition of the younger man's exceptional philosophical genius; that the mature signature projects

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<sup>278</sup> E.g., Steinman, *Builders of the Bridge*, 18; Trachtenberg, 'Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol', 68; Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 46; Arndt & Brostowin, 'Pragmatists and Prophets', 1; Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 5. Whilst "childhood friend" and "boyhood friend" are the most popular formulae, the supposed youthful fraternity of Etzler and Roebling occasionally takes more elaborate shape: "[Etzler] attended the German equivalent of secondary school with [...] Johann August Robling [sic]" according to Benjamin Lisle, 'Toward a More Perfect Engine: Natural Science and Optimism in the American Renaissance' (PhD thesis, Auburn University, 2011), 1. For Brostowin, Roebling was Etzler's "closest associate" ('John Adolphus Etzler', 4), and when they parted there was a "taste of the bittersweet in the falling out of these two close friends, friends from childhood. In effect Roebling was bidding adieu to his own childhood dreams" (ibid., 13).

<sup>279</sup> The most sober commentators have tended to select terminology that excludes the *prima facie* absurd notion that Etzler, born a full decade and a half before Roebling, was the latter's childhood playmate, old school friend, etc. See in particular Claeys, who judiciously demotes him to "longtime friend" ('John Adolphus Etzler', 352), and Hindle, who gives, perhaps optimally, "one-time friend" ('Spatial Thinking in the Bridge Era', 131).

<sup>280</sup> "[Roebling] was already marked as the quiet but ardent ringleader of the liberals in Mühlhausen" (Steinman, *Builders of the Bridge*, 19).

<sup>281</sup> See e.g., McCulloch, *The Great Bridge*, 42–43.

<sup>282</sup> "This pamphlet [i.e., AAVSN1] was secretly the joint work of Roebling and Etzler" (Steinman, *Builders of the Bridge*, 20); "Together the two men prepared and published secretly (Etzler had already been imprisoned for his activities in 1829, shortly after his return) a pamphlet urging resettlement in America" (Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 46).

<sup>283</sup> "[The emigrants] found themselves under strict surveillance, with all their movements closely watched by government spies. It became impossible for them to hold meetings, and their mail was opened by the police [...] [Roebling] had to move with the greatest caution and secrecy. One false step and he would land in a Prussian prison" (Steinman, *Builders of the Bridge*, 19); "[T]he government considered him a subversive for advocating mass emigration. [...] When he left, Roebling had to sneak out of the country" (Reier, *Bridges of New York*, 11).

<sup>284</sup> E.g., "Roebling's friend Etzler was thrown into jail for inciting emigration" (Steinman, *Builders of the Bridge*, 19); "Etzler risked his life by openly advocating emigration [...] Prussian police arrested the street rat without a warrant and threw him in jail" (Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 26–27); "Etzler had just been released from jail [...] he had urged others to emigrate with him, but his proselytizing landed him in prison for treason" (Mensch, *In the Shadow of Genius*, 34).

<sup>285</sup> "Among his early influences none was profounder nor more lasting than his association with the philosopher Hegel [...] The relationship was instrumental in his decision [...] to leave Germany for America" (Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 42).

<sup>286</sup> "Roebling [...] soon became not only an avid disciple of Hegel but also a personal friend and confidant of the aging professor of philosophy" (Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 5); "During his university career he became a protege of the brilliant, charismatic philosophy professor Georg Hegel. Roebling was deeply influenced by the idealistic philosopher" (Reier, *Bridges of New York*, 11).

of Roebling, Etzler or both (including the Brooklyn Bridge,<sup>287</sup> Etzler's mechanical inventions<sup>288</sup> and political experiments,<sup>289</sup> etc.) were understood by their creators as symbolic representations or physical manifestations of Hegelian concepts,<sup>290</sup> or that their other major life decisions<sup>291</sup> were somehow influenced by or consecrated to the doctrines or person of Georg Hegel.<sup>292</sup>

None of the above claims about the Mühlhausen emigration scheme of 1831 are at all congruent with primary archival evidence. Many of them are directly contradicted by it. Yet in various forms they have also served as virtually the entire received history of the scheme for almost a century.

Especially importantly in the case of Etzler, these ideas are depended upon by the two main monograph-length treatments of the figure—Brostowin's 1969 doctoral thesis and Stoll's *Great Delusion*—to explore Etzler's philosophical outlook and the development of his mature system. The Hegel myth in particular is the unifying premise of Stoll's opening chapter—almost a quarter of the book<sup>293</sup>—and dominates his whole characterisation of Etzler's thought. The reader is escorted through the intellectual development of “Etzler the Hegelian socialist”;<sup>294</sup> rich details about biographical events that in fact never occurred (such as his arrest and incarceration) are interlaced with critical insights into “Etzler's inward journey—the one that led him to rectify the idea with the object in his own dialectic”.<sup>295</sup> The unavoidable conclusion to which Stoll delivers his audience is that the central features of the mature Etzlerist programme were a product of Etzler's deep-rooted Hegelian *Weltanschauung*: “his education in Hegel [...] imbued him with a desire to organize social life and create environmental order as an outward sign of the rational idealism he saw operating in the world”.<sup>296</sup> The following extract is representative of the supporting narrative:

Etzler had Hegel to mull over when jailers brought him his daily gruel. In calling for Germans to leave the fatherland and join him in the United States,

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<sup>287</sup> “A fusion of these dimensions was necessary, in Roebling's mind, if the bridge was to possess the Hegelian trait of actuality or *Wirklichkeit*” (Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 68).

<sup>288</sup> “Etzler's thought was linear, logical, cause—effect, following the logical thinking he had learned from the master, Hegel. His thought was like a linear block diagram in which the blocks were words such as *windmill*, *reaper*, or *gang plow*” (Hindle, ‘Spatial Thinking in the Bridge Era’, 134).

<sup>289</sup> “The relationship between the youthful engineers is significant, for Etzler was a complete Utopian. His imagination fed on lavish images of the future society Hegel had referred to — a society of man's self-realization through mastery of nature” (Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 46).

<sup>290</sup> E.g., “Philosophically, Etzler's Hegelian utopia presents an extreme version of the same progressive ideology that Brooklyn Bridge, his friend's design, stands for”, Markku Salmela, ‘Two Subtexts of Paul Auster's *Ghosts*’ (M.A. thesis, University of Tampere, 2001), 74.

<sup>291</sup> “Trained by Hegel to recognize the potentialities of the moment, Roebling was originally drawn to farming.” (Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 49).

<sup>292</sup> “[T]he two men shared a common ideal, derived largely from Hegel, of a new world where man would at last master nature and free himself from the irrationalities of history” (Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 48).

<sup>293</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 9–44.

<sup>294</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 8. See also *ibid.*, 50.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>296</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 44.

he lived out another facet of Hegel's philosophy [...] Released in 1830 [...] Etzler ran into Roebing [...] Roebing had known Hegel in Berlin, had become a visitor to the professor's home and taken walks with him. In the shadow of his mentor, Roebing had prepared his own philosophical manuscript [...] Together [Etzler and Roebing] printed a pamphlet, which they distributed secretly [...] Roebing then organized an emigration society and drew up an underground plan for escape.<sup>297</sup>

Virtually all of the information presented in the above passage is provably false, yet because of the myth-making process associated with the Roebing literature, it is *also* plausibly supported by other (errant) sources. Although remedying such densely consolidated errors of fact about this phase of Etzler's may be worthwhile for its own sake, it serves a more important function in this thesis: these individual factual mistakes are enlisted by Stoll in support of a broader conclusion that commits us to misinterpret Etzler's ideas as much as to misapprehend his mere biography, a misinterpretation that I intend to challenge.

Whilst Stoll cannot be blamed for inventing it,<sup>298</sup> the Hegel-Etzler link is nonetheless elaborated with such confidence and vigour in *The Great Delusion* that several<sup>299</sup> subsequent scholars who wish to discuss Etzler in passing, using Stoll as their authority, now emphasize this utterly spurious facet of Etzler's philosophical belief as definitive above all others. "Etzler's thinking was *heavily influenced* by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [...]" writes Alexis Madrigal, citing Stoll, "[...] Transplanted to the American soil, these ideas took the form of utopian adventures".<sup>300</sup> The possibility that Hegelianism *took form* in the Etzlerist and proto-Etzlerist community experiments studied in this thesis, or even more generally in the North American utopian socialist projects that were broadly allied with them (such as those of the phalansterian movement, whose important theoretical relationship to Etzlerism is discussed at length in Chapter Six of this thesis) is difficult to sustain.

If we interpret the *taking form* of Hegelian ideas in these communities to mean they were deliberately studied and consciously implemented by participants, then the total lack of explicit engagement with these ideas in the extensive infra-movement correspondence debates through which

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<sup>297</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 34–35.

<sup>298</sup> The same cannot be said of passages purporting to describe the gruesome circumstances of Etzler's death (*Great Delusion*, 138), which are wholly original. For my discussion of Stoll's gratuitous fiction on this theme, see 7.7.

<sup>299</sup> It is to the credit of James Gregory that *The Poetry and the Politics: Radical Reform in Victorian England* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), despite reproducing some of Stoll's minor errors, at least remains silent on his view that Etzlerism owed its philosophical basis to Hegel. Unlike most commentators after Stoll, Gregory's direct consultation of archival material will have revealed, as it might to any "who do not judge before they examine" (PWR2, 59) that no trace of Hegel's purported influence is evident in any of Etzler's extensive published writings or surviving correspondence, nor those of his principal followers.

<sup>300</sup> Alexis Madrigal, *Powering the Dream: The History and Promise of Green Technology* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2011), 14 [emphasis mine].

substantial questions of policy and principle were frequently decided is nothing short of extraordinary. Leading movement activists, including Etzler himself, were hardly shy about naming and discussing their real influences in these contexts: in hammering out the distinctive identity of the Etzlerist movement, countless paragraphs flew back and forth on the philosophical and associative social systems of Fourier<sup>301</sup> and Owen,<sup>302</sup> for example. The theories of pioneering natural scientists, including contemporary compatriots of Hegel such as Liebig<sup>303</sup> and von Humboldt<sup>304</sup> received frequent attention, whilst the ideas of political economists like Malthus<sup>305</sup> were also intensively studied and debated, even if only to disagree with them. Unsurprisingly, the cross-disciplinary Etzler also regarded mechanical innovators such as Robert Fulton<sup>306</sup> as precursors to his own designs for machinery, while his fans compared his experimental work to early scientists such as George-Louis Leclerc.<sup>307</sup> Yet no Etzlerist, including Etzler, acknowledged Hegel's existence, much less his ideas, in an otherwise densely-populated roster of explicitly named early nineteenth-century theoretical influences on their political ideology; if any of Hegel's ideas *took form* here in the sense of conscious incorporation, they must have done so with uncharacteristic quiet. Hegel's (lack of) influence on North American utopian community experiments more generally can be given a more definite estimate by examining the testimony of the leading phalansterian Albert Brisbane, who, unlike Etzler and Roebling, actually did study under Hegel<sup>308</sup> during the period of the Mühlhausen emigration scheme (i.e., 1828–1831), though Brisbane would not meet Etzler for almost another decade.<sup>309</sup> The thickly-evidenced personal affiliation and ideological co-development that subsequently took place between Brisbane and Etzler might even recommend Brisbane's own explicit assessment of Hegel's impact on his phalansterianism as a rough model for its corresponding influence on Etzler's—i.e., what *would* Etzler have made of Hegel's ideas *if he had* studied them, as we know that Brisbane really did?—but this line of enquiry only further menaces the already-endangered chimera of “Etzler the

<sup>301</sup> E.g., ‘What Shall We Do to be Saved?’, *Morning Star or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 14 (12 April 1845): 106–8.

<sup>302</sup> E.g., Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, ‘Mr. Etzler and his Critics’, *Morning Star or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 13 (5 April 1845): 102.

<sup>303</sup> E.g., ‘The Truths and Falsehoods of the Theories of Leibig [sic]’, *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 18 (9 May 1846): 141–3.

<sup>304</sup> E.g., ‘Venezuela or Caracas’, *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 31 (9 August 1845): 241–2.

<sup>305</sup> See A. A., ‘Modern Legislation and Social Science IV’, *Morning Star or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 13 (5 April 1845): 98.

<sup>306</sup> See the NWOMS extract published as ‘Etzler's Advice to his Critics’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 50 (12 March 1842): 792; see also DEP, 10. By eerie coincidence, it was Fulton who engineered the same steam ferry that mortally injured John Augustus Roebling before he could complete Brooklyn Bridge.

<sup>307</sup> G. S., ‘To the Editor of the New Moral World [...] Buffon's Burning Mirror’, *New Moral World, or Millennium* 2, no. 73 (19 March 1836): 163–4.

<sup>308</sup> “I followed Hegel during the fall and entire winter [of 1829]. I wrote out the theory of psychology, the philosophy of history, the philosophy of religion, and the theory of the course of philosophic development—making in all five small volumes of manuscript. I had also frequent occasions to discuss with the disciples of Hegel various points of his doctrine, so that altogether I succeeded in getting a tolerably fair idea of the fundamental principles of the school”. See Albert Brisbane, *A Mental Biography* (Boston, MA: Arena Publishing Company, 1893), 89.

<sup>309</sup> See my coverage of the period 1840–1841 in subsection 6.1, both for the descriptive circumstances of Brisbane and Etzler's encounters and for a detailed comparison of their contrasting (though mutually influential) utopian systems.



Hegelian socialist”.<sup>310</sup> As I argue in Chapter Six, Brisbanian phalansterianism and Etzlerism developed in close parallel, but “after having gone through the philosophy of Hegel”, Brisbane wrote, “I discovered that I had learned absolutely nothing”.<sup>311</sup> Brisbane was aghast at Hegel’s “incomprehensible”<sup>312</sup> system, delivered in an “obscure and wretched manner”<sup>313</sup> and he “rejected it with disappointment and disdain”.<sup>314</sup> Brostowin therefore broadcasts his unfortunate ignorance of Brisbane’s ideas when he confidently states that “[a]t an impressionable age [Brisbane] was attracted by Hegelian philosophy”,<sup>315</sup> since nothing could be further from the truth—and I would suggest his confidence in Etzler’s own Hegelianism is equally misplaced.

Part of the issue for Brisbane was that Hegel’s dependence on expansive *a priori* first principles perpetuated a crisis of underdetermination: “Hegel started from conceptions so abstract, so universal [...] that his disciples could apply his theory to any form that suited their peculiar modes of thought”.<sup>316</sup>

This frustrating outcome, Brisbane explained, was symptomatic of the inherently flawed direction of travel within Hegel’s epistemology: “out of this primary foundation [...] Hegel evolved his whole system of Logic that applied to all departments of human knowledge,—to religion, to philosophy, to history, to art, and to all the special sciences”.<sup>317</sup> Brisbane thought it amounted to an absurdity, the “strange though remarkable effort of an intellect evolving the universe from the recesses of its own brain”.<sup>318</sup> No wonder that Brisbane so admired Etzler then, whose theory of knowledge, utterly unlike Hegel’s, was remarkable for its trenchant and painstaking empiricism:

Fact after fact must be brought gradually to [human] perception, and successive comparisons and combinations in applying real knowledge to practical life, to enlighten [the] mind and correct false notions or injurious customs.<sup>319</sup>

In the face of such clear expressions of position on the acquisition of human knowledge by Etzler, conspicuous here by their direct contrast to Hegel’s own, it is surely difficult to give assent to

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<sup>310</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 8.

<sup>311</sup> Brisbane, *Mental Biography*, 133.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> Brisbane, *Mental Biography*, 133.

<sup>315</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 43.

<sup>316</sup> Brisbane, *Mental Biography*, 88.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* This particular statement of Brisbane’s is remarkable for its exact inversion of Engels’ ridicule of the utopian socialists for “attempt[ing] to evolve [the solution to social problems] out of the human brain” in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. In Brisbane’s first-hand account of his interaction with Hegel, we see precisely one such utopian socialist recuse Marx’s philosophical idol with the same barbs. Friedrich Engels, ‘Socialism: Utopian and Scientific’, in *The Collected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, vol. 24 (Moscow: Progress, 1989), 281–326.

<sup>319</sup> MOJAEa, 217.

statements of the form, “Etzler drew much of his vision from philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel who professed the power of the human mind to transcend the apparent limitations of the material universe.”<sup>320</sup> Nor is it comprehensible how “Etzler’s way of presenting his plan is [...] heavily influenced by the very (technological) rationalism that he and his friend John Roebling had derived from Hegel.”<sup>321</sup>

Lured away from Etzler’s own words by the persistent embellishment of a myth whose subject matter reposes principally in the period of the Mühlhausen scheme, a myth that in its earliest iterations attaches not even to Etzler himself, but to Roebling, with whom Etzler had only a relatively brief and trivial association, wave after wave of contemporary interpretation reliably ascribes to Etzlerism foundational claims, assumptions, theoretical methods etc., that are completely alien to the core beliefs of its actual participants, per the surviving writings of the same. A root-and-branch reinterpretation of the Mühlhausen period that rejects the credulous association of Etzler and Hegel and returns to the direct primary evidence is therefore an important corrective to the hitherto literature of Etzlerology.

The earliest expression of the Etzler-Roebling-Hegel concatenation that seems to appear in print is found in Hamilton Schuyler’s *The Roeblings: A Century of Engineers, Bridge-builders and Industrialists, The Story of Three Generations of an Illustrious Family, 1831–1931*. Schuyler, though, cannot quite bring himself to assert this improbably intimate association of Roebling and Hegel as naked fact: “[i]t is a tradition in the family”, he relays, with admirable diplomatic caution, “that Roebling was Hegel’s favorite pupil”.<sup>322</sup> The idea that he studied under Hegel, then, is at best family legend—there is no evidence that Roebling, whose entire known programme of study was in civil engineering, made a concerted study of Hegel’s philosophical system in the well-attested manner that Brisbane did—and certainly no evidence that Etzler himself had any Hegelian connection (nor even

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<sup>320</sup> Christopher E. Johnson, ‘Turn on the Sunshine: A History of the Solar Future’ (PhD thesis, University of Washington, 2015), 25.

<sup>321</sup> Markku, ‘Two Subtexts of Paul Auster’s *Ghosts*’, 76.

<sup>322</sup> Schuyler dutifully transmits an anecdotal vignette in connection with this claim. Decades later, Roebling and his son Washington dispute the physical properties of matter. The senior Roebling supposedly shows his “Hegelian” character by “damn[ing] [his son’s] atoms” when the latter cites John Dalton, the chemist and pioneer of the theory of atomic weight. The tale is presented in a way that suggests its anonymous source may not fully understand what is implied by the punchline (i.e., why a damnation of atoms might be a peculiarly *Hegelian* weapon against Dalton). The joke here is that Hegel (who doubted the existence of atoms) publicly disparaged Dalton’s experimental work, describing it as “in die schlechteste Form einer atomistischen Metaphysik eingehüllt [i.e., ‘shrouded in the basest form of atomistic metaphysics’]”. Since Dalton’s discoveries became the foundation of modern empirical chemistry, posterity charitably overlooks Hegel’s crusade against atoms for the sake of his more profound contributions to the humanities and social sciences, but in Roebling’s youth this spat between prominent public intellectuals was likely better known. The anecdote—if true—illustrates that the byword *Hegelian* in the Roebling household was perhaps more closely associated with Hegel’s ignominious bluster on molecular theory—a domain of intrinsic professional interest to Roebling—than (as is inevitably assumed) with the former’s enormously more influential theory of history. For the anonymous anecdote, see Schuyler, *The Roeblings*, 12–13. For Hegel’s boorish attack on Dalton, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Naturphilosophie als der Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1842), 409.

a connection to Roebeling) prior to the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* scheme. The idea that they were forced to conspire secretly together in the production of AAVSN under conditions of intensive state repression, including Etzler's alleged incarceration are also refutable, as I will show.

Though it can scarcely be pretended that the Kingdom of Prussia under Frederick William III was an environment well-fitted to the exercise of liberal or democratic rights, it must nonetheless be insisted on the basis of the available evidence that the narratives of Brostowin, Stoll and the whole of the Roebeling-literature—especially concerning Etzler's fictional arrest, but also more generally in their representations of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* as an outlaw organisation, mobilising in conspiratorial secrecy to realise a forbidden escape plan against the totalitarian will of the Prussian secret police—are without any credible basis in historical reality.

Organised emigration of Germans to the United States was exceptionally common throughout the whole first half of the nineteenth century; as emigrants *per se*, the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* were a tiny drop in a vast demographic ocean. Between 1820 and 1860, 30%<sup>323</sup> of all American immigrants were German, and these 1.5 million<sup>324</sup> were not the first: they typically joined large and well-established expatriate communities peopled by the descendants of at least 125,000<sup>325</sup> other Germans who had already made the trip in the eighteenth century. The prospectus of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* makes direct reference to the prolific scale of the *Auswanderung* migratory movement, enjoining its readers to “turn their inquiring minds towards the great western continents of the Earth [...] as many millions have before them”.<sup>326</sup> The phenomenon of *Auswanderung* was in fact so endemic that most German states at the time would have struggled to meaningfully control the constant outflow of their populations even if they wanted to, although as Bade points out, in many cases “[t]he migration legislation of the German states was liberal [...] their migration policies—as far as they had them—were included with the idea of a transatlantic export of ‘social problems’”.<sup>327</sup>

To read of Etzler “[r]otting in the hulk”<sup>328</sup> after he “risked his life by openly advocating emigration”,<sup>329</sup> one might suppose Prussia to have been the exception to this rule, perhaps using iron-fisted regulatory authority and repressive police tactics to choke the life out of its own domestic emigration movement even as smaller, weaker German states faltered and caved in to theirs—but this

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<sup>323</sup> This figure, which seems consistent with other available data, is given by Klaus J. Bade, ‘From Emigration to Immigration: the German Experience in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, *Central European History* 28, no. 4 (1995), 511.

<sup>324</sup> For this figure confirmed see e.g., David Edwin Harrell, Jr., Sally Foreman Griffith et al., *Unto a Good Land: A History of the American People* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 305.

<sup>325</sup> See Hans Fenske, ‘International Migration: Germany in the Eighteenth Century’, *Central European History* 13, no. 4 (1980): 334.

<sup>326</sup> AAVSN2, 1 [translation mine].

<sup>327</sup> Bade, ‘From Emigration to Immigration’, 520.

<sup>328</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 27.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

would be quite wrong, because “Prussia never actually forbade emigration”,<sup>330</sup> a fact that flatly refutes a central premise of many of the stories previously told about the adversities faced by the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*. The *hands-off* approach of the Prussian authorities with respect to criminalising emigration was consistent enough that they even refused to legislate on the issue when implored to do so by neighbouring polities:

Of the states whose own subjects were emigrating, the smaller ones lacked the power and apparatus to do much outside their borders [...] Prussia had the administrative apparatus [...] necessary for the implementation of any regulation of the emigration trade, and which the smaller states lacked. But the official Prussian attitude made cooperation impossible. The Prussian Interior Ministry held that any official recognition of the problem would suggest that the government did not look with uncompromising disfavor upon the *Auswanderung*.<sup>331</sup>

As Walker’s explanation shows, the Prussian government by no means approved of the mass emigration that was taking place under their noses in the 1830s—in fact they detested it—but it was precisely this disapprobation that absolutely ruled out the sorts of official activities of repression that supposedly forced Etzler and his colleagues underground. The Prussian authorities did not proscribe the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*; to do so would have unacceptably dignified the scheme as the symptom of a problem they wished to pretend did not exist.

I would like to offer an alternative genealogy for the repression-narrative that has been applied so consistently to Etzler’s time in Mühlhausen in the early 1830s, since it is unsatisfying to suppose that it simply came out of thin air. By comparing Washington Roebling’s 1924 narrative of his father’s passage from Mühlhausen<sup>332</sup>—which tellingly makes no mention of any Prussian police countermeasures whatsoever against the emigrants, nor, incidentally, of the senior Roebling’s devotion to Hegel—with Schuyler’s 1931 account of the same events,<sup>333</sup> I believe I have been able to isolate Schuyler’s text as the earliest published origin point of both the Hegel myth *and* the police repression myth. I have already passed comment on Schuyler’s tentative sourcing for the former. As to the latter, I venture the following explanation: Schuyler’s specific wording that Etzler and his

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<sup>330</sup> Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816–1885* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 94.

<sup>331</sup> Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, 93–94.

<sup>332</sup> See Washington A. Roebling, *Early History of Saxonburg* (Saxonburg, PA: Saxonburg Historical and Restoration Commission, 1924 [1975 reprint]), 6–9.

<sup>333</sup> See Schuyler, *The Roeblings*, 20–31.

associates were “placed under police surveillance”<sup>334</sup> shortly after Etzler’s reappearance in Mühlhausen likely reflects partial knowledge of a real procedure, the true implication of which was nonetheless misunderstood by Schuyler as he attempted to reconstruct (and romanticise) Roebbling’s early life from largely unpublished German-language materials belonging to an era antedating his own by a century.

A travelogue of the early libertarian socialist<sup>335</sup> Thomas Hodgskin, who visited Prussia during his extensive travels across the German-speaking world, gives insight into a specific Prussian regulatory control during the period that was likely the originating cause of Schuyler’s confusion:

A person is placed by the police in each inn as a valet-de-place, and to be at the same time a spy; he is obliged to give an account of all strangers on their arrival, and to carry their passports to the police for inspection. He is licensed by it, and no other can be employed. [...] The valet-de-place [...] intruded himself on me more than once, to tell me what I ought to do, and to warn me of the consequences of neglect. I turned him out of the room, and heard no more of him. [...] Governments forget the end of their existence when they employ so odious a means to attain a trifling object.<sup>336</sup>

I would suggest that Schuyler has therefore mistaken some (regrettably unattributed) mention of the above police-reporting routine, to which *all* incoming overseas visitors to Prussian territory—including Etzler, who had been living in the United States for the 7 years preceding—would have been indiscriminately subject, with *police surveillance* in the narrower and more exceptional sense (i.e., a clandestine, actively-targeted programme of person-specific reconnaissance, such as might be directed against the leadership of a proscribed organisation).

Since Schuyler gives no indication of how he was appraised of Etzler’s being placed under police observation on arrival, it has not been possible to verify this hypothesis beyond doubt. However, it would plausibly explain the origin of the police repression/Etzler-arrest narrative whilst taking account of the fact (lost on virtually all subsequent commentators) that the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*

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<sup>334</sup> Schuyler, *The Roebblings*, 21.

<sup>335</sup> Hodgskin’s pamphlet *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital, or the Unproductiveness of Capital Proved with Reference to the Present Combinations amongst Journeymen* (London: Knight & Lacey, 1825) was later subject by Marx to extensive critical review—see Karl Marx, *Economic Manuscript of 1861–63 (Continuation)*, in Marx and Engels Collected Works, vol. 32 (Moscow: Progress, 1989), 397–543. For a more recent in-depth engagement with Hodgskin’s political and economic thought, especially its libertarian and perhaps even proto-anarchist inflections, see Gary Chartier, *Anarchy and Legal Order: Law and Politics for a Stateless Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>336</sup> Thomas Hodgskin, *Travels in the North of Germany, Describing the Present State of the Social and Political Institutions, the Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, Education, Arts and Manners in that Country, Particularly in the Kingdom of Hannover*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1820), 83–84.

were *not* committing any crime by emigrating to the United States.

The Prussian police of the 1830s were evidently capable of significant outrages against privacy and dignity, but when it came specifically to the question of migration, it seems they were far more preoccupied with cataloguing the identities of those *entering* Prussia than they were with any specific action against those developing plans to *leave* it. Etzler, as a *de facto* visitor from America, likely faced routine police observation through a valet-de-place (per Hodgskin's account); but *not* in any specific connection with his role as the architect of an emigration scheme, and not in a manner that should be taken as evidence that the business of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* was conducted in defiance of any specific police repression.

Schuyler's fairly subtle mistake about the technicalities of Prussian migration law might have remained inconsequential, were it not for the vivid imagination of the Roebling-literature's two next major contributors.

Consolidating Schulyer's earlier slip, Steinman's version of events a decade later cemented the myth by implying that repressed Mühlhausen dissidents would have to sneak over the border to a 'free' Eschwege in order to publish secret escape plans;<sup>337</sup> Harrod's dramatic retelling of Steinman's account then offered luridly imagined scenes of Prussian officers ransacking Roebling's childhood home like the Gestapo while his mother concealed emigrationist *kompromat* in her pastries.<sup>338</sup> Elsewhere in Harrod's narrative, the plucky rebels are even treated to the sage counsel of a familiar celebrity cameo in their struggle against the state:

Hegel threw back his large head and laughed heartily. "Ah, John [Roebling] [...] I cannot see that there is much hope for your type here in Prussia. Freedom for new ideas is a long way off in Germany [...] Learn all you can, read everything you find on that wild and wonderful America [...]"<sup>339</sup>

But these mid-century pictures of a Mühlhausen wantonly trampled by jackbooted oppressors almost certainly owed more to the political realities of the 1940s than those of the 1830s.<sup>340</sup> By pure happenstance, the western perimeter of the Soviet Occupation Zone at the close of the Second World War precisely bisected the small strip of woodland between the two adjacent towns of Eschwege and

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<sup>337</sup> For the specific implication that such materials had to be published in Eschwege because of state repression, see Steinman, *The Builders of the Bridge*, 23. For the more general embellished repression narrative, see *ibid.*, 17–21.

<sup>338</sup> Harrod, *Master Bridge Builders*, 36–37.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>340</sup> In his preface, Steinman himself even confesses that he has "in minor features [...] drawn upon his imagination or taken slight liberties" (*ibid.*, viii). Part of the trouble is that this warning has been subsequently ignored: see e.g. Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 5, n. 6, where Steinman's account of the affair is cited authoritatively as if it is a work of straight history.

Mühlhausen, with profound and unprecedented local political consequences: “thousands of people followed the American troops to the Western side of the border [...] which was only 15 km to the west of Mühlhausen and in those days not barred by a wall or barbed wire fence.”<sup>341</sup> As the division between East and West concretised during the postwar period, Mühlhausen indeed became a heavily fortified frontier settlement and locus of authoritarian police espionage: one of the very westernmost border towns of the newly-formed DDR.

If von Dachröden, Etzler, Harseim and Roebling had been Steinman’s or Harrod’s contemporaries, they really would have had a difficult time getting out of Mühlhausen. Of course they were not, and although these tales of daring escape heroics in the German countryside no doubt made Roebling’s biography far more relatable to its audience, playing as they did on several vivid wartime archetypes in the imagination of a mid-century American public, they have also profoundly hindered later efforts to properly understand the political realities of the world in which the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* actually operated. What follows is an attempt to return to the verifiable realities of the affair, for the sake of understanding the authentic context for the early development of Etzler’s thought.

### 3.2 “Voluntary Combination of Efforts”: Etzler’s Role in the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*

What the private individual can accomplish only very incompletely and at great cost, is achieved here through voluntary combination of efforts during leisure time, for the moneyless enjoyment of all. The higher purposes of this association are merely hinted at here; but these hints should be quite sufficient to convey a sense of what this Society can and will become.<sup>342</sup>

Before returning to Prussia to assist in the project of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*, Etzler had been living in the Americas for several years, and had already begun to experiment with novel mechanical systems. As early as 17 March 1828, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives heard “the petition of John Adolphus Etzler, of Lehigh county, stating that he has invented a machine for making canals, and praying for legislative patronage”.<sup>343</sup> Demurring to pronounce directly on the machine themselves, the Pennsylvania legislators referred the matter to the Committee on Inland Navigation and Internal Improvement, in whose hands it remained without apparent conclusion for the next 5 years. A subsequent petition coinciding with the publication of the *Paradise* in 1833 would later be

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<sup>341</sup> Helmut Werner, *Landmarks in Organo-Transition Metal Chemistry: A Personal View* (New York, NY: Springer, 2009), 13.

<sup>342</sup> AAVSN2, vii [translation mine].

<sup>343</sup> ‘Monday, March 17, 1828’, *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* 1 (17 March 1828): 559.

processed in the same manner,<sup>344</sup> although unlike its predecessor, it at least elicited a response from the Committee on Inland Navigation and Internal Improvement—this time, they promptly sought the unequivocal resolution of the legislature “[t]hat the committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject”.<sup>345</sup>

It is possible that the lack of success attracting government sponsorship for the machine may have contributed to Etzler’s decision to return to Prussia in search of collaborators or patrons. He evidently found one in Friedrich Christoph von Dachröden. The von Dachrödens were a minor branch of the Prussian aristocracy with a special multi-generation interest in the patronage of the sciences. One of von Dachröden’s older relatives, Karl Friedrich, was the director of the Kurmainzian Academy of Sciences until his death in 1809,<sup>346</sup> and Friedrich Christoph’s membership of this family also made him a relation by marriage to the brothers von Humboldt.<sup>347</sup> Since Alexander von Humboldt’s experiences in the Americas are explicitly mentioned in AAVSN2,<sup>348</sup> it is conceivable that von Dachröden availed himself directly of this useful connection during his and Etzler’s preparations for the emigration scheme, though I was unable to find direct evidence of any such consultation.

The product of Dachroeden and Etzler’s collaborative energies, *Allgemeine Ansicht der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika für Auswanderer, nebst Plan zu einer Gemeinschaftlichen Ansiedelung daselbst* was published in Autumn 1830,<sup>349</sup> but since “the first edition [...] quickly sold out, additional demand made a second edition necessary”,<sup>350</sup> which promptly followed in February 1831.<sup>351</sup> In the intervening months, the association which was to carry out the emigration scheme advertised in the first edition was formally established: the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*.<sup>352</sup> Its two most senior directors<sup>353</sup> were Dachroeden and Etzler himself. A third, Henry Harseim, was apparently a merchant from

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<sup>344</sup> “Mr. Robinson presented the memorial of J. A. Etzler of Allegheny county, stating that he has invented a new plan for rail-roads and locomotive machinery, and praying for legislative patronage. Which was referred to the committee on inland navigation and internal improvement”. ‘Saturday, December 7, 1833’, *Journal of the Forty-Fourth House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* 1 (7 December 1833): 28.

<sup>345</sup> ‘Thursday, December 19, 1833’, *Journal of the Forty-Fourth House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* 1 (19 December 1833): 92.

<sup>346</sup> See the entry for ‘Dachröden’ in J. G. Gruber (ed.), *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 22, part 2 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1832), 18.

<sup>347</sup> Caroline von Dachröden married Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1791. For her full biography, see Dagmar von Gersdorff, *Caroline von Humboldt: eine Biographie* (Berlin: Insel, 2011).

<sup>348</sup> AAVSN2, 89.

<sup>349</sup> Season of publication—“im herbste 1830”—is explicitly specified on the title page of AAVSN1.

<sup>350</sup> AAVSN2, iii [translation mine].

<sup>351</sup> The preface to the second edition specifies precise month of publication (ibid., xi).

<sup>352</sup> Although AAVSN1 does not explicitly make use of this demonymic form, its usage is retroactively attested in Frieh. Fr., ‘Sachsenberg, Butler County, Pa.’, *Liberale Beobachter* [Reading, PA] 7, no. 336 (10 February 1846): 1.

<sup>353</sup> Based on the order in which they are attributed by name in this capacity (AAVSN2, xi).



Eisenach.<sup>354</sup> Contrary to subsequent exaggeration of his role, John August[us] Röbling appears in the text as the most junior<sup>355</sup> of the association's four named organisers; his main contribution at this stage seemingly having consisted of his family's<sup>356</sup> publishing house having been commissioned to physically print the pamphlet.

The scheme's prospectus bore the prominent hallmark of both von Dachroeden and Etzler's scientific research specialities, chemistry<sup>357</sup> and mechanical engineering, respectively:

Mechanical science offers numerous aids to alleviate human work, and transfer the burden onto animals and natural forces. These will be used, alongside technical chemistry, to maximum possible advantage.<sup>358</sup>

It is notable that whilst toil-relieving machinery is already present in AAVSN2, proposals for its use in the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft's* community settlement plan fall short of the work-abolitionist standard Etzler would set two years later in *Paradise within the Reach of All Men*. Mechanical displacement of human effort is not yet represented as the basis for the “total revolution of mankind”,<sup>359</sup> as it is in Etzler's fully-developed system, but at this stage only as a useful adjunct to the more general advantages of associative living and co-operation.

Nothing quite resembling the *Mammuth-Cultivator*, satellite, or other unique agricultural machines of Etzler's later system is yet discernible in the text of AAVSN2, though he evidently already had some specific applications of his renewable energy systems in mind. The settlement would create a collectively-owned mechanical construction device, comprising

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<sup>354</sup> See Ernst Ludwig Brauns, *Amerika und die Moderne Völkerwanderung: Nebst einer Darstellung der Gegenwärtig zu Ökonomie—Economy—am Ohio Angesiedelten Harmonie-Gesellschaft, und einem Kupfer: Georg Rapp, Leiter der Harmonie-Gesellschaft, Vorstellend* (Potsdam: H. Vogler, 1833), 293–294. Caveat lector: Brauns makes two misapprehensions about the exact professions of other directors, reckoning Etzler as a “protestant clergyman [protestantischen Geistlichen]” and confusing J. A. Roebling with his bookseller relative (“Buchdruckers [sic] zu Eschwege”), i.e., with the publisher of AAVSN2.

<sup>355</sup> The relative importance of the personalities involved in the Mühlhausen scheme has been completely misunderstood by prior researchers—see e.g., Brostowin & Arndt, whose annotation of Dachroeden and Harseim's names mentioned in Roebling's correspondence describes them as merely “[t]wo members [...] of the Emigration Society founded by Roebling and Etzler” (‘Pragmatists and Prophets’, 6, n. 5). The exact opposite assessment would be closer to the truth—if anything, Roebling was a junior member of Dachroeden's emigration scheme, not the other way around.

<sup>356</sup> The “Röbling'schen Buchdruckerei” in Eschwege, listed as publisher in both editions, may have been the same overseen by his cousin, to whom Roebling referred in later correspondence as “my cousin, the printer”. See John A. Roebling to Ferdinand Bähr, 13 December 1831, in Randolph C. Downes, ‘Opportunities for Emigrants in Western Pennsylvania in 1831’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 18, no. 2 (June 1935): 107.

<sup>357</sup> Frederick Christopher Dachroeden's interest in chemical research is confirmed elsewhere by Roebling, who speculates that “being a chemist, he [Dachroeden] could run a chemical plant here to advantage, as there is need for plenty of chemical products in Pittsburgh”. See John A. Roebling to Ferdinand Bähr, 13 December 1831, in Randolph C. Downes, ‘Opportunities for Emigrants in Western Pennsylvania in 1831’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 18, no. 2 (June 1935): 107.

<sup>358</sup> AAVSN2, viii.

<sup>359</sup> PWR2, 160.

a circular saw machine [Kreissägemaschine] [...] combined with a straight gang saw [Gattersäge] [...] for the rapid fabrication of housing [...] initially driven by oxen or horses, though eventually by water or wind power. This machine will become a major lever in the business of the settlement: what normally takes colonists years to achieve will take us only a few months.<sup>360</sup>

Hundreds quickly joined, and in May 1831, the entire association travelled to Bremerhaven in order to embark for the United States and put these marvels into practice, but by this point recruitment for the scheme had in fact been so successful that the whole body of colonists could not be accommodated on a single vessel, forcing them to split the membership into two parties in order to make the Atlantic crossing. At this critical juncture, the four named directors of the company were divided between the two ships in a manner that confirms my revised assessment of their relative importance within the organisation based on their order of attribution in AAVSN2. The largest possible majority of members unsurprisingly travelled with the association's principal leader—Friedrich Christoph von Dachröden—aboard the *Henry Barclay*, whilst it was decided that Etzler (the other main architect of the scheme) would superintend a second smaller contingent aboard the *August Edward*.<sup>361</sup> The two most junior directors (Heinrich Harseim and John Augustus Roebling) were then likewise allocated to the two differently-sized ships in reflection of their relative seniority to one another: Harseim was logically assigned to the main vessel with von Dachröden, whilst Roebling (the least organisationally responsible and—at just 25—likely the youngest of the directors) was finally deputized to Etzler and the secondary group.<sup>362</sup>

It was the evident intention of the two groups to rendezvous on arrival in the United States in order to carry out the objectives of the association as laid out in AAVSN2. However, the unanticipated complications arising from the incapacity of the *Henry Barclay* to take the whole of the membership as a single body would ultimately conspire to thwart the seemingly straightforward programme of the

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<sup>360</sup> AAVSN2, 85.

<sup>361</sup> The passenger manifest for this vessel has survived through the records of the US Customs Service, and has been useful in reconstructing what took place. National Archives at Washington, D.C., 'Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Philadelphia, PA', in *Records of the United States Customs Service, 1745–1997*, Film M425, Reel 46, List 133.

<sup>362</sup> This placement of Etzler and Roebling as the two ranking members in the same secondary vessel has doubtless exacerbated the prevailing incorrect theories of their close friendship, exclusive co-leadership of the scheme, etc., already surveyed in this chapter. Yet in full light of the evidence, it is obvious that they were thrust into this temporary condition of personal proximity and enhanced co-responsibility only by an accident of fate: the need to make an impromptu partition of the scheme's membership (and executive) in order to fit everybody into the available shipping.

Mühlhausen emigration scheme.<sup>363</sup>

Though the two contingents set off within roughly a week of one another,<sup>364</sup> they not only covered the distance at markedly different rates, but moreover (it is unclear whether by accident or design—the former seems far more likely given the impracticality of the result) put in at entirely different US ports over a hundred miles apart. The main party under von Dachröden and Harseim made exceptionally quick time and arrived in Baltimore, MD on or around 26 June,<sup>365</sup> where they then appear to have waited for several weeks for news of the rest. The ship carrying the smaller contingent, under the provisional command of Etzler and Roebling, did not make landfall until over a month later on 6 August,<sup>366</sup> and when it finally did arrive, it was to Philadelphia, PA rather than Baltimore.

Now Etzler and the *August Edward* party waited in turn at Philadelphia for news of von Dachröden and the main group, unaware of their whereabouts and intentions. They finally received word that the main party had come up with a plan to travel to South Carolina, where a relative of Harseim's was already established at a site near the town of Augusta.<sup>367</sup> Whether this trip was ever made is very doubtful—Harseim fell ill and died<sup>368</sup> shortly upon arriving in the USA—and von Dachröden himself eventually settled far from South Carolina in St. Louis, Missouri, where he married Martha Susanna Ludewig on 20 April 1836,<sup>369</sup> a fact hitherto unknown.

### 3.3 Roebling's Revenge: Private Empire-Building at Saxonburg, PA

With the passengers of the *August Edward* believing the main group to have left already for South Carolina, the brothers Roebling had, by 20 August,<sup>370</sup> fallen out with the rest of their party and formed a small breakaway faction, resolving “to separate [themselves] from the others and from Etzler”.<sup>371</sup> Though the large majority of the colonists remained cohesive,<sup>372</sup> three other men—O. J. G. Geuss,

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<sup>363</sup> It is likely this physical separation which is meant by Brauns' description of the Mühlhausen colonists as having made “the big mistake of not having their members fully united before departure” (*Amerika und die Moderne Völkerwanderung*, 294 [translation mine]), though this remark could also allude to subsequent ideological disunity within the group.

<sup>364</sup> The *Henry Barclay* reportedly left port on 12 May 1831; the *August Edward* on 21 May.

<sup>365</sup> This may be extrapolated by working backwards from 10 July, the date of correspondence in which Roebling recounted that “[Harseim and Dachroeden] reported to [Etzler's party] that they have been in Baltimore for 14 days and vainly waited for us”. See John A. Roebling to Ferdinand Bähr, 2 November 1831, in Karl J. Arndt & Patrick R. Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets: George Rapp and J. A. Roebling versus J. A. Etzler and Count Leon’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 52, no. 1 (January 1969): 6.

<sup>366</sup> See John A. Roebling to Ferdinand Bähr, 13 December 1831, in Randolph C. Downes, ‘Opportunities for Emigrants in Western Pennsylvania in 1831’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 18, no. 2 (June 1935): 76.

<sup>367</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 6.

<sup>368</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 7 November 1831, 196.

<sup>369</sup> St. Louis Genealogical Society, *St. Louis Marriage Index, 1804–76* 2 (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Genealogical Society, 1999), 5.

<sup>370</sup> See Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 5.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> The proportions of this fissure are grossly misrepresented by Stoll for the sake of making Etzler seem divisive and fractious: he misleadingly calls the enormously larger party “Etzler and the separatists” to achieve this effect (*Great Delusion*, 41).

Edward Manso, and Jancke<sup>373</sup>—were persuaded to defect with the Röblings. The stated rationale for the split appeared selfish and prejudicial: Röbling and the others wished to avoid “disadvantage [...] in both pecuniary and social relations”, by remaining with Etzler and the other colonists, since “[a]ll these people possess few means and little education, and are of little value to us”.<sup>374</sup> However, personal jealousy may also have played a role. Over the course of the agonisingly long voyage, Röbling had come to resent Etzler’s organisational seniority within the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*, finding it “annoying [...] that every man should subordinate himself to [Etzler’s] views, which we did not like to do”.<sup>375</sup> It is worthy of remark that he had no objection to subordination when it ran in the opposite direction: before departure, Röbling coerced another prospective colonist, Johann August Grabe, into signing a certificate of indenture to him<sup>376</sup> in exchange for a ticket, since Grabe’s family<sup>377</sup> could not otherwise afford the transatlantic passage.

Reflecting on Roebling’s opportunistic enlistment of the Grabes as his personal thralls before the voyage, Schuyler mused that “[w]hether the contract was actually carried out or not is impossible to say, though probably not, for the name of Grabe does not appear in the list of Saxonburg colonists as given by Colonel [Washington] Roebling in his *Early History of Saxonburg*”.<sup>378</sup> I have discovered evidence that Schuyler’s optimism about the non-enforcement of the contract was misplaced: Grabe, his wife and at least two of his five children are indeed buried at Saxonburg. Perhaps their omission from the colonist list in *Early History of Saxonburg* should instead be taken as an indication that the Roebling heir did not perceive his father’s servants as full citizens of the town.

On 22 August Roebling, together with his brother Karl and their three associates Manso, Geuss and Jancke, departed Philadelphia and made the “unpleasant, costly and boring”<sup>379</sup> trip to Pittsburgh. After a survey of the surrounding area, the brothers Roebling and the other non-servile members of their faction bought large tracts of private farmland for themselves<sup>380</sup> about 25 miles north-east of Pittsburgh itself.

The parcel belonging to Roebling would eventually become the settlement of Saxonburg, but Roebling’s model town bore little resemblance to the community-minded project envisioned by von

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<sup>373</sup> It was necessary to reconstruct these names directly from the *August Edward* shipping manifest and other primary evidence, since Arndt and Brostowin rather incredibly managed to mistranscribe the surnames of *all three* colonists in one go, erroneously rendering the trio as “Genss, Manco and Januss [sic]” (‘Pragmatists and Prophets’, 5).

<sup>374</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 5.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> This extraordinary document is reproduced in Schuyler, *The Roeblings*, 23–24. To Etzler’s significant potential discredit, his surname appears to implicate him as one of three witnesses to contract’s signatures, though his exact opinion of the arrangement cannot be gauged beyond the fact that he must have at least tolerated it enough to help process its paperwork.

<sup>377</sup> The *August Edward* manifest shows that Grabe travelled together with his wife and five children.

<sup>378</sup> Schuyler, *The Roeblings*, 22–3.

<sup>379</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 9.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., 25.

Dachröden and Etzler in *AAVSN2 der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*. Instead of the proto-socialistic *Gemeinsamkeit* principle<sup>381</sup> that had animated the original community plan of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*, Roebling decided that affairs at Saxonburg would run on a strictly self-interested and individualistic basis: he cautioned any who might join him there to “expect no more than a world with free [sic!] people, where everyone unhindered follows his interests as well as he can”.<sup>382</sup>

In contrast to Etzler’s cosmopolitan, internationalist vision of the future, Roebling’s privatised Saxonburg also conspicuously emphasised its own distinctly German ethnic and cultural identity. One visitor remarked that “everything here is German, even the German window-shutters, German bedsteads and the like. We found German cordiality here, and paired with industry and activity, that old German uprightness”.<sup>383</sup>

Roebling’s parting criticisms of Etzler are equally revealing. They attest to precisely the fundamental mismatch of political outlook and priorities that metamorphosed Saxonburg so far from the original scheme. Roebling complained that Etzler “never judged the matter from the point of view of a business man”<sup>384</sup> and that he “failed completely as far as mercantile interests are concerned”.<sup>385</sup> But the scheme as envisioned by Etzler and von Dachröden was never intended as a money-making enterprise in the first place, a point made explicit in the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*’s own prospectus, where they declared that “the aim is to enjoy an unclouded life of higher cultivation and the elevation of the senses and spirit, *not merely to make money*”.<sup>386</sup>

Whilst it was not expected that the members of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* would practice full communism of property—“everyone must be permitted [...] to dispose of their property at their own discretion”<sup>387</sup>—Roebling’s commercially-minded individualist orientation would nonetheless have been anathema to the entire premise of the intended community settlement. The authors of *AAVSN2* had argued that

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<sup>381</sup> The *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*’s principle of *Gemeinsamkeit* was expressly rebuked for its naïve faith in the benignity of human nature by a contemporary critic in the following terms: “[...] an axiom which, in this corrupt epoch, when nobody—who wishes to be preserved from great harm, even complete ruin [...]—may trust another person, is unfit to attract much admiration from experienced and cool-headed people” (*Amerika und die Moderne Völkerwanderung*, 294–5 [translation mine]). Brauns evidently also took the programme of *AAVSN2*, which he cited directly, to imply a certain propensity for leaderless self-organisation, since he rhetorically asked: “[w]ho should wield executive authority in associations such as these, and in what manner?” (Ibid., 295 [translation mine]).

<sup>382</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 177.

<sup>383</sup> Frieß, Fr., ‘Sachsenberg, Butler County, Pa.’, *Liberale Beobachter* [Reading, PA] 7, no. 336 (10 February 1846): 1 [translation mine].

<sup>384</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 172.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>386</sup> “Möglichst ungetrübter Lebensgenuß für höhere Bildung, für Gefühl und Geist, *nicht etwa bloßer Geldgewinn*, ist ihr Ziel [...]” (*AAVSN2*, 96–97 [translation and emphasis mine]).

<sup>387</sup> “Einem jeden muß es überlassen bleiben, [...] über sein Eigenthum [sic] nach Gefallen zu verfügen.” (Ibid., 98 [translation mine]).

[i]solated man is a helpless, wretched being, but in connection with many others, infinitely more mighty [...] a mere agglomeration of people without mutual interests—as is the case in everyday life, where everyone is out for themselves, and working, not with, but against one another; where all seek advantage at the expense of others—is not a society, not an entity at all: only a many-headed monstrosity where each tries to consume the other.<sup>388</sup>

The original community plan also stipulated a comprehensive system of social care. Elderly, infirm and sick members were automatically “protected against any depredation”, as were all orphaned or widowed relatives of deceased members, since “without the strictest adherence this principle, an association could not lay the slightest claim to humanity or modern sensibility”.<sup>389</sup>

The dependent and vulnerable could expect no such treatment in Roebling’s Saxonburg; a transactional and commercial mindset reigned supreme over every human relationship. After his success in indenturing the Grabe family, he wrote back to his friend Ferdinand Bähr that the latter might consider making a similar arrangement, though he should be sure to “write a special contract in duplicate for each individual child and have the child sign itself, if it can write, as well as the father [...] the contract with the parents must be separate”.<sup>390</sup>

### 3.4 Non-Prophet: Refuting Some Uncharitable Caricatures of Etzler’s Personality

Brostowin’s treatment of the decisions taken by Roebling in the period is perplexing for its sycophancy. Roebling’s abandonment of the other *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* pioneers in pursuit of his own private interests is twisted apologetically into evidence of his virtues: “unlike Etzler”, Brostowin opines, “Roebling was able to adapt to the new man he was becoming [...] to submerge his imagination for the present and become a practical man [...] a practical businessman”.<sup>391</sup>

This propensity to compare Etzler’s personality unfavourably to Roebling’s is consistent with Brostowin’s overall *pragmatist versus prophet* lens, which permeates his PhD thesis but also appears prominently in his collaborative work with Karl Arndt.<sup>392</sup> The *pragmatist versus prophet* perspective invites the reader to understand Etzler’s beliefs and behaviour in both this and later periods by interpreting his personality as that of a zealous but inept *prophet*, floundering against a world that is also peopled by hard-nosed *pragmatists* (a category inevitably coextensive with Etzler’s critics and ideological opponents: Roebling, Henry David Thoreau, etc.) who understand the harsh realities of

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 98–99 [translation mine].

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 107 [translation mine].

<sup>390</sup> Roebling to Bähr, 2 November 1831, 186.

<sup>391</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 14.

<sup>392</sup> See Arndt & Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets’, *passim*.

life in way that Etzler cannot, by reason of his utopian political commitments. “Although professedly not a prophet or messiah”, Brostowin alleges, “Etzler’s personality and frenetic drive often gave him the appearance of such”.<sup>393</sup>

Brostowin lays the groundwork for this anti-utopian interpretation of Etzler in his thesis’ second chapter, “Prophet in the Desert: 1831–1839”,<sup>394</sup> but the narrative he supplies there is compromised from the start by completely false intelligence about Etzler’s actual whereabouts and activities during the period he attempts to cover.

After Roebling’s defection in August 1831, Etzler and the rest of the section of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* that sailed per the *August Edward* immediately travelled to Pittsburgh themselves, presumably in order to continue to try and carry out the scheme as planned. But Brostowin gives a thoroughly confused account of their departure, which has been repeated without correction ever since.<sup>395</sup> First, he misunderstands an 1831 sighting of Etzler “on a riversteamer *on the Ohio* [River]”,<sup>396</sup> to mean that Etzler was *in Ohio* [State]—hundreds of miles to the west across tracts of open wilderness—though in fact the Ohio River also runs directly through Pittsburgh, PA. Brostowin then misdates a letter sent by Etzler from Cincinnati several years later,<sup>397</sup> and combining these two errors, suggests that the entire *August Edward* party travelled to Cincinnati—a perilous journey that would have potentially taken weeks in the early 1830s (especially since he strongly implies<sup>398</sup> they went on foot!)—only to turn tail and travel 300 miles straight back to Pittsburgh in the direction they had just come, in time for Etzler’s *Paradise* to be registered there prior to its publication the following year.<sup>399</sup>

This made-up history dovetails intimately with Brostowin’s *Etzler the Prophet* construct, since it enables him to represent Etzler as a peripatetic desert preacher in the style of Moses:

Etzler [...] led his band of loyal followers in 1831–2 westward across Pennsylvania and Ohio to Cincinnati. On his messianic journey he stopped often in search of the right conditions under which he intended to re-establish the Paradise that Adam had lost for mankind.<sup>400</sup>

Whilst the invented journey helps to establish one flawed interpretation—Etzler’s stereotype as a

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<sup>393</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 24.

<sup>394</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 17–45.

<sup>395</sup> See e.g. Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 41–42.

<sup>396</sup> Arndt & Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets [Part Two]’, 184 [emphasis mine].

<sup>397</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 18 n. 3. For a fuller discussion of this letter’s true context, see subsection 4.2 of this thesis.

<sup>398</sup> The fictional odyssey is described as “Etzler’s western trek” (Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 18).

<sup>399</sup> See for example Brostowin’s footnote in Arndt & Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets’, 5, n. 3, where this mistaken chronology is stated as fact. The same erroneous assumption is reinforced in Arndt & Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets [Part 2]’, 176, n. 24.

<sup>400</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 17.

dogmatic cult-leader—the supposed arrival of the party at Cincinnati is then recruited to the reinforcement of another recurring false association. Brostowin does not understand that the term *Young Hegelians* refers to a specific Berlin intellectual circle<sup>401</sup> comprising a tiny number of well-known individuals (Marx, Feuerbach, Stirner, the Bauers, etc.)—in his idiosyncratic usage, a *Young Hegelian* is just literally any young person who is interested in Hegel<sup>402</sup>—so at this juncture we are treated to the rather surprising news that “Etzler found many kindred spirits in the Young Hegelians who constituted a large segment of Cincinnati’s population in the 1830’s.”<sup>403</sup>

Of course the statement is just trivially false—Etzler was not even in Cincinnati at the time—but besides that, Brostowin’s more general assessment that antebellum Cincinnati teemed with Hegelians (*Young* or otherwise) is a blunder. He cannot have read carefully enough the single item he cites in connection with this hypothesis—a monograph entitled *Hegel’s First American Followers: The Ohio Hegelians John B. Stallo, Peter Kaufmann, Moncure Conway, and August Willich*<sup>404</sup>—since not one of the four men (the aforementioned *large segment of Cincinnati’s population*) whose biographies the book communicates were in Cincinnati at the time either. Stallo arrived in 1839, Willich not until 1858, and Moncure Conway was *born* in 1832, the year after he and Etzler supposedly became “kindred spirits”.<sup>405</sup> Kaufmann, the only of the four eponymous Hegelians to have any possibility of experiencing a real-world encounter with Etzler during this period, nevertheless still lived over 250 miles from Cincinnati in Canton, Ohio, and no evidence suggests that they even suspected one another’s existence, much less met or became friends.

Yet in 1831, “[Cincinnati] boasted a large settlement of German immigrants,” says Brostowin, “who like Etzler, *sought to actualize Hegel’s ideas in America*.”<sup>406</sup> Rather like the idea that the Brooklyn Bridge was a pious monument to Hegel, then, Brostowin’s particular errors of detail with regard to Etzler are the mere symptom of a much more expansive mistake about the period’s general history: namely, a tendency to overestimate the influence of Hegelian ideas on American intellectual and political life in the 1830s.

In Brostowin’s case, the seeds of error he plants in his coverage of this period ripen and mature in his third chapter’s first subsection—entitled “Under the Sway of Hegel”<sup>407</sup>—where he delivers his intermediate conclusion that “it was Hegel, more than any other thinker, who held sway over

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<sup>401</sup> See Gregory Claeys, *Marx and Marxism* (London: Pelican, 2019), 20–21.

<sup>402</sup> This ignorance of the term’s actual meaning is demonstrated fairly abundantly throughout the rest of text: see e.g. Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 7, 51–52, 175.

<sup>403</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 17–18.

<sup>404</sup> Loyd Easton, *Hegel’s First American Followers: The Ohio Hegelians John B. Stallo, Peter Kaufmann, Moncure Conway, and August Willich* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1966).

<sup>405</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 18.

<sup>406</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 17 [emphasis mine].

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 46–52.



Etzler”.<sup>408</sup> His analysis of the actual ideas of both thinkers seems garbled, and depends on the most tenuous parallels:

Just as Hegel’s historicism is based on the idea that things succeed because they are good [...] so Etzler was convinced that the world would eventually adopt his scientific plan for alleviating man’s suffering because it was essentially good and true.<sup>409</sup>

It is difficult to meaningfully evaluate this kind of claim, since it is unclear precisely which aspects of either thinker’s repertoire Brostowin takes himself to be summarising here; no actual passages of text by either are supplied as examples. If he just generally means Hegel’s teleological view of history (albeit this is rather more than just *that things succeed because they are good*), then its imputation to Etzler is still completely unfair. Passages from Etzler’s own major works show abundantly that he did not believe in anything like the inevitability or teleological directedness of human historical progress:

Ancient nations, several thousand years ago, in Asia and Africa, were further advanced in many knowledges than we are now [...] It is true, improvements are made upon improvements [...] but they are made accidentally or at haphazard. There is no general system of this science [...] we are in a manner groping along in the dark, and wonder at every new invention and improvement [...]<sup>410</sup>

As to the more specific claim that Etzler thought his own political programme would be accepted because it was “essentially good and true”,<sup>411</sup> this idea seems almost tautological in its universal applicability—are there political theorists who avow that their own programmes are *essentially bad and false*?—and as to his confidence in its success, he actually remained, despite the boldness of his proposals, remarkably lucid about the possibility that they might *not* be realised in his lifetime—“who has read my writings? [...] Only a few have done so; and whether something great will arise of it, time must show”<sup>412</sup>—so even if complacency about political success were a uniquely Hegelian hallmark, Etzler would not actually be a particularly strong example of this vice.

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> PWR2, 57–58.

<sup>411</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 46.

<sup>412</sup> TVJAE, 17.

There are also some ad hominem evaluations of personality which, as with his earlier comparison to Roebeling, serve more as an opportunity to insult Etzler than as a vehicle for evaluating his or Hegel's actual ideas—"[t]he ebullient and impatient Etzler never learned the restraint and patience that Hegel later developed after his own radical youth"<sup>413</sup>—Hegel here is evidently yet another of Brostowin's *Pragmatists* against Etzler's *Prophet*, though apparently by dint of temperament more than philosophy. Brostowin's comparison has another bizarre implication though: since the substantive intellectual content of Hegel's *maturity* consisted most notoriously in the idea that the Prussian autocracy was the epitome of rational statehood<sup>414</sup> and Brostowin has already tried to convince us that Etzler was a daredevil freedom fighter against the same Prussian autocracy, are we to understand Brostowin as chastising Etzler for *not growing out of* his commitment to democratic values?

Further confused comparison of Hegel and Etzler's ideas takes place, though as the chapter goes on this seems increasingly to proceed by selecting and juxtaposing elements of the two systems virtually at random, e.g.,

Etzler's own paradisation of the earth [...] calls for a basic reform of society, that is, for the establishment of a new State—Hegel's true State—as the actuality of the ethical idea of freedom. Only when men contribute their money or labor to purchase shares of ownership in a joint-stock company can Etzler's plan be carried out.<sup>415</sup>

Why the particular use of the joint-stock company structure—the standard format of convenience for most utopian socialist communal experiments of the period, including all of the major phalansterian and Owenite ones—should be specifically equated with Hegel's ideal of the State is unanswerable; nothing in Etzler's writings suggests that he had this in mind, and we know for certain that others who advocated the joint-stock model of utopian community, especially Brisbane, explicitly did not.

Much of Brostowin's elaboration about Etzler's intellectual debt to Hegel appears to be a post hoc exercise though; he is already firmly committed to the spurious link in its purely biographical dimension. The conviction that Etzler was Hegel's apostle is established strictly by mistakes in his descriptive biography—first through the mythology of Roebeling's intimate mentorship under Hegel, then Etzler's imaginary flying visit to Hegelian Cincinnati—and a speculative and in places self-

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<sup>413</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 47.

<sup>414</sup> Claeys, *Marx and Marxism*, 20.

<sup>415</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 47–48.

contradictory heritage of ideas is then cobbled together only as an afterthought.

Brostowin then tries to give the “reasons Etzler failed to establish a communal society as he moved westwards [...] into Ohio”<sup>416</sup> (whilst missing the biggest reason of all: the desert trek’s historical unreality). His account of the imaginary venture does however repeat Roebing’s prejudices as fact, alleging that the fictitious push of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* into the Ohio wilderness was scuppered in part by “the nature of [Etzler’s] band of followers [...] mostly peasants [...] with little education and little love of ideas and ideals”.<sup>417</sup> He also speculates that a cholera outbreak could have been another possible reason they “curtailed their westward trek”<sup>418</sup> and returned so rapidly to Pittsburgh, although care is taken to demonstrate that personal blame lies with *Etzler the Prophet* himself, and for this last purpose, he engages in a lengthy exposition of a contemporary feud in which Etzler himself was barely<sup>419</sup> involved: the power struggle between Harmony Society leader Georg Rapp (the founder of the utopian settlement of *Economy* in Ambridge, PA, and former proprietor of Owen’s *New Harmony* site in Indiana) and his sworn enemy Bernard Müller (who styled himself *Maxamilian, Count de Leon* and declared himself ‘the Lion of Judah’ in an apparently fairly successful attempt to steal Rapp’s followers).

But Brostowin’s description of the showdown between Rapp and Count Leon is completely guided by the gruelling repetition of counterfactuals about Etzler’s own whereabouts and hypothetical sympathies during this time, with the result that his analysis of Etzler’s relationship to the Count de Leon affair delivers a redundant conclusion.

He introduces the Rapp-Leon altercation by relating it explicitly to his own misplacement of Etzler—“Luckily for Etzler, he did not [go] to the Pittsburgh area [...] in August 1831. Had he done so, he would have been tempted to join the Harmonists at Economy”.<sup>420</sup> On the next page, he reminds us that “[i]t was fortunate that Etzler decided to lead his followers further west [...] in the autumn of 1831, just the time when Etzler might have located himself in Economy”,<sup>421</sup> because “[h]ad Etzler come to Pittsburgh [...] in the autumn of 1831, he would have arrived at Economy at the same time as Count Leon. More than likely he would have sided with Rapp over Count Leon”.<sup>422</sup>

The ostensible purpose of this exercise of Brostowin’s is to decide which of the two spiritual leaders Etzler *would have* thrown his support behind *if he had lived in Pittsburgh at the time*, which is

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<sup>416</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 21.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>419</sup> Etzler (since he was at the time working in the bilingual publishing industry at the press of the *Pittsburgher Beobachter*) was later contracted as a German-to-English translator for some of the legal paperwork associated with the protracted battle between the rival factions, though there is little evidence that this involvement was anything more than a commercial service. See Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 27.

<sup>420</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 22.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., 24.

represented as an opportunity to weigh the extent to which Etzler was a *Prophet* as opposed to a *Pragmatist*.

We know that Etzler *did* live in Pittsburgh at the time, so Brostowin's repetitious quest to show how fortunate he was to be elsewhere is a waste of ink. Perhaps Etzler—a *Prophet* in Brostowin's reckoning only—just decided (pragmatically) not to embroil himself too heavily with these nearby feuding millenarian religious leaders because *neither* proclaimed doctrines that were really compatible with his own ideals, and not because he was physically out of reach of the affair (as Brostowin is at incredible pains, against all contrary evidence, to establish).

We can most effectively trace the real intellectual development of Etzlerism if we abandon the fetish that Etzler was a prophet—Hegel's, or anybody else's—during this period, having rectified the chimerical mistakes of fact on which such assertions rely, and instead repair to the authentic historical situation of Etzler and his companions.

# **Chapter Four**

*Paradise* on Trial in  
Pennsylvania and Ohio

(1832-1835)

#### 4.1 Ich bin ein Pittsburgher: Etzler Edits the *Beobachter* and Pushes Paradise in Pittsburgh

In late 1831, while Roebling was getting to work establishing his own miniature Germany at Saxonburg, the rest of the *August Edward* party, under Etzler's leadership, had also travelled directly to the Pittsburgh area. There, they had briefly sought land for the co-operative project outlined in *AAVSN2*, using steamboats to scout the Pennsylvanian sections of the Ohio River (in Pittsburgh's immediate vicinity).<sup>423</sup>

However, with most of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*'s funds and resources already embezzled by the Roebling splinter-group, Etzler and his co-colonist George Reinhold<sup>424</sup> soon felt the necessity of finding an intermediate source of income, which they did by establishing themselves as the editors of a new German-language newspaper, the *Pittsburgher Beobachter*,<sup>425</sup> in which capacity the pair would remain for the next two and a half years.<sup>426</sup>

In a manner bearing some biographical parallels to Marx's famous stint as the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*<sup>427</sup> a decade later (though *pace* Brostowin, this comparison is as close as Etzler comes to a *Young Hegelian*!) Etzler's own editorship of the *Pittsburgher Beobachter* between 1832 and 1834 put the latter into an environment that was evidently conducive both to the rapid maturation of his political ideas and to a sustained period of productive writing. By 14 November 1832, Etzler registered the title of the work for which he would be most famed, *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men*, with the Clerk of the Western District of Pennsylvania; he and Reinhold then used their own press to publish the first edition in February 1833.<sup>428</sup>

As Etzler's situation changed, his political focus was honed and refined. His convictions about the relationship between labour-saving technology and the flourishing of a higher quality of human life

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<sup>423</sup> On this river-trip, the colonists had a chance encounter with another of Pittsburgh's German expatriates, Henry Kleber. A careless misreading of this fact contributed to Brostowin's subsequent costly miscalculations about Etzler's movements in the period. For a biography of Kleber—who went on to become a celebrated musician in Pittsburgh—see Edward G. Baynham, 'Henry Kleber, Early Pittsburgh Musician', *Western Pennsylvania History* 25, no. 3 (1942): 113–120. For Brostowin's initial error, see Arndt & Brostowin, 'Pragmatists and Prophets [Part Two]', 184, n. 37.

<sup>424</sup> *Pace* Steven Stoll, who satisfies himself that Reinhold is "otherwise unidentified" (*Great Delusion*, 43)—I was able to establish Reinhold's initials myself from the shipping manifest of the *August Edward*. With this additional information, I located his tombstone in Williamsport, PA, which explicitly confirms his birth in Mühlhausen on 8 November 1802, reveals that he died on 25 June 1865, and suggests he was at some stage of life involved in medicine since he is interred there as *G. G. Reinhold, MD*. On 29 June 1854, he returned from a family trip to Germany per the ship *Europa*, from whose passenger manifest I learned his full first name, Georg (Anglicised as George).

<sup>425</sup> "Der *Pittsburgher Beobachter* was a midyear [1831] production [...] Etzler & Reinhold had charge of the project, which has subsisted until this day [1922]. Quadrennial changes in the Pittsburgh post office always were made the pretext for violent editorial utterances on the part of local papers". See George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs* vol. 2 (New York, NY: American Historical Society, Inc., 1922), 332.

<sup>426</sup> Like much of Brostowin's chronology for this period, his reports of the *Beobachter*'s history seem at least partially misdated, mostly for the sake of accommodating his commitment to the incorrect theory that Etzler led the *August Edward* colonists on a Mosaic journey to Ohio before the *Paradise* was published. See particularly Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 25–32.

<sup>427</sup> For biographical coverage of this seminal period in Marx's life, see Gregory Claeys, *Marx and Marxism* (London: Pelican, 2018), 41–51.

<sup>428</sup> Date of clerk registration and month of final publication are both recorded in the title pages of PWR1a/b.

were no longer just an attractive bonus feature in somebody else's co-operative emigration scheme. As his life entered its next chapter in Pittsburgh, these convictions would become the basis of a radical new political philosophy: a proposal for a "total revolution of the human race",<sup>429</sup> for the abolition of work, by *Powers of Nature and Machinery*.

It could be that Etzler already harboured some visions of a fully work-abolitionist settlement powered by the vast renewable powers of nature whilst still co-authoring *AAVSN2 der VSN* in 1830 with von Dachröden and the others, but withheld the full force of his ideas in order to conform his contribution to the project more acceptably to the preferences and expectations of his co-directors in the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*. With the exception of Reinhold, there seems to have been virtually no carry-over in personnel from the earlier scheme to the next phase of Etzler's career, which suggests that whilst his Mühlhausen co-emigrants may have been amenable to generally socialistic objectives, Etzler would have been an outlier among them if indeed he imagined the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* as a potential vehicle for creating a post-work machine city.

Esoteric references in the earlier text to the scheme's "higher purposes" and hints at "what this Society can and will become",<sup>430</sup> could nonetheless be read in support of the view that the dramatic aspirations characteristic of mature Etzlerism were already present in his imagination at that earlier stage, and merely tempered for the sake of reaching a consensus with his collaborators.

There were, however, some features of his new situation and surroundings that may have helped shape and develop his theories and convictions further. Perhaps wading through the waterlogged streets of Pittsburgh after the devastating flood of 1832 inspired Etzler to incorporate "dams along rivers against noxious inundations"<sup>431</sup> into the general plan of land development that his opus would call for the following year. Barely had he, Reinhold and the others arrived, than they would have witnessed first-hand those "powers in nature [a] million times greater than the whole human race is able to effect [...] that are playing before our eyes without any benefit".<sup>432</sup> On 10 February 1832,<sup>433</sup> the Ohio River burst its banks, wreaking utter devastation on Pittsburgh and its environs:

[...] it was *forty feet* above low water mark [...] many parts of the city were overflowed, and Alleghany-Town was under water. Houses, barns and stacks of hay and grain, were *instantly* passing down the Ohio—fifty houses are said to have been swept away, or turned over [...] <sup>434</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> PWR2, 212.

<sup>430</sup> AAVSN2, vii [translation mine].

<sup>431</sup> PWR2, 122.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>433</sup> 'Pennsylvania Weather Records, 1644–1835', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 15, no. 1 (1891): 121.

<sup>434</sup> 'Our Rivers', *Niles' Weekly Register* [Baltimore, MD] 41, no. 1066 (25 February 1832): 461 [emphasis in original].

Amidst the carnage, however, there was yet some evidence of the capacity for intelligent feats of human engineering to resist and perhaps even pacify and harness the otherwise destructive energies of violent weather and other natural phenomena for human benefit: “[...] the noble bridge and aqueduct resisted the flood and stood fast”.<sup>435</sup>



Fig. 6. Painted in 1832, the same year as the great flood, Russell Smith's *The Aqueduct, Pittsburgh*<sup>436</sup> offers a glimpse of the vista Etzler himself likely took in as he prepared the manuscript of the *Paradise*, envisioning as he did “channels of vitrified substance, bordered with dams against inundation; elevations or excavations of ground for any desired purpose; canals and aqueducts for irrigating the soil, at any time, any where [sic]”.<sup>437</sup>

Built human infrastructure like the Pittsburgh Aqueduct not only resisted natural disaster, but even channelled the same destructive natural forces into helpful applications for the improvement of the human condition. This may have suggested to Etzler's imagination a far grander series of construction projects than he had ever conceived as elements in his and von Dachröden's earlier settlement plan, or perhaps it only confirmed an already-present vision of architectural innovations that could support a workless future.

Either way, the dissolution of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* scheme appears to have been complete by 1833—failure to reconnect with Dachroeden and the others after Roebling's betrayal may have

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

<sup>436</sup> Russell Smith, *The Aqueduct, Pittsburgh*, 1832. Oil on Panel, 9¾" x 13", Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. For a detailed history of the circumstances of the painting's creation, see Rina Youngner, *Industry in Art: Pittsburgh, 1812 to 1920* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 9–11.

<sup>437</sup> PWR2, 212.



left the remaining colonists with insufficient resources to acquire appropriate land for the project—but after a year of drafting whilst working alongside Reinhold at the press of the *Pittsburger Beobachter*, Etzler’s manuscript for *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men, without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery* was also complete, and the first copies of became available to the general public in February. The extraordinary manifesto for the abolition of a work-based society was appended by open letters to US president Andrew Jackson and to the US congress, both dated 21 February 1833, inviting them “to bestow [their] most serious attention upon the subject”.<sup>438</sup>

Despite the radicalism of the *Paradise*’s proposals, it was by no means completely foolish for Etzler to petition the recently re-elected Jackson for material support at this juncture, given the prevailing political landscape. Mere months before the publication of the *Paradise*, the election campaign of 1832 had been fought and won against the backdrop of Jackson’s famous legislative battle against the Bank of the United States, during which the former had represented himself as a defender of “the humble members of society, the farmers, mechanics, and laborers”<sup>439</sup> against the predations of “the rich and powerful [who] too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes”.<sup>440</sup> Here then, Etzler evidently reasoned, was a perfect opportunity for this self-proclaimed champion of the poor to put his—or more precisely, the nation’s—money where his mouth was, by pledging material support for an unprecedented programme of improvements—Etzler’s “total revolution of the human race”<sup>441</sup>—which augured for these same humble members of society “a superior life in every respect to what was ever in practice”.<sup>442</sup> Jackson’s own portrayals of the unregulated commercial environment as an incoherent opposition of “interest against interest, and man against man”<sup>443</sup> and the propensity of contemporary pro-Jackson media to stylise him as the heroic vanquisher of a many-headed hydra bore parallels to the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*’s earlier characterisation of the capitalist order as “not a society, not an entity at all: only a many-headed monstrosity where each tries to consume the other”.<sup>444</sup> There was, then, at least an outside chance that Etzler’s new scheme might obtain some level of official recognition.

However, Etzler’s bold entreaty to Jackson should not mislead us about his political loyalties: it must be understood from the outset that the Etzlerism of the *Paradise* was by no means conceived of by its creator as dependent on legislative support, nor fundamentally as a set of proposals about government policy. The *Paradise* was instead calculated by Etzler to initiate a mass social

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<sup>438</sup> PWR2, 210.

<sup>439</sup> Andrew Jackson, Bank Veto [Message to US Senate], 10 July 1832, in John F. Brown & William White (eds.) *Messages of Gen. Andrew Jackson: with a Short Sketch of his Life* (Boston, MA: Otis Broaders & Co., 1837), 167.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> PWR2, 212.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>443</sup> Jackson, Bank Veto, 168.

<sup>444</sup> AAVSN2, 98–99 [translation mine].



*Human Condition*<sup>448</sup> (hereafter AIHC)—then Etzler made perfectly clear how this could be done: the AIHC “would require from Congress nothing more than to grant tracts of land for settlements, on reasonable terms, with a credit for a few years”.<sup>449</sup> As a transnational membership organisation though, the AIHC would insist on independently overseeing its own internal political affairs regardless of any specific arrangement it might make with state actors. It would organise itself on the basis of a confederal democratic structure,

limited to no particular country or place, and may extend to any part of the world, by co-ordinate branches [...] connected by deputies, in a central congress of the whole association, and the parts of a branch likewise by deputies in general meetings of the branch. [...] All branches, and parts of branches, communicate reciprocally all their informations [sic] received, or experiments made [...]<sup>450</sup>

Although it would elect officers—a president, secretary and treasurer would discharge various administrative functions within the organisation<sup>451</sup>—its actual decision-making procedures would differ markedly from representative electoral democracy, with each individual question of AIHC policy decided on its merits by the whole membership, using a hybrid of 50+1 majoritarianism and consensus: “[m]ajority of votes in some cases of minor importance, unanimity in cases of contribution, may decide resolutions for the whole union”.<sup>452</sup> In the opening decades of the twentieth century, similar general principles of confederal democratic organisation would later be adopted by revolutionary syndicalist formations such as the IWW, and also by explicitly anarcho-syndicalist unions such as FORA in Argentina and the CNT in Spain.

Yet the AIHC as envisioned by Etzler would not have been in open enough confrontation with existing state power to straightforwardly justify characterisation as a precursor to the democratic structures of anarcho-syndicalism. Provided its directly-democratic transnational political independence was not interfered with, then if AIHC’s work-abolitionist mission could be expedited by an advance of land and credit from the US Government, so much the better, and it would therefore gladly consider entering “contracts [...] highly advantageous both to the nation and [the] association, for general improvements of various kinds”.<sup>453</sup> Etzler hoped to lure the US Government into a

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<sup>448</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 105–106.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid., 142.

partnership with AIHC by suggesting that his team of utopian technicians could reciprocate any initial funding or land grants by deploying their automated machinery in unprecedented public infrastructure projects that would make the United States the envy of the world, thereby attracting so much immigration as to “cause a migration of nations, unparalleled in history”,<sup>454</sup> a prospect that Etzler was confident Jackson would regard as a desirable eventuality. However, Etzler warned Jackson, “I have no hesitation to confess, that I shall seize upon the first opportunity for application offered to me any where [sic]”.<sup>455</sup>

Whether or not the US government or any other private or public backer could be successfully importuned for funding was represented by Etzler as a matter of little ultimate consequence, however since “whether this be the case or not, it will not interfere with the interest of a society [i.e., AIHC] formed for the purpose of investigating, and eventually executing, the proposals”.<sup>456</sup>

Even without government grants, the mass-membership organisation of the AIHC itself, “open to all, both to the rich and poor, whoever will participate”,<sup>457</sup> would just use whatever independent resources it could muster anyway to press ahead and make “[t]he saving of human labour, the increase of productions [...] no longer a curse to the many, but a blessing, as it ought to be, to every one”.<sup>458</sup> If necessary, the AIHC would try to cover its own operating costs without external institutional support, creatively adapting the mechanism of the joint-stock company financial-legal format to effectively administer a variable system of membership dues—wealthier subscribers could initially be encouraged to contribute greater sums to “the common property”<sup>459</sup> of the association—though the actions of the AIHC were explicitly intended to render all concepts of wealth and property, and the very instrument of money itself, promptly obsolete:

The immediate effect of the application of the new means will be, that all what [sic] now constitutes wealth will lose its value. So what is at present called wealth will be of no consideration. The emigrants from foreign countries [i.e., to a future United States or other AIHC-improved territory] need not to have property; and if they have, it will be of little use. For what benefit could they derive from it[?]<sup>460</sup>

Since all needs-meeting products were to be unconditionally delivered, *gratis*, by megamachines

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 128–129.

“propelled by powers that cost nothing, and conducted by men whose labour is not required; who live thereon at pleasure”,<sup>461</sup> explained Etzler, “whatever can be bought with money now, will have no value. If the artificial products [of the work-based economy] should be of any use at all, it must be to place some of them into the museum”.<sup>462</sup> In any locality where AIHC’s objectives were implemented, there would therefore be “no occasion for complicated laws for the protection of private property”<sup>463</sup>—mechanically-guaranteed workless superabundance would make the very concept of property meaningless—an absurd relic from a primitive and wretched bygone age (i.e., Etzler’s, or indeed our own, work-based present). Regardless of whether the wealth that was needed to initialise the scheme came from government or any other source, such wealth was basically regarded as the instrument of its own abolition: a means to make differential wealth in general a thing of the past.

As for Etzlerism’s long-term relationship to state power, the quest for legislative and executive patronage of the *Paradise* should perhaps best be interpreted as an early example of what radical left organisers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would come to call a strategy of *dual power*:<sup>464</sup> independent institutions of transformative social change (in this case, the AIHC) would gather strength within the existing society, availing themselves only opportunistically of the support of elected officials, and expecting that the latter would soon be superseded entirely by the new institutions of directly democratic power.

In Etzler’s strategic roadmap for the ascendancy of the AIHC, State and Capital would not be overthrown in a single cataclysmic revolutionary event, so much as they would just be devastatingly outperformed as mechanisms for meeting human need, to such a degree that both would become completely obsolete formats for the mediation of human affairs. Fully-automated moneyless provisioning would shortly instantiate “[a] new state of society, a new constitution of state, entirely different from any extant”.<sup>465</sup> Future humans, co-ordinating themselves through the AIHC, would be able, Etzler thought, to adapt any precise institutional arrangements to whatever considerations “the necessary effects of the practice of these [mechanical] means suggest of themselves”,<sup>466</sup> though in a manner that was sure “to be far less artificial and less complicated than they are at present”.<sup>467</sup> Half

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>464</sup> A well-known example of this usage is Bookchin’s concept of *libertarian municipalism*, which proposes the creation of independent popular democratic institutions “existing in growing tension with the nation-state [...] a *dual power* that contests the legitimacy of the existing *state power*. Such a movement can be expected to begin slowly, perhaps sporadically, in communities here and there that initially may demand only the *moral* authority to alter the structuring of society before enough interlinked confederations exist to demand the outright institutional power to replace the state”. Murray Bookchin, ‘Libertarian Municipalism: an Overview’, *Green Perspectives*, no. 24 (October 1991). Bookchin’s adoption of the term “dual power” should be carefully distinguished from the older Leninist concept of the same name.

<sup>465</sup> PWR2, 138.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

a century later, Engels would characterise the final dissolution of a hypothetical post-revolutionary communist state by surmising that “the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things”.<sup>468</sup> Political affairs in the AIHC-administered regions of Etzler’s *Paradise* were expected, it seems, to undergo a formally similar transition to the one captured by this famous expression, though with the significant distinction that under Etzlerism, the *things* of production—fleets of mechanical automata designed not only to assist but actually replace human workers—could be largely expected to *administrate themselves*.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that Etzler’s long-term strategy would potentially put both out of a job, neither Jackson nor Congress were tempted into an endorsement of the scheme, and even State government was reticent, though in the latter case it is not clear they even fully grasped what was being proposed: Pennsylvania’s Committee on Inland Navigation and Internal Improvement begged to be “discharged from the further consideration of the subject”<sup>469</sup> shortly after the Pennsylvania House of Representatives directed them to examine “the memorial of J. A. Etzler of Allegheny county, stating that he has invented a new plan for rail-roads and locomotive machinery, and praying for legislative patronage”.<sup>470</sup> That PWR1a/b was apparently mistaken for a railway prospectus by state legislators might give a rather unfavourable sense of the level of care and attention it would have received in even higher echelons of the American government, though we do not know for sure whether Jackson demurred to finance Etzler’s scheme because he actually disliked it, or because he, too, never bothered to read it properly in the first place.

In addition to the open letters to Congress and the President though, first-edition copies of the *Paradise* were also appended with a short statement—omitted in subsequent editions—the purpose of which was to facilitate the short-term movement-building aspirations implied by the main text.<sup>471</sup> The statement advertised Etzler’s intent to issue a regular monthly pamphlet for the benefit of readers of the *Paradise* who wished to take things a step further.

“Meetings are proposed,” wrote Etzler, “in which associations may be formed in the proposed manner. But there must be some centre, and some medium of communicating whatever occurs in this behalf. Therefore, it is proposed, to issue a pamphlet at the end of every month, of two sheets medium, in pamphlet form, under the title of *The New World*”.<sup>472</sup>

The monthly pamphlet would serve a partly didactic and discursive purpose: the “new, extensive,

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<sup>468</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, in *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, vol. 24 (Moscow: Progress, [1880] 1989), 321.

<sup>469</sup> Thursday, December 19, 1833’, *Journal of the Forty-Fourth House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* 1 (19 December 1833): 92.

<sup>470</sup> ‘Saturday, December 7, 1833’, *Journal of the Forty-Fourth House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* 1 (7 December 1833): 28.

<sup>471</sup> PWR1b, 97–98.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

multifarious and most important” subject matter of the *Paradise* would “be there more amplified; animadversions on the subject will find admittance in it; the queries and answers relative to the new means, and all other publications in relation to the subject”.<sup>473</sup> However, it would also serve as an instrument of propaganda—“to rouse men from their torpor and trivial life to reflection and co-operation for attaining a far superior sphere of life”<sup>474</sup>—and crucially, as the exclusive vehicle for the actual proceedings of the AIHC itself: “the meetings, and their resolutions, the decisions of the [AIHC’s] government, and in short, every thing [sic] transacted, or to be transacted, will have this pamphlet for its sole medium of communication”.<sup>475</sup>

Etzler enclosed the instruction that would-be subscribers should apply in advance for the first six months’ worth of pamphlets by posting \$2 to him in Pittsburgh; as soon as enough subscriptions were obtained, production of the pamphlets would commence. The first batch of subscribers would be treated to a buy-6-get-1-free promotion: the seventh number would be forwarded *gratis* to these lucky few.

There is no firm evidence that *The New World* actually went in to production—suggesting that Etzler may have received insufficient subscription requests at this stage to meet whatever modest fundraising targets he initially set for himself—and the fact that Etzler and Stollmeyer later decided to partially recycle the term in the title of NWOMS seems like a further indication that it was probably not put to use in the 1830s. Etzler’s intended format for the earlier pamphlet, though, matches up closely with the various functions of the Tropical Emigration Society’s *Morning Star*.<sup>476</sup> Although Etzler’s later writings, especially ETW, were also influential to the organisation, the procedural business of the TES was conducted in more-or-less the same fashion (i.e., principally through correspondence) which Etzler had already envisioned a decade earlier for the AIHC, though this turned out to be disadvantageous in practice: internecine conflicts between the branches and leading personalities of the TES were transacted publicly across the Atlantic through the printed medium of the *Star*, and were exacerbated by the significant time delays inherent in this system.

In any case, subscriptions for the speculative AIHC *New World* pamphlet do not appear to have flooded in during 1833, and the pattern of surviving documentary evidence suggests that more general promotional activity for PWR1a/b was also fairly sporadic, probably because Etzler was busy keeping himself afloat by working full-time on other paid work: the editorship of the *Pittsburgher Beobachter*, and also the German-English translating and interpreting work he apparently carried out for George

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<sup>473</sup> Ibid., 97–98.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

<sup>476</sup> For my further treatment of this source, see chapter 7 of this thesis.

Rapp in connection with the Count Leon affair and accompanying court case.<sup>477</sup>

In September 1833, the passages of Etzler's *Paradise* which describe how to harness and transmit tidal power for inland mechanical application<sup>478</sup> were reprinted without editorial comment by the abolitionist and public library advocate Jesse Torrey Jr. in his Philadelphia periodical *National Library*<sup>479</sup>—rather an odd choice of extract, considering that elsewhere in the text Etzler had written explicitly on Torrey's own two particular specialities (i.e., anti-slavery and information science)—then in December a second Philadelphia publication, Adam Waldie's *Journal of Belles Lettres* (not to be confused with the London literary supplement of the same name) published a more substantial review.<sup>480</sup> Waldie attempted to capture Etzler's political disposition by saying that he “out-Owens Owen himself”,<sup>481</sup> a light-hearted observation which at the same time revealed something of the difficulty inherent in communicating the precise flavour of Etzler's radicalism at a historical juncture when most of the extensive political vocabulary of socialism had not yet even come into existence, much less popular use. Waldie was charitable in his assessment of the technical feasibility of the machines themselves: to his credit, he appears to have taken seriously Etzler's groundbreaking hypotheses about the possibility of systematically storing generated power for later use<sup>482</sup> and converting the light of the sun into useable mechanical energy,<sup>483</sup> neither of which were known to be possible at the time, and which were therefore roundly mocked by several of Etzler's later and more prominent reviewers, though both technologies would later become accomplished facts. The inventor's philanthropic disposition caused a little more perplexity, however: Waldie could not quite wrap his head around what motivation Etzler must have for developing these world-changing technologies “without any prospect of taking out a patent, but for the mere pleasure of benefiting his fellow men.”<sup>484</sup> Etzler's extraordinary designs and uncommon motives evidently left an impression on Waldie, who would occasionally make tangential back-reference to Etzler in unrelated reviews.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> For contemporary coverage of the Count Leon saga, see: ‘Economy’, *Niles' Weekly Register, Containing Political, Historical, Geographical, Scientifical, Statistical, Economical and Biographical Documents, Essays and Facts, Together with Notices of the Arts and Manufactures, and a Record of the Events of the Times* [Baltimore, MD] 41, no. 1066 (25 February 1832): 472–73; and ‘An Affray at Economy, Pennsylvania’, *Niles' Weekly Register; [&c.]* 44, no. 1128 (4 May 1833): 151. Neither source makes any mention of Etzler, reflecting his fairly minor and non-partisan involvement as an external contractor providing paid translation services, despite how much has subsequently been made of this relatively inconsequential connection by Brostowin. See subsection 3.4 of this thesis for further discussion of this episode and its later interpretation.

<sup>478</sup> PWR2, 19–26.

<sup>479</sup> ‘The Power of the Tide’, *National Library, and Advocate of Civil and Religious Liberty; Or Universal Repository of Useful Knowledge* [Philadelphia, PA] 1, no. 9 (25 September 1833): 139–42.

<sup>480</sup> Review of *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men* [&c.], by John Adolphus Etzler, *Journal of Belles Lettres* [Philadelphia, PA] 2, no. 37 (24 December 1833): 3–4.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>482</sup> “One of his greatest conceptions is, that power may be stored up for future use”. *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>483</sup> “[...] by far the most potent of the author's ‘machineries,’ is his sunshine steam engine”. *Ibid.*

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>485</sup> E.g., ‘New American Publications’, *Journal of Belles Lettres* [Philadelphia, PA] 2, no. 38 (31 December 1833): 3–4.



Waldie's main review of the *Paradise* was reprinted verbatim in the *Virginian Farmer's Register* in April of the following year.<sup>486</sup> Outside of these few scattered instances, not much contemporary press seems to have followed for a while—we might imagine an expectant Etzler frequently checking his mail during this period and waiting with dwindling hope for a glut of AIHC subscriptions (and a letter from the President) that failed to arrive.

Whilst the initial promotional efforts associated with the launch of the *Paradise within the Reach of All Men* fell short of the sort of enduring global impact that would have been commensurate with Etzler's ambitions for the establishment of a transnational AIHC, his magnum opus was not entirely without a sympathetic international audience. In May 1834, Robert Owen (who was by then operating from London while his sons remained at New Harmony, IN) spotted an advertisement for the *Paradise* that had been placed in the New York socialist periodical *Working Man's Advocate*,<sup>487</sup> and in a lecture to his followers, earnestly "introduced and recommended to consideration"<sup>488</sup> the book on the basis of the short synopsis provided. Owenite interest, piqued by this initial discovery, led to more substantial British reception of Etzler's ideas in the second half of the 1830s.

Meanwhile in Pittsburgh, Etzler was preparing for an attempt to make his work-abolitionist mission a full-time affair: we learn from another German-language newspaper, the Canton *Vaterlandsfreund*, that Etzler relinquished his editorship of the *Pittsburgher Beobachter* to one J. Smith in August 1834.<sup>489</sup> Etzler's departure signalled a political shift in editorial policy—unlike Etzler, Smith reportedly "declared himself completely for the Democratic party"<sup>490</sup>—perhaps implying that an earlier streak of firebrand utopianism disappeared from the pages of the *Beobachter* along with its founding editor. Under Etzler's editorship, the *Beobachter* had signalled its technical independence from party-political loyalties by explicitly professing an official position of 'neutrality', though the absurdity of this declaration seems to have become something of a running joke<sup>491</sup> among other German-language newspapers at the time, suggesting that the real content of Etzler and Reinhold's editorials was probably anything but politically neutral in the more general sense. From at least the

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<sup>486</sup> Review of *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men* [&c.], by John Adolphus Etzler, *Farmers' Register* [Richmond, VA] 1, no. 11 (April 1834): 657–9.

<sup>487</sup> 'The Paradise within the Reach of All Men [&c.]', *Working Man's Advocate* [New York, NY], no. (29 March 1834).

<sup>488</sup> 'In the lecture of Sunday evening last [...]', *Crisis, and National Co-Operative Trades Union Gazette* 4, no. 6 (17 May 1834): 42.

<sup>489</sup> 'Herr Etzler, der bisherige Herausgeber des „neutralen“ *Pittsburgher Beobachters* [...]', *Vaterlandsfreund* [Canton, OH] 6, no. 19 (23 August 1834): 3. Note that this newly-discovered evidence very strongly confirms that Etzler's correspondence to George Rapp, cited by Brostowin ('John Adolphus Etzler', 18 n. 3), is not "erroneously filed [...]" under September 1834" (ibid); this is certainly its correct date. In Brostowin's confused timeline, the letter (which he wrongly convinces himself is from 1832) supposedly shows that Etzler "sold his printing plant [sic]" in Cincinnati in 1832—but this is clearly a reference to the 1834 transfer of ownership of the *Pittsburgher Beobachter* press reported in my source; per my amended chronology, Etzler was based in Pittsburgh continuously from August 1831 until roughly August 1834.

<sup>490</sup> 'Herr Etzler, der bisherige Herausgeber des „neutralen“ *Pittsburgher Beobachters* [...]', 3 [translation mine].

<sup>491</sup> See e.g., J. M., 'Was heißt *neutral* seyn?', *Vaterlandsfreund* [Canton, OH] 6, no. 3 (2 May 1834): 2.

*Paradise*'s publication date onwards, if not before, Etzler's ideas about the mechanical abolition of work and money may well have been a staple: so insofar as 'neutrality' might be further taken to imply some sort of moderate centre-ground between being "ein Jacksonmann oder ein Bankmann",<sup>492</sup> it was hardly a laurel that could be bestowed on Etzler with a straight face.

#### 4.2 Mitbürger! The First Etzlerists Convene in Cincinnati

It was only after relinquishing the *Beobachter* to Smith in August 1834—and not, as Brostowin, Stoll and others have wrongly claimed,<sup>493</sup> in 1831—that Etzler travelled to Cincinnati. Moreover, the circumstances and rationale for his trip were completely different from what has previously been supposed: rather than leading scores of hapless Mühlhausers on a meandering, capricious, Mosaic quest through the desert, he appears to have travelled there by himself, presumably by ordinary means and for a quite definite purpose: collaborative interest in the project described in the *Paradise within the Reach of All Men* was at last forthcoming.<sup>494</sup>

On 5 April 1835 in Cincinnati, 17 collaborators, most of them German émigrés, announced themselves as the members of a new association to carry out Etzler's plan. Their founding statement, which was proliferated through the German-language press via the Cincinnati *Deutschen Franklin* (and shortly thereafter reproduced in the Canton *Vaterlandsfreund*<sup>495</sup> and probably other local newspapers as well) drew particular attention to Etzler's suggestion that the joint-stock company legal and financial structure should be adapted to a non-profit purpose—to an objective "far above the quagmire of self-servingness and self-interest"—and the group's founding members cited this as particularly strong "evidence of both the honest intentions and certainty of the inventor that his invention will afford extraordinary advantages".<sup>496</sup> The Cincinnati Etzlerist group would accordingly likewise operate on the principle that

[...] contributions are not paid to the inventor, but are held at the discretion of the society itself. It is therefore not possible for the inventor to profit in

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<sup>492</sup> Ibid. The binary political dichotomy expressed here by this critic of the *Beobachter*'s supposedly hypocritical editorial policy is yet another reference to Andrew Jackson's famous legislative struggle against the Bank of the United States, which dominated the electoral landscape throughout the mid-1830s. Etzler's political horizon completely transcended the question of banking regulation—he was neither a *Jacksonmann* nor a *Bankmann*—but nor was he between them; he was far to what we would now call the *left* of both. Waldie's clunky summary of Etzler as one who "out-Owens Owen" shows the relatively limited availability of socialist vocabulary at this early point; many of Etzler's peers may have struggled to place his ideas coherently within the political coordinates of the day.

<sup>493</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 17; Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 41.

<sup>494</sup> That Etzler first arrived in Cincinnati in 1834 is doubly confirmed by his collaborator Charles Reemelin, who recalled that Etzler "came to Cincinnati in 1834 after the failure of his colony [i.e., the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*] in Pennsylvania". See C[harles] R[eemelin], 'John A. Röbling', *Deutsche Pionier* [Cincinnati, OH] 1, no. 7 (September 1869): 198 [translation mine].

<sup>495</sup> 'Adresse an die Deutschen in den Vereinigten Staaten', *Vaterlandsfreund* [Canton, OH] 7, no. 2 (1 May 1835): 1.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid. [translation mine].

advance—only once the implementation is complete—and even then, not in the form of some specific monetary sum, but only as a small part of the pure general profit obtained by the society through his invention.<sup>497</sup>

Etzler might not have intended to profiteer, but he would still need to eat—and so echoing Waldie’s earlier reflections about how singular it was to deliberately avoid commercialising the machines despite their obvious usefulness, the new group urged fellow-citizens to help financially support the scheme partly in order to ensure that Etzler, whose commitment to human *Gemeinsamkeit* was currently motivating him to try and defy the logic of the commercial system, would not eventually find himself “forced by circumstance to surrender his invention to usurious profit, rather than general benefit”.<sup>498</sup> Yet the implementation of Etzlerism’s politically and socially transformative aims would require far more than just a pecuniary *buy-in* by passive philanthropists: the group also cautioned that making the *Paradise* a reality would demand “not just the attention, but the real active participation of the general public”.<sup>499</sup>

Unlike the later Tropical Emigration Society, whose predominantly British mass-membership included a significant proportion of working-class families, especially as a result of its proximity to the chartist movement, the men who threw their energies behind this Cincinnati Etzlerist group a decade earlier appear by contrast to have been mostly highly-educated professionals and entrepreneurs, often with specialised technical interests that especially predisposed them to take a sympathetic view of the scientific *avant garde*.

Amongst these were the award-winning sweetmaker John “Candy Myers” Myers<sup>500</sup>—whose construction of an elaborate 6-foot tall pyramid of sugar and marzipan won him the accolade *Confectioner of the West* in 1825—and the pharmacist Dr. Louis Reh fuss [Ludwig Rehfuß]—who reportedly procured Cincinnati’s first ever Christmas tree.<sup>501</sup>

Another notable founding member of the Cincinnati Etzlerist group was Gustav Bunsen. Bunsen’s cousin Robert was the inventor of the famous Bunsen burner, but fire of a different sort burned in Gustav’s heart: in 1833 he led an insurrectionary struggle in Germany, the *Frankfurter Wachensturm*, during which he and around 50 other Hessian revolutionaries tried to storm the watchtower of the Frankfurt Constabulary. Nine of his comrades lost their lives in the attempt, but Bunsen escaped and managed to flee to the United States. Cooling his heels in exile the following year in Ohio, he

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid., [translation mine].

<sup>498</sup> ‘Adresse an die Teutschen in den Vereinigten Staaten’, 1 [translation mine].

<sup>499</sup> Ibid [translation mine].

<sup>500</sup> For further biographical information on Myers, see Dann Woellert, *Cincinnati Candy: A Sweet History* (Charleston, SC: American Palate, 2017), 20–22.

<sup>501</sup> Alvin Fay Harlow, *The Serene Cincinnatians* (New York, NY: E. Dutton, 1950), 188.

evidently saw in Etzlerism the same transformative impulse for which he had recently been prepared to take up arms—the possibility that a radically new world could be made to emerge from the ashes of the old—though as a member of this new proto-AIHC it was no longer the heat of battle so much as the white heat of technology which would be expected to sear away the injustices of the age.

Bunsen was not the only one of Etzler's new supporters whose credentials were more political than scientific. Newspaper editor Henry Roedter [Heinrich Rödter] was another so-called *Dreißiger*—an exile of the German political upheavals of the 1830s—having been one of the organisers of the pro-democracy *Hambacher Fest* protest of 1832.<sup>502</sup> Carl Reemelin, a lifelong Democrat<sup>503</sup> who would go on to become an Ohio Senator a decade later, was another signatory to the founding statement of the Etzlerist circle in Cincinnati. His later reminiscences about the scheme have served as one of the most substantial sources of information that have been consulted here in order to reconstruct this previously unknown period of Etzlerist movement history.

Roedter, Reemelin and Rehfuss were not strangers to one another: only the preceding year, the trio had worked together to establish a mutual aid society amongst the local German expatriate community. On 31 July 1834, they had set up this organisation at meeting in the city hall, proclaiming that “through reciprocal aid we may mutually assure ourselves of a better future, to assist those in need, and to secure generally those charitable aims which are impossible to the single individual”.<sup>504</sup> The benefits of mutual association, couched in these terms, were evidently appealing to the sensibilities of many German-Americans of the period; they very closely echoed some of Etzler and von Dachröden's own rhetoric in the 1830 *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* prospectus, which likewise argued that living conditions in the United States were made “much more pleasant when emigrants unite to form a society and do together what is not possible for the individual”.<sup>505</sup> A number of other signatories to the 5 April statement, about whom less is known, can nonetheless still be identified as members of Roedter, Reemelin and Rehfuss' existing mutual aid society, including Dr. Sebastian Huber and Raimund Witchger.<sup>506</sup>

The prior existence and overlap of a separate (and not specifically Etzlerist) German mutual aid organisation, which appears to have continued to exist alongside the one established in April 1835 specifically to promote Etzlerism, has potential implications when trying to establish exactly what happened. It is not entirely clear from surviving evidence what degree of personal initiative or influence Etzler himself was able to exert in his interaction with this Cincinnati group, nor precisely

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<sup>502</sup> Henry A. Ford & Kate B. Ford, *History of Cincinnati, Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches* (Cleveland, OH: L. A. Williams & Co, 1881), 129.

<sup>503</sup> For Reemelin's biography, see Ford & Ford, *History of Cincinnati*, 130–132.

<sup>504</sup> Charles Frederic Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City, 1788–1912*, vol. 2 (Cincinnati, OH: S. J. Clarke, 1912), 13.

<sup>505</sup> AAVSN2, 44 [translation mine].

<sup>506</sup> See Ford & Ford, *History of Cincinnati*, 129.

how faithful their intentions or manner of organising were to the transnational cosmopolitan vision of the AIHC he had spelled out in the *Paradise*.

What seems most likely is that the group of expatriates, familiar to one another and clustered around Reh fuss and the other leading organisers, came across Etzler's work whilst the latter was still living in Pittsburgh in 1834, then contacted him directly as an already-formed collective in order to invite him to come and work with them in Cincinnati, on which basis he felt confident enough to leave the *Beobachter* behind entirely and relocate for that purpose in August. According to Reemelin's recollection of the affair three decades later, Reh fuss was Etzler's initial contact, though the rest were promptly introduced to him as a group once he arrived.<sup>507</sup>

### 4.3 Trunk Route: Etzler Builds the *Mammuth-Cultivator*

We do not know the precise detail of any benevolent or contractual agreement the group may have made in order to keep Etzler fed, watered and lodged in Cincinnati during the 7-month period between August 1834 and April 1835—assuming he did not live by independent means, which seems unlikely given his previous work commitments and money trouble<sup>508</sup> during the surrounding period—but whatever arrangement was in place, it freed up enough of his time to allow him to complete a really substantial piece of practical work: his first known autonomous farming-machine prototype, a forerunner of the satellite machine which the TES would construct and take with them to Venezuela a decade later.

It was Etzler's first recorded attempt to physically build a working model of the unnamed all-in-one agricultural and land-management megamachine proposed in the *Paradise*,<sup>509</sup> and in the two years since he first described the mechanical colossus in print, he (or perhaps his new associates) had come up with a suitably mighty name for it—not the satellite, yet—the 1835 model was billed as the *Mammuth-Cultivator*. An updated German-language description of the machine appeared in the Canton *Vaterlandsfreund* for 24 April 1835,<sup>510</sup> which made explicit some of its game-changing socio-political implications: together with its auxiliary systems as described in the *Paradise*, it would subordinate the renewable energy of natural forces such as wind and water in order to liberate human beings and animals from virtually all “major work on the necessities of life [*Lebensbedürfnissen*] and

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<sup>507</sup> “Once [Etzler] had made the acquaintance of Mr. Reh fuss, the latter assembled a dozen other Germans to discuss the great plans that Mr. Etzler carried in his head”. C[harles] R[ee]melin, ‘John A. Röbling’, *Deutsche Pionier* [Cincinnati, OH] 1, no. 7 (September 1869): 198 [translation mine].

<sup>508</sup> Etzler's cash-flow problems shortly after arrival in Cincinnati are in part attested by his 3 September 1834 correspondence to Georg Rapp and the Harmony Society. See Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 18–20, though *caveat lector*, Brostowin misdates the letter and profoundly misunderstands its context.

<sup>509</sup> See especially PWR2, 61–62.

<sup>510</sup> ‘Der Mammoth [sic] Cultivator (eine neue Erfindung von J. A. Etzler)’, *Vaterlandsfreund* [Canton, OH] 7, no. 1 (24 April 1835): 2.

higher culture”.<sup>511</sup> The *Mammuth-Cultivator* alone boasted 25 distinct labour-displacing functions (most of these in reality falling within the broader operational repertoires of automated agriculture, forestry, landscaping, construction and mining), and a miniature replica could moreover for a limited time be examined in person—and any questions answered by the inventor himself—on the premises of the Reh fuss pharmacy on Ninth and Main in downtown Cincinnati, for just 25¢ (a penny for each function, perhaps?) per viewing.

The iconographical juxtaposition of recently rediscovered flesh-and-blood creatures of the ancient past, such as mammoths, with recently or soon-to-be invented mechanical behemoths of a near-term high-tech future was a recurrent motif of American technological discourse in the 1830s; this provisional branding decision adroitly captured the enthusiasm of the decade for both types of discovery and especially for their thematic entanglement with one another. The following year, for example, Virginia railroad engineers giddily toasted

*The Locomotive: Monstrum horrendum!*—With bones of iron and bowels of brass; nourished upon fire and water; his veins and arteries pulsating with steam; he is swifter than the fleetest Arabian; stronger than a team of mammoths—unequalled in creation for speed, bottom, or strength.<sup>512</sup>

The press strategy the Cincinnati Etzlerist group deployed around the *Mammuth Cultivator* perhaps sought to channel the same set of contradictory fascinations—a spectacle that could simultaneously seem ancient yet futuristic, mechanical yet vital—in order to build up excitement (and funding) for the more serious humanitarian objectives of the Etzlerist programme. In alighting on the symbolism of the mammoth in particular, a specifically local stamp to the project may have been intended: in 1835, the Cincinnati museum was proudly exhibiting “a few fossil mammoth bones of extraordinary size”.<sup>513</sup>

A couple of weeks after the launch statement, the group announced that a new German-language text by Etzler would shortly be issued: *Anwendung der Leblosen Naturkräfte, die nichts kosten, zu allen Holz-, Erde- und Stein-Arbeiten* [“Application of Inanimate Natural Forces, that Cost Nothing, to all Wood-, Earth- and Stone-work”],<sup>514</sup> available for 25¢, the same price as a single micro-*Mammuth-Cultivator* viewing. Whether the text was produced or not remains unclear: this thesis

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<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> One of several toasts made at the official opening of the Winchester and Potomac Rail-Road in 1836, quoted in: ‘Mr. Bruce’s Address’, *Virginia Free Press* [Charlestown, VA] 29, no. 11 (14 April, 1836): 1.

<sup>513</sup> Charles Augustus Murray, *Travels in North America during the Years 1834, 1835 & 1836, including a Summer Residence with the Pawnee Tribe of Indians in the Remote Prairies of the Missouri and a Visit to Cuba and the Azores Islands*, vol. 1 (London: R. Bentley, 1839), 203.

<sup>514</sup> ‘An Das Teutsche Publikum’, *Vaterlandsfreund* [Canton, OH] 7, no. 4 (15 May 1835): 2, [translation mine].

appears to be the first piece of scholarship to ascertain that any work by this title was even advertised; I have been unable to locate any extant copy despite an extensive search.

As with the *New World* periodical provisionally advertised by Etzler in 1833, the fragmentary phrase *Leblosen Naturkräfte, die nichts kosten* [i.e., “Inanimate Natural Forces, that Cost Nothing”] in this 1835 advertisement anticipates another segment from the full title of Etzler’s 1841 *New World, or Mechanical System, to Perform the Labours of Man and Beast by Inanimate Powers, that Cost Nothing, for Producing and Preparing the Substances of Life*. One possibility suggested by this finding is that the 75-page 1841 publication may have been assembled largely from unpublished draft materials prepared by Etzler throughout the 1830s in the forlorn expectation that they would be published sooner; certainly this would explain the relatively prompt turnaround time between his return from Haiti<sup>515</sup> and his completion of the *New World, or Mechanical System*.

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<sup>515</sup> For a detailed account of this later period, see subsections 5.3 and 6.1 of the thesis.

# **Chapter Five**

Mammoth Disappointment in  
North America and a Sweet Life  
in Haiti

(1836-1839)



### 5.1 “Extraordinary Communications”: International Acclaim for Etzler’s Early Work

Etzler’s ideas continued to make waves beyond the newly-established group of supporters in Cincinnati. On 15 November 1835, having already mentioned it to his followers the previous year,<sup>516</sup> Robert Owen at last received his own full copy of the *Paradise* first edition. He could barely put it down. “From what I have read,” he told readers of *New Moral World* just after the book arrived, “it appears to be one of the most extraordinary communications ever made to the public”.<sup>517</sup>

Owen very quickly made arrangements with the “radical pirate”<sup>518</sup> bookseller John Brooks to have it reissued in Britain—Brooks had previously reprinted a contraceptionist pamphlet by Owen’s son<sup>519</sup> only a couple of years prior, so he was likely well known to the family—and already by January 1836, Brooks was advertising that he would “shortly” publish a book by the title *Paradise within the Reach of All Men*, though in his haste to announce the project, he neglected to even mention Etzler’s name in the advertisement.<sup>520</sup> It was out by the beginning of March,<sup>521</sup> together with a new preface by Brooks himself.<sup>522</sup>

This preface revealed that, true to his principles as a practitioner of book piracy, Brooks had not obtained from the author any right of reproduction. He had in fact not managed to make any communication, or obtain any news of Etzler whatsoever—“the effect of its [1833] publication in the United States, the publisher [...] has no means of accurately ascertaining”—with the peculiar implication that not only were Brooks and Owen totally unaware of the Cincinnati group’s concurrent activities surrounding the *Mammuth Cultivator* experiment, but Etzler, Reemelin, Rehfuß and the others were likewise equally unaware at this juncture that the *Paradise* was now receiving such enthusiasm and fanfare in Britain.

Brooks represented the rapid dissemination of the *Paradise* in Britain as a very urgent matter—“he judged it by far [sic] too important to remain unknown to the people of this country”—confessing himself a true believer in Etzler’s mission “to secure to the whole human race the richest abundance of every thing [sic] that is desirable” and expressing his ardent wish “that this result may be speedily attained”.<sup>523</sup> Owen clearly agreed: in February he serially published extracts of the *Paradise* in the

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<sup>516</sup> ‘In the lecture of Sunday evening last [...]’, *Crisis* 4, no. 6 (17 May 1834): 42.

<sup>517</sup> Robert Owen, ‘The “Paradise”’, *New Moral World, or Millennium* 2, no. 56 (21 November 1835): 26–27.

<sup>518</sup> So-called by William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 649. The ambiguous turn of phrase here should be taken to mean that he was involved specifically in the piracy of books, and was, additionally, a political radical.

<sup>519</sup> Robert Dale Owen, *Moral Physiology, or, a Brief and Plain Treatise on the Population Question*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (London: John Brooks, 1832 [1830]).

<sup>520</sup> ‘Just published [...]’, *John Bull* [London] 16, no. 787 (10 January 1836): 8.

<sup>521</sup> ‘Just published [...]’, *Examiner* [London], no. 1466 (6 March 1836): 160.

<sup>522</sup> PWR2, vi.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

pages of *New Moral World*,<sup>524</sup> and began to frequently quote Etzler's words and ideas in his own position pieces during the same period.<sup>525</sup> Consequently, Etzlerism entered the conceptual vocabulary of many of Owen's readers at this juncture, sowing the early seeds for the ascendant British Etzlerist movement in the following decade. Subscribers to the Owenite *New Moral World* began to think specifically of Etzler when they came across more general information about advances in the techniques of science and engineering, and some of them wrote in to that effect: for example, the initialised "G. S." sent Owen a clipping describing the solar-reflective experiments of the eighteenth-century French naturalist George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. G. S. thought that information about this earlier optical experiment, involving the concentration of sunlight in order to ignite flammable substances, "may not be unacceptable to some of [Owen's] readers, particularly those who have perused [the *Paradise*] by Etzler; as it may serve to show the possibility of applying one of the powers of which he [Etzler] proposes to avail himself".<sup>526</sup>

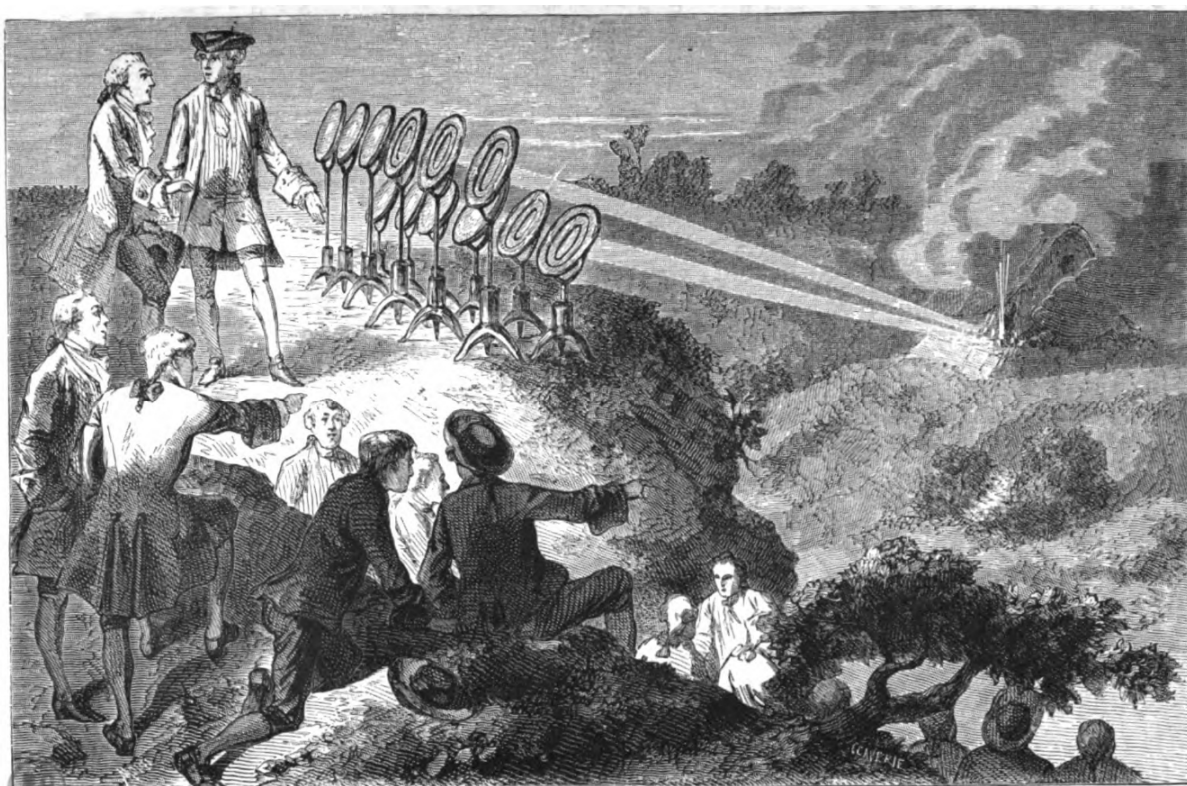


Fig. 8, The Comte de Buffon is depicted using reflecting mirrors to concentrate the rays of the sun and generate heat in this engraving from Figuier's *Vies des Savants*.<sup>527</sup> Though Buffon's eighteenth-century experiments were rudimentary by

<sup>524</sup> See e.g., 'The Paradise', *New Moral World, or Millennium 2*, no. 69 (20 February 1836): 134.

<sup>525</sup> e.g., 'Let me but find a UNION of a few intelligent men [...]', *New Moral World, or Millennium 2*, no. 69 (20 February 1836): 132; "'The science of mechanics is yet in its infancy", says the original thinking Etzler [...]', *New Moral World, or Millennium 2*, no. 71 (5 March 1836): 149.

<sup>526</sup> G. S., 'To the Editor of the New Moral World', *New Moral World, or Millennium 2*, no. 73 (19 March 1836): 163. Etzler would go on to refer explicitly to Buffon's experiments as precursory to his own in his later works, see e.g., DEP, 13.

<sup>527</sup> Louis Figuier, *Vies des Savants Illustres du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, avec L'Appréciation Sommaire de Leurs Travaux* (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1870), 373.

comparison to Etzler's, they nonetheless represent an early precursor to one of the major working principles of Etzler's own solar steam-power system—and likewise of still-more sophisticated twenty-first century CSP ensembles.

Besides their growing currency with Owen's subscribers and followers, Etzler's ideas became popular within Brooks' own immediate publishing circle as well. A pseudonymous "Student in Realities", whose atheistic treatise Brooks published in 1836, cited Etzler's *Paradise* as cutting-edge evidence "that human intelligence has taught mankind how to manage and coerce the physical world, how to direct all the elements, and the inexhaustible forces of nature [...] to make them labour FOR HIM".<sup>528</sup>

Mystical doctrines about the immortality of the soul and the existence of a blissful afterlife, the commentator argued, had served a consolatory purpose to the human mind during historical periods "when all the people poor, helpless and patient, consented to believe they were doomed *for ever* [sic] to drag on a life of incessant toil".<sup>529</sup> The overbearing influence of religion on public life was at least explicable under such conditions, even if unjustified. However, at the dawn of an age in which material scientific understanding could at last be applied systematically to alleviating the burden of poverty and hard labour—Etzler's ideas being precisely a harbinger of such an age—the "Student in Realities" surmised that "legislation and politics [should] have the same basis as morality, viz. the wants of human society [...] pure legislation and sound politics resolve themselves into knowing how to supply those wants".<sup>530</sup>

As the year went on, Owen's *New Moral World* published a much more substantial review article occasioned by the *Paradise*'s second edition (the correspondent demurred to be named).<sup>531</sup> The reviewer was "fain to accept, as a godsend, the pages of the trans-atlantic Etzler",<sup>532</sup> concurring with him in stressing the desirability of full automation: "[e]very kind of operation [...] which can be reduced to a series of regularly repeated actions, *ought* to be performed by machinery".<sup>533</sup>

Etzlerism did more than just clamour for the displacement of human beings by machinery, though: it also offered a compelling critique of the existing norms of production and consumption, drawing attention to the fact that mechanisation was not beneficial *simpliciter*, but only in conjunction with a total overhaul of the consumer economy. The aim was not, as under capitalist management of machinery, "merely to produce more and more, and to set labour at liberty to gratify new and fantastic

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<sup>528</sup> "A Student in Realities" [pseud.], *Serious Thoughts, Generated by Perusing Lord Brougham's Discourse of Natural Theology; with a Few Broad Hints on Education and Politics* (London: John Brooks, 1836), 55 [emphasis in original].

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., 54 [emphasis in original].

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>531</sup> Review of *The Paradise within the Reach of all Men* [&c.], by John Adolphus Etzler, *New Moral World, or Millennium* 2, nos. 84 & 85 (4 May & 11 May 1836): 255–256, 262–263.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid. 262.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid., 255.

wants, by inventing and tempting empty minds with a perpetual influx of useless luxuries”.<sup>534</sup> This type of vicious cycle only perpetuated the misery and toil of the work-based society, ultimately benefiting only a small proprietary elite. Etzlerism’s particular appeal then, far beyond a merely technical fascination with the replacement of human workers by machinery, was its insistence “that such powers should be made to minister to the good of *all*—not be applied by *the few* to their own individual benefit”.<sup>535</sup>

The reviewer somewhat hypocritically complained of Etzler’s “specimens of false grammer [sic!]”<sup>536</sup> and confessed to finding the specifics of his mathematical calculations about the magnitude of available renewable natural powers “so erroneous, that the mind at once revolts from the idea of their feasibility”. Yet neither of these perceived defects were enough to overturn a verdict squarely in favour of Etzlerism-in-principle: “without resorting to the *premises* of Etzler [i.e., about the gargantuan extent of natural powers], we may fairly adopt his conclusion”.<sup>537</sup>

Although Etzler’s new British fanbase apparently remained unaware for the time being of the attempts at Etzlerism-in-practice that were concurrently underway in Ohio, slightly more up-to-date news of the American situation somehow reached as far as Prague: in July, the German-language *Bohemia* periodical there gave a brief report of “Herr Etzler in Cincinnati”,<sup>538</sup> explicitly identifying him as the inventor of the *Mammuth-Cultivator* and briefly summarising his ambition to abolish all human work with a fleet of similar machines.

## 5.2 “More Mousetrap than Cultivator”: Crisis in Cincinnati; Mammoth Really Takes Off

It was not to be. The *Bohemia*’s editors did not realise it, but in the very same week their report was published, the *Mammuth-Cultivator* had already had its moment of truth—and had been found sorely wanting, with disastrous consequences for the incipient Etzlerist movement in the United States.

While the scale model of the *Mammuth-Cultivator* had been displayed at Rehfuß’s pharmacy for several months in order to drum up public interest, Etzler had been hard at work constructing its full-sized counterpart. The time had finally come for a grand unveiling and public test, which the group undertook on some farmland on the outskirts of Cheviot, a short distance from Cincinnati and owned by Raimund Witchner,<sup>539</sup> another of the 5 April signatories.

The power system of the *Mammuth-Cultivator* was simpler than that of the satellite: rather than filter the renewable energy source through an intermediate stationary power, thereby storing and

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<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> ‘Mosaik’, *Bohemia, Ein Unterhaltungsblatt* [Prague] 9, no. 90 (26 July 1836): 3–4.

<sup>539</sup> C[harles] R[ee]melin, ‘John A. Röbling’, *Deutsche Pionier* [Cincinnati, OH] 1, no. 7 (September 1869): 199.

regulating its output, the *Mammuth-Cultivator* appears to have used a system of kites in order to apply wind-power directly onto the mechanism itself, “pull[ing] on a gear train that could move a plough, a flail, a chaff-cutter or even a wood-splitter”.<sup>540</sup> This oversight was its undoing. As Reemelin remembered it:

In short, the machine and the wind could not be made to work together in the necessary manner. At first, the machine was too heavy for the wind, but as the wind became stronger, there was a scene like the one described in Schiller’s *Pegasus at the Plough!* [i.e., the machine itself flew away]<sup>541</sup>

In a turn of events that perhaps enlightens us as to the relatively low commitment of the members of the April 5 Cincinnati group to Etzlerism as a distinct socio-political creed in its own right—and suggests instead that they were perhaps only really interested in supporting Etzler’s experiments insofar as they could be subordinated to the agenda of their existing independent German Mutual Aid club—most of the members appear to have spurned Etzler immediately after the failure of the initial *Mammuth-Cultivator* trial.

However, “in spite of the fiasco, Rehfuß stood fast”, Reemelin recollected, “urging that we should put all other major projects on hold in order to retain Etzler for Cincinnati, and to that end, establish a school in which Etzler could hone our mathematical skills [...]”.<sup>542</sup> In Reemelin’s version of events, attempts were indeed made to convoke an inaugural course of seminars, though these were so poorly attended in the wake of the *Mammuth-Cultivator* trial that they were soon called off; whereupon Etzler’s financial support promptly ran out and he “left Cincinnati, grim about his great materialism”.<sup>543</sup>

A pseudonymous newspaper correspondent gave the following scathing account of Etzler’s departure, which was then circulated widely in the German-language press, including out-of-town newspapers such as the *Pittsburgher Adler* and Canton *Vaterlandsfreud*:

Last Thursday, 21 July [1836], there departed from town—with feelings of the highest resentment against the local population (with very few exceptions)—that deepest of thinkers—whose research plumbs even the depths of the ocean floor—the atheist philosopher and benefactor to humanity

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid., [translation mine].

<sup>541</sup> Ibid., 199–200 [translation mine].

<sup>542</sup> Ibid., 200 [translation mine].

<sup>543</sup> Ibid. [translation mine].

Mr Adam [sic] Etzler,<sup>544</sup> after he could not, with all his theoretically-applied mathematics, get his humanitarian machine, vulgarly known as the *Elephant-Plough*, to travel a single hair further than its scale model (which is more like a mousetrap than a cultivator).<sup>545</sup>

There were to be few, if any vestiges of Etzlerism in Cincinnati after his departure: according to the same source, there were rumours that “before its dissolution [...] the association is thinking of pinning an effigy of the machine's creator [...] to its masts before setting the whole thing alight—Rest In Peace!”<sup>546</sup>

Whether or not the Cincinnati group ever did get around to torching the *Mammuth Cultivator* in this manner, Etzlerism in Ohio was well and truly over in this moment; Etzler skipped town dejected and alone, probably without even the meagre consolation of having yet suspected the existence of his transatlantic admirers.

Though Etzler had played no active role in it himself, Owen's mid-decade promotion of the *Paradise*, and especially the consequent publication of the text's second edition by John Brooks, seems to have made Etzlerism significantly more familiar to English audiences in the later years of the 1830s than to American ones. Unbeknownst to Etzler, even as his *Mammuth Cultivator* experiment in Cincinnati went up in flames (perhaps literally), his name and the incredible ideas he had expounded in the *Paradise* continued to pop up with increasing frequency in British socialist publications throughout the second half of the 30s.

James ‘Bronterre’ O’Brien<sup>547</sup> was one such early convert to Etzlerism. His belief in Etzler's plan would endure for many years, and as late as 1847, his assistance would go on to directly benefit the Tropical Emigration Society's mission even once they were already in Venezuela.<sup>548</sup> Over a decade earlier, just after the *Paradise*'s second edition came out in 1836, Bronterre published a heavily annotated English translation of Philippe Buonarroti's history of the Conspiracy of Equals.<sup>549</sup> In a

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<sup>544</sup> This specific error is probably the result of an accidental conflation of the names ‘Adam Schmidt’ and ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, Schmidt having been one of the seventeen signatories of the 5 April founding statement, and therefore a leading Cincinnati Etzlerist.

<sup>545</sup> “Cicero” [pseud.], ‘Epoche in der Weltgeschichte! (Eingesand.)’, *Vaterlandsfreund* [Canton, OH] 8, no. 13 (5 August 1836): 1 [translation mine].

<sup>546</sup> Ibid. [translation mine].

<sup>547</sup> For a full biography of this singular factotum of nineteenth-century radical politics, remarkable in his own right, see Alfred Plummer, *Bronterre: A Political Biography of Bronterre O’Brien, 1804–1864* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971); or more recently Ben Maw, ‘The Democratic Anti-Capitalism of Bronterre O’Brien’, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 2 (2008): 201–226.

<sup>548</sup> Bronterre's *National Reformer*, and *Manx Weekly Review of Home and Foreign Affairs* continued to publish the correspondence and proceedings of the TES on the Society's behalf even after the collapse of the *Morning Star*.

<sup>549</sup> James ‘Bronterre’ O’Brien (ed. & trans.), *Buonarroti's History of Babeuf's Conspiracy*, (London: H. Hetherington, 1836).

footnoted editorial comment of absurd proportion,<sup>550</sup> Bronterre effusively cited the Brooks edition of the *Paradise*, urging his readers to consult it and ponder an (impossible) alternative history of the French Revolution in which Babeuf and his comrades became Etzlerists:

Had Buonarroti's conspirators seen that book, it would have been a powerful lever in their hands. It would, most likely, have induced them to limit the objects of the insurrection to the restoration of the Constitution of 1793, in the hope that time and knowledge would soon render that Constitution effectual for the [sic] working out the great ends developed by Mr. Etzler.<sup>551</sup>

Bronterre evidently saw in the *Paradise* building of the Etzlerist scheme a powerful vision of the physical manifestation of that *grand hospice ouvert à tous les hommes* proclaimed by Maréchal;<sup>552</sup> though here it would no longer be *la nature* alone, but rather *Nature and Machinery*, which would quite literally lay the common table for humanity, through the fully-automated growth, harvest, preparation and delivery of free food.

He was firmly convinced of the practicality of the mechanical proposals presented in the *Paradise*, since “though some of its statements appear extravagant, it is impossible to deny the truth of its general principles, or of the particular facts and experiments detailed in it”.

As both a pacifist and an anti-authoritarian, Bronterre also admired the fact that the AIHC's mechanical transition to an egalitarian utopia would likely not only proceed bloodlessly, without the hazardous violence of a *coup d'état*, but would moreover not fundamentally have to depend on the legislative trappings of the state whatsoever: “believing that the system of community must be the work of wisdom and knowledge, not of force or law”, he observed, “I believe Etzler's book to be one of the best that ever appeared for the purpose”.<sup>553</sup>

Others within the Owenite movement during this period began to argue for a great emphasis on work-reduction, citing Etzler directly on this question. In a piece of 1837 *New Moral World* correspondence, William Hawkes Smith put the case that Owen and his associates could “go further”<sup>554</sup> in the quest to provide workers with opportunities for self-development by prioritising

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<sup>550</sup> The note technically begins at *ibid.*, 217 n. \*, but runs for a total of six pages, containing multiple subheadings and thematic digressions.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>552</sup> “L'instant est venu de fonder la République des Égaux, ce grand hospice ouvert à tous les hommes [...] venez vous asseoir à la table commune dressée par la nature pour tous ses enfants. [The moment is come to establish the Republic of Equals, the great home open to all humanity [...] come and sit at the common table which Nature lays for her children]”.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>554</sup> W[illiam] H[awkes] S[mith], ‘The State and Prospects of Society’, *New Moral World; and Manual of Science* 4, no. 160 (18 November 1837): 30–31. For reproductions of this and other letters by the same figure, see Gregory Claeys (ed.), *Owenite Socialism: Pamphlets & Correspondence*, vol. 5 (London: Routledge, 2005).

worktime-reduction itself more squarely over attempts to reform people's character: "[w]e must commence our work by lightening labour, or, which is the same thing, by producing *leisure*; and follow up our efforts by encouraging a wise employment of the leisure thus obtained".<sup>555</sup> In support of this argument, Smith directly quoted Etzler's slogan that "[m]an must *first* be satisfied as to his physical wants, and be liberated from the *slavery of work*, before his mind can be accessible to superior culture".<sup>556</sup> This early formula—that unconditional reduction of workload must come before any serious expectation of behavioural reform or self-improvement on the part of those who work, since the latter is enabled by the former—anticipates similar lines of argument that would later be made by leading anarchist theorists and organisers in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Peter Kropotkin's concept of a revolution which "for the first time in history [...] considers the NEEDS of the people before schooling them in their DUTIES",<sup>557</sup> as well as his observation that "[i]t is idle to talk of studies to the worker, who comes home in the evening crushed by excessive toil with its brutalizing atmosphere"<sup>558</sup> concord with this earlier Etzlerist priority-ordering of revolutionary objectives.

J. A. St. John, an associate of the famous Peterloo agitator Richard Carlisle, was another English radical who became familiar with Etzlerist doctrines during 1830s as a result of Owen and Brooks' promotional activities. In 1838 St. John published a new edition of Thomas More's *Utopia*, appended with the text of Bacon's *New Atlantis* and (as with Bronterre's translation of Buonarotti two years earlier) dense with footnoted commentary. In an editorial annotation of the passages of the *New Atlantis* in which the infrastructural marvels of Bensalem are described, St. John remarked that "[a]n honest German, named Etzler" had proposed

still more splendid inventions than are here described. He has a notion that we may build habitable islands on a large scale, with towns, gardens, forests, &c., upon them; and in these comfortable contrivances, float over the ocean unrocked, and unconscious of sea-sickness.<sup>559</sup>

St. John's wry treatment of Etzler's plan was a little less credulous than Bronterre's, however. "The only obstacle to the construction of these floating Paradises," he quipped, "[...] is the few millions it would cost. Otherwise nothing would be more easy."<sup>560</sup> Others, too, poked gentle fun at Etzler as a

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<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 31 [emphasis in original].

<sup>556</sup> PWR2, 108.

<sup>557</sup> Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London: G. Putnam's Sons, [1892] 1907), 26–27.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>559</sup> J. A. St. John (ed.), *Utopia: Or, the Happy Republic, a Philosophical Romance, by Sir Thomas More, to which is Added, The New Atlantis, by Lord Bacon* (London: Joseph Rickerby, 1838), 254, n. 30.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.



mascot of the improbable and impossible. One such case said rhetorically of Etzler's "very bold speculations" that they nevertheless "do not seem less practicable at present than the concentration of popular force upon a given subject, or of the popular strength around a common standard"<sup>561</sup>—the joke here being that anything *less* practicable than Etzler's plan to enlist the "two high-mightinesses of wind and water" in "economizing the outlay of human capital and labour to such an extent",<sup>562</sup> must necessarily be regarded as very impracticable indeed.

Surviving reflections from Owen, Bronterre, Brooks, St. John and others show how widely Etzler's thought travelled within the British radical circuit even in the 1830s, long before he himself would set foot in the country.

Outside Britain, Etzler's system also continued to attract other transatlantic attention. In 1838, the Leipzig *Blätter für Literarische Unterhaltung* gave a review of the *Paradise*,<sup>563</sup> though this came about independently from the British interest of the preceding years, since the reviewer based his comments on a first edition copy: Etzler was reported as still living in Pittsburgh, and the review mentioned the planned *New World* monthly advertised at the end of the 1833 edition, wondering whether it had come into existence (and also whether "our inventive compatriot"<sup>564</sup> had yet received any response from President Jackson). Some German-speaking observers of the period were able to keep closer track of the American developments that followed the *Paradise*'s initial publication, however. The Cincinnati *Mammuth-Cultivator* trial of 1836 made an evident impression on the radical preacher Gustav Adolf Wislicenus, whose heterodox sermons earned him several prison stints in Halle. A decade later, Wislicenus would recall the machine's name in an article on the topic of 'the True Power of Faith',<sup>565</sup> though he quibbled about the full extent to which Etzler's plan, even if it were successful, could really live up to its abolitionist hype, since the machine,

[...] despite its supposed simplicity, would nonetheless first have to be built and operated by people—even if just one—and this would still require some amount of time—however short—which is to say, it would not have completely abolished human work.<sup>566</sup>

Despite the balance of coverage tending to tilt back across the Atlantic after the ignominy in

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<sup>561</sup> 'The Liberals', *Shepherd: A Critico-Theological, Social, and Miscellaneous Periodical, Conducted Upon the Principles of Universal Faith, or Pantheism* [London] 3, no. 3 (15 July 1837): 24.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

<sup>563</sup> Review of *The Paradise within the Reach of all Men* [&c.], by John Adolphus Etzler, *Blätter für Literarische Unterhaltung* [Leipzig], no. 268 (25 September 1838): 1090–91.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., [translation mine].

<sup>565</sup> Gustav Adolph Wislicenus, 'Die wahre Macht des Glaubens', *Kirchliche Reform: Monatsschrift für Freie Protestanten Aller Stände* [Halle], no. 6 (June 1846): 14–19.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

Cincinnati, Etzler's thought was not completely forgotten in the United States. On 27 June 1839, the editors of the *Philadelphia Botanic Sentinel* decided to reproduce an inexplicably selected extract from the *Paradise* of "J. A. Estler [sic]".<sup>567</sup> Without giving any indication whatsoever that the quoted passages are from a text whose main purpose is to advocate the total mechanical abolition of human work, they reproduced a few paragraphs from early in the text, wherein Etzler digresses about the gradual process of cumulative experimental knowledge.<sup>568</sup> Readers of the *Sentinel* unfamiliar with Etzler would have been quite unable to suspect, from the presentation of the material, that he had any interest in the construction of mechanical automata, the resolution of poverty and toil, or any other of his major themes—only that he thought scientific understanding in general accumulated "little by little", was subject to painstaking error-checking, and was corroborated through "compar[ison of] theory with experiments", by which iterative procedure humanity "is led gradually into more complicated truths"—a perfectly serviceable, though hardly remarkable, rehearsal of something approximating the scientific method. Quite how the editors could have thought that this relative banality, above all of the other *outré* notions fielded in the *Paradise*, would "prove interest [sic] to [their] readers"<sup>569</sup> is difficult to comprehend.

It is not likely that Etzler kept abreast of even these modest accolades, however. His rejection by the Cincinnati group had completely shattered his confidence. Miserable at his reception in North America, and still ignorant of his more favourable reception in Europe, by the time the *Philadelphia Botanic Sentinel* decided to laud his theory of knowledge in print, he had already quit the United States for the Tropics.

### 5.3 "No More Slaves to Labour": Etzler Moves to Haiti

The comparatively limited early US reception of *The Paradise Within the Reach of All Men* over the course of the 1830s was an outcome that greatly troubled and discouraged Etzler, who by the end of the decade felt ignored, isolated and vulnerable. As he saw it, he had painstakingly conducted groundbreaking technical experiments to the best of his ability, and canvassed tirelessly for potential collaborators at every station of society by every means he could imagine, but "the friends I have gained thereby", he reflected miserably, "are so few that I could write all their names on my thumb nail".<sup>570</sup>

Continually disgusted by the avarice and violence of a system in which people "live in madness,

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<sup>567</sup> 'On examining a work entitled "Paradise within the reach of All Men," by J. A. Estler [sic] [...]', *Philadelphia Botanic Sentinel and Thompson Medical Revolutionist* 4, no. 22 (27 June 1839): 346–7.

<sup>568</sup> The extracted text corresponds with PWR2, 17–19.

<sup>569</sup> 'On examining a work entitled "Paradise within the reach of All Men," by J. A. Estler [sic] [...]', 346.

<sup>570</sup> TVJAE 13.

like ravenous wolves, taking the substance of life from each other, and killing and tormenting each other, toiling and anxiously hunting for no good purpose”,<sup>571</sup> and dismayed by the perceived narrow-mindedness of an American public who would, despite all their sufferings, “not listen to the voice of reason, which endeavours to awaken them from their beastly slumber, from the slavery of labour”,<sup>572</sup> he withdrew to the Republic of Haiti in the late 1830s,<sup>573</sup> where for a while he intended to live out the rest of his natural life “in peace, and in the enjoyment of this beautiful, lovely, glorious nature of perpetual summer”.<sup>574</sup>

Etzler's precise activities in Haiti remain unknown, but there is reason to suspect that the stay held much deeper significance for him than merely scouting out a balmy retirement spot. Brostowin conjectures<sup>575</sup> that it was here Etzler conducted the experiments in artificial sugar synthesis that would form the basis of his enthusiastic theories about the substance, as advanced in ETW<sup>576</sup> and further publicised in Stollmeyer's *Sugar Question Made Easy*<sup>577</sup> (1845), a plausible hypothesis given that Haiti remained a major exporter of sugar throughout the nineteenth century.

Yet Haiti in the early 1800s was also a beacon of radical political ideas; the overthrow of French colonial powers by self-liberated slaves had led to the creation of the first free black Caribbean republic there in 1804. As the nineteenth century and the post-colonial development of Haiti continued—the 1822 annexation of Spanish Haiti (modern-day Dominican Republic) extended the abolition of slavery to the whole island—Haiti also began to capture the imagination of American abolitionists in their own struggle for black liberation. The Haitian revolutionary constitution summarily prohibited white land ownership and the acquisition of full citizenship by whites,<sup>578</sup> and conversely, guaranteed citizenship to non-white emigrants residing in the country for more than a year.<sup>579</sup> Consequently, African American activists in the United States agitated for emancipatory emigration to Haiti throughout the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century,<sup>580</sup> a fact

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> See Patrick Ronald Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler: Scientific-Utopian during the 1830’s and 1840’s’ (PhD thesis, New York University, 1969), 37; Steven Stoll, *The Great Delusion: A Mad Inventor, Death in the Tropics, and the Utopian Origins of Economic Growth* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2008), 97.

<sup>574</sup> TVJAE, 13.

<sup>575</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 37.

<sup>576</sup> E.g., ETW, 6–7.

<sup>577</sup> Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, *The Sugar Question Made Easy* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1845).

<sup>578</sup> Articles 38–39 in the revised Constitution of 1816—still in force during Etzler's visit—required that “[n]o white person, of whatever nation, shall set foot on this territory as a master or a proprietor [...] no other, after the publication of this present revision, shall hereafter pretend to the same right, or be employed, or possess the right of citizenship, or hold property in the republic”. This translation, together with any other English translated passage of the Haitian Constitution of 1816 cited hereafter, is taken from James Treadwell (ed. & trans.), *The Constitution of the Republic of Hayti; to which is Added Documents Relating to the Correspondence of his Most Christian Majesty, with the President of Hayti; Preceded by a Proclamation to the People and the Army* (New York, NY: James Treadwell, 1818), 62–91.

<sup>579</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Hayti (1816 Revision), art. 44.

<sup>580</sup> For a thorough treatment of African American emigrationist propaganda of this period, see Claire Bourhis-Mariotti, “Go to Our Brethren, the Haytians”: Haiti as the African Americans’ Promised Land in the Antebellum Era’, *Revue Française d’études Américaines* 1, no. 142 (12 October 2015): 6–23.

overshadowed today by the memory of more recent white-led overseas repatriation programmes for former slaves such as that which ultimately led to the establishment of independent Liberia in 1847,<sup>581</sup> or still later black-led schemes such as Marcus Garvey's at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>582</sup>

None of Etzler's prior interpreters have commented on the radical geopolitical significance of Haiti at this time, nor reflected on what Etzler's extraordinary decision to live on the island—where he, as a white European, would have been a second-class citizen, legally disbarred from owning property, in contrast to his black compatriots—implies about his beliefs or his political priorities.

In the *Paradise*, seven years earlier, Etzler had suggested to the American public that with the introduction of automated satellite-farming, “[t]he slaves in your country will cease to be slaves [...] for the new mechanical means will supersede their employment; there will be no use for slaves any longer to any purpose”. He further ventured that once machine socialism had rendered slavery obsolete, some reparation should be made to “this unfortunate race [i.e., African Americans]”, such as emigration “to some distant part of the world, if you think proper; colonize them, make them as happy as can be, and make some amends for the grievous wrongs they have suffered in this country.”<sup>583</sup> In his doctoral thesis, Brostowin uncritically characterised these passages as revealing what he called “[Etzler's] own brand of white supremacy”.<sup>584</sup> This interpretation was deeply flawed, since it overlooked some of the major dynamics within early nineteenth-century antislavery politics, especially those concerning Haitian emancipatory migration, which, viewed in conjunction with Etzler's own biographical information, properly contextualise the passages in question and speak to their anti-racist character and intent, *pace* Brostowin.

Black-led emancipatory migration efforts from the United States to Haiti had already been attempted as early as 1820,<sup>585</sup> and in 1824, Haitian president Jean-Pierre Boyer actively encouraged a major scheme of African American migration as an explicit instrument of black liberation, with which Etzler was almost certainly familiar. In terms very similar to those later used by Etzler, Boyer advertised Haiti's readiness “to meliorate the lot of a portion of the human race, sadly borne down by

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<sup>581</sup> The repopulation of Liberia by former slaves was initially coordinated by the American Colonization Society under racist auspices, and was criticised by many African American activists and their white supporters, who tended to actively agitate for Haitian emigration instead. For information on the relationship between schemes of African versus Haitian emigration from the United States in this period, see Sara C. Fanning, ‘The Roots of Early Black Nationalism: Northern African Americans’ Invocations of Haiti in the Early Nineteenth Century’, in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution: Selected Essays and Historical Documents*, eds. Maurice Jackson & Jacqueline Bacon (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 39. See also Ousmane K. Power-Greene, *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle Against the Colonization Movement* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014), 28–38.

<sup>582</sup> For a concise critical history of Garvey's UNIA movement, which attempted to organise African American emigration in the 1910s and 1920s under the watchword ‘Back to Africa’, see the fifth chapter of C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012 [1969]), 87–94.

<sup>583</sup> PWR2, 134.

<sup>584</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 115.

<sup>585</sup> See Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 97.

the weight of misfortune”,<sup>586</sup> further noting that “our brethren, who drag out in the United States a painful and degrading existence, will become, on arriving at Hayti, [sic] citizens of the Republic”.<sup>587</sup>

As part of the scheme, the Haitian government offered African Americans monetary stipends to “aid in defraying part of the expenses of the voyage of those who cannot bear them”,<sup>588</sup> and also generous land grants, promising to “give fertile lands to those who wish to cultivate them [...] [and] advance to them nourishment, tools, and other things of indispensable necessity until they shall be sufficiently established to do without this assistance”.<sup>589</sup> Boyer's correspondence reiterated and emphasised the special constitutional affordances available to all people of African descent:

all individuals of African blood, who will appear in the Republic, shall, after a years' residence, enjoy the civil and political rights and quality of a citizen [...] they shall enjoy in Hayti, all civil and political rights [...] they shall have entire liberty of conscience, in their religious practices [...] they shall obtain concession of land in fee simple, when they shall have made settlements on the said lands.<sup>590</sup>

Boyer's Haitian emancipatory settlement programme bore some notable similarities to the corresponding ambitions of the Tropical Emigration Society in Venezuela twenty years later. Although the TES pioneer population ended up consisting mainly of white English proletarians as opposed to former African American slaves, and although the TES sought the abolition, not only of enslaved work, but of work *per se*, other parallels between the two cases to bespeak a probable relationship of influence. Both involved the voluntary self-transplantation of oppressed persons to a sparsely-populated tropical destination, where the negotiated acquisition of generous land grants for utopian development from a sympathetic revolutionary Republican government would accomplish ostensibly grand philanthropic results. Etzler's own stay in Haiti certainly corresponded with a gradual reorientation in his writings towards the comparative advantages of the tropics as a work-abolitionist

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<sup>586</sup> Jean-Pierre Boyer to Loring D. Dewey, 30 April, 1824, in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour in the United States, together with the Instructions to the Agent sent out by President Boyer*, ed. Loring D. Dewey (New York, NY: Mahlon Day, 1824), 6.

<sup>587</sup> Jean-Pierre Boyer to Loring D. Dewey, 25 May, 1824, in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration* [&c.], 14.

<sup>588</sup> Jean-Pierre Boyer to Loring D. Dewey, 30 April, 1824, 8.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

<sup>590</sup> Jean-Pierre Boyer, ‘Instructions to the Citizen J. Granville, Substitute of the Commissary of Government, at the tribunal of Cassation dispatched to the United States of America, &c.’, in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration* [&c.], 21–22.

destination<sup>591</sup>—but it also seems likely that prior knowledge of Haitian emigrationist politics, especially the widely-publicised 1824 scheme, not only influenced his enduring attitude towards emigration as a general strategy against oppression but also conditioned his more specific expectations during TES land negotiations with the government of Venezuela in 1845.<sup>592</sup>

Thousands of African Americans took up President Boyer's offer during the mid-1820s,<sup>593</sup> and the scheme was well-known amongst the Owenite utopian socialist milieu from which Etzler drew some of his formative influence: the very first issue of the *New Harmony Gazette*, for example, carried a piece by the abolitionist Haiti-emigration advocate Benjamin Lundy,<sup>594</sup> and throughout its three-year run, the *Gazette* continued to transmit sympathetic news of Haitian migration politics, and of Haiti more generally, to Owen's followers.<sup>595</sup> The wider abolitionist and African American press in the United States likewise continued to propagandise for emigration to Haiti even after the land grant programme was withdrawn in 1826.<sup>596</sup> Irrespective of funding, the attractive constitutional guarantee of citizenship to all emigrants of African descent—not to mention the tremendous symbolic empowerment which African American activists of the period explicitly associated with “Hayti, the glory of the blacks and terror of tyrants”<sup>597</sup>—remained in place as compelling inducements for emancipatory migration by people of African descent well into the 1830s. Correspondingly, other post-revolutionary constitutional provisions (especially those precluding white land ownership and restricting white employment) made Haiti a uniquely *unsuitable* and *inhospitable* destination for

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<sup>591</sup> In PWR1a/b, Etzler still wrote under the assumption that his machinery would first be deployed in the United States, but by the time of NWOMS, published almost immediately after his Haitian expedition, we find already the fresh observation that “[t]he advantages of my system will be still far greater in tropical climates” (NWOMS, 53). Etzler's growing fixation on the suitability of the tropics then peaked in ETW, cementing the strategy of tropical emigration into the politics of the mature Etzlerist movement.

<sup>592</sup> A substantially revised account of the character, circumstances and outcome of these negotiations, reconstructed directly from archival evidence in order to expunge enduring misunderstandings about them, is presented in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

<sup>593</sup> For a complete history of the scheme, see Julie Winch, ‘American Free Blacks and Emigration to Haiti’, *CISCLA Working Papers*, no. 33 (San Germán: Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, August 1988), 1–15. For estimates of the number of African American migrants to Haiti under the scheme, see particularly 12, n. 60 of the same.

<sup>594</sup> Benjamin Lundy, ‘A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States, without Danger of Loss to the Citizens of the South’, *New Harmony Gazette* 1, no. 1 (1 October 1825): 4–5. This particular piece, though it does mention Haitian migration, has a focus domestic to the United States: Lundy proposes (albeit in a somewhat paternalistic fashion) the establishment of utopian “experiment farm” black co-operative communities, of roughly Owenite plan, as a transitional vehicle away from the Southern slave plantation system. Lundy subsequently helped coordinate Haitian migration attempts and was himself a visitor to Haiti on a number of occasions—see Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind*, 103; see also Julie L. Holcomb, *Moral Commerce: Quakers and the Transatlantic Boycott of the Slave Labor Economy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 75.

<sup>595</sup> E.g., ‘Removal of Slaves to Hayti’, *New Harmony Gazette* 3, no. 15 (23 January 1828): 119; ‘Hayti’, *New Harmony Gazette* 3, no. 4 (31 October 1827): 27. When the *New York Enquirer* published an appalling racist attack against the widow of the Haitian revolutionary figure Henri Christophe in 1827, the *New Harmony Gazette* published a rebuttal deploring the fact that such statements “must have a tendency to injure Americans in the estimation of the black population of Hayti; who have been, and continue to be, the friends of all friendly foreigners, especially the Americans”. See ‘Madame Christophe’, *New Harmony Gazette* 3, no. 36 (13 June 1827): 286.

<sup>596</sup> Winch, ‘American Free Blacks’, 13; see also Bourhis-Mariotti, ‘Go to Our Brethren, the Haytiens’, 12–13.

<sup>597</sup> David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles, together with a Preamble to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in Particular and very Especially to those of the United States of America* (Boston: David Walker, 1829), 22.

European migrants.

With all of this in mind, I am inclined to suggest that it is as an emancipatory cue taken from black activists of the period themselves, rather than as an expression of anti-black prejudice, that Etzler's 1833 reference to the overseas emigration of freed slaves is best understood. An emphatic distinction between the political connotations of Haitian versus African schemes of emigration in this period is crucial here, however—African American activists of the period and their committed abolitionist white supporters typically promoted Haitian emancipatory migration<sup>598</sup> over and against the racist conservatism endemic to contemporaneous white-led African repatriation projects, which were more often favoured by slaveowners, and tended towards white supremacist ideology and craven apologism for slavery. But as Dain explains, “[s]upporters of Haitian emigration for African Americans, by contrast, wanted to keep abolitionism alive and bring the slavery issue forward [...] Africans were men and brothers deserving sympathy, freedom, and philanthropic aid, but brothers capable of fratricide if their situation became hopeless”.<sup>599</sup> That Etzler's ideas on race and slavery fell into precisely this latter (i.e., radical, anti-racist, pro-Haiti) camp and not the other is, I would suggest, plainly signalled by his own extraordinary decision to retire to Haiti—the *only* location in the Western hemisphere where a migrant of European descent in 1839 would have enjoyed substantially *fewer* statutory rights than one of African descent—a nuance that has escaped previous commentators.

Beyond the unique politics of early nineteenth-century Haiti however, Brostowin's flawed reading of Etzler's attitude on race is also undermined by statements in the latter's own major works. Etzler explicitly looked forward to a cosmopolitan future that would do away with what he regarded as small-minded national and ethnic chauvinisms—to “a remote posterity [which] may [...] for the greatest part care very little for their country [...] under circumstances and views of the world very different from ours”.<sup>600</sup> He professed that “the intelligent is a cosmopolite, the dull and ignorant a mere local being”,<sup>601</sup> sentiments dovetailed still further with his admiration of Haiti and his provisional decision to settle there.

Nonetheless, a handful of Etzler's subsequent interpreters after Brostowin have also found it convenient to insinuate that he was racist, and these evaluations occur with even less fidelity to the available evidence. Stoll's 2008 monograph took extreme liberties in this direction, perjuring itself directly against the source he is citing by baldly stating that Etzler's *Paradise* calls “for the annihilation of Indians”<sup>602</sup> when the precise opposite is true, in the *Paradise* Etzler points with stark

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<sup>598</sup> For a partial survey of leading African American figures who advocated Haitian emigration, especially in connection with Boyer's scheme, see Fanning, ‘Roots of Early Black Nationalism’, 50.

<sup>599</sup> Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind*, 101.

<sup>600</sup> PWR2, 163.

<sup>601</sup> NWOMS, 5.

<sup>602</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 70.

admonition to the fact that “[b]y the unsatiable [sic] desire for wealth, *the innocent inhabitants of one continent were exterminated*, and the same populated again with slaves from another continent, for work”.<sup>603</sup> Etzler is even more outspoken in his critique of transatlantic colonialism in the *New World or Mechanical System*, published immediately after his time in Haiti. Here, Etzler laments the day that Europeans undertook to make “voyages in their miserable frail vessels, to plunder distant parts of the globe [...] and when they found them, *killed millions of the native inhabitants, and made other millions slaves*”.<sup>604</sup> These sentiments are not confined to some deep recess of Etzler’s writings: on the sixth page of NWOMS he explicitly challenges the idea that European settlers can consider themselves to live in an enlightened age if they go about “[m]urdering and enslaving many millions of human beings, [indulging] superstitious persecutions, search[ing] after a little yellow and white metal, and glistening pebbles of no utility”.<sup>605</sup> Stoll consults the very page<sup>606</sup> that discloses this unequivocal evidence of Etzler’s horror at the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans, so it cannot even be charitably pretended that Stoll has not read far enough into the text to see it. Something more discreditable takes place here: Stoll’s mendacious attacks on Etzler’s character, which form indispensable supports for the *a priori* anti-utopian thesis of his book, can only be upheld if these passages are selectively withheld from the reader; accordingly, Stoll writes as if they were never made, trusting a sufficient proportion of his audience not to avail themselves of the source material.

Following Stoll’s lead, Robert Antoni’s heavily fictionalized treatment of the Venezuelan expedition in the novel *As Flies to Whatless Boys*<sup>607</sup> (2013) further expands the portfolio of misinformation about Etzler’s supposed prejudices. As part of the promotional activity surrounding the release of his novel, Antoni confected a false archival document purporting to be the script of a bawdy and outrageously racist minstrel play written by Etzler to promote his ideas, supposedly performed in full blackface before a gleeful audience of Etzler’s followers.<sup>608</sup> The script, which is in fact wholly the product of Antoni’s own present-day creative writing, carries a frontispiece doctored by Antoni with invented (yet plausible) publication information, marginalia and stamp marks suggestive of authentic archival origin. He has uploaded a facsimile of this item to the web, alongside other genuine archival

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<sup>603</sup> PWR2, 186 [emphasis mine].

<sup>604</sup> NWOMS, 71 [emphasis mine].

<sup>605</sup> NWOMS, 6.

<sup>606</sup> *Great Delusion*, 107 n. 13.

<sup>607</sup> Robert Antoni, *As Flies to Whatless Boys* (New York, NY: Akashic Books, 2013).

<sup>608</sup> For an account of the supposed authorship and staging of the play within Antoni’s historically inaccurate narrative, see Antoni, *As Flies to Whatless Boys*, 93–7.



documents associated with Etzler.<sup>609</sup> The title of the fabricated document<sup>610</sup> has moreover been contrived so that it may easily be confused with that of an unrelated (and non-racist) pamphlet by Etzler himself.<sup>611</sup> No indication of the modern origin of the artefact appears to have been publicly acknowledged by its creator, and in press correspondence and interviews about the novel—which won the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature in 2014—Antoni has made a patchwork of statements and omissions that would easily permit his audience to mistakenly believe in the historical authenticity of documents which he has in fact edited or in this case even wholly authored himself.<sup>612</sup>

Whatever laurels Antoni's products may attract in view of their literary innovation, they nevertheless also seem calculated to create the credible false impression that the historical Etzler wrote a racist blackface stage play, even outside the immediate context of the novel and its reception. Literary value notwithstanding, their net historiographic effect is to obstruct future efforts by any interested reader to learn what Etzler's real ideas were, and to reinforce existing false insinuations about him promulgated by Stoll's putatively non-fictitious account of the same subject matter.

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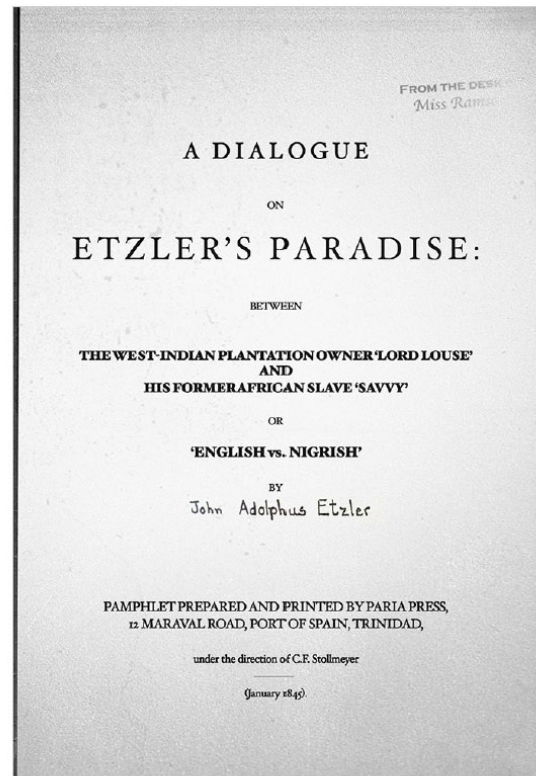
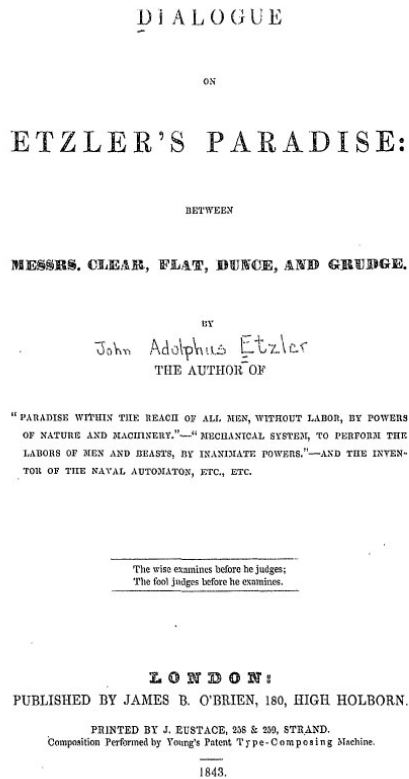
<sup>609</sup> For example, a faithful facsimile of Henry David Thoreau's 1843 review of Etzler's *Paradise*—a genuine archival document—has been uploaded in identical format by Antoni to <http://whatlessboys.com/thoreausreview/> (accessed 2019-08-26).

<sup>610</sup> See “John Adolphus Etzler” [pseud. Robert Antoni], *A Dialogue on Etzler's Paradise: Between The West-Indian Plantation Owner 'Lord Louse' and his Former African Slave 'Savvy', or, 'English vs. Nigrish'*, available at <http://whatlessboys.com/etzlers-play/> (accessed 2019-08-26). This false document was then further circulated in an online exclusive given to Conjunctions Magazine, see Robert Antoni, ‘Minstrel Passage’, *Conjunctions online exclusive* (27 August 2013), <http://www.conjunctions.com/online/article/robert-antoni-08-27-2013/> (accessed 2019-08-26).

<sup>611</sup> The title of Antoni's document invites confabulation with the authentic—and more difficult to obtain—pamphlet *A Dialogue on Etzler's Paradise: Between Messrs. Clear, Flat, Dunce and Grudge* (DEP). This has the (presumably intended) consequence that any casual reader investigating Etzler for the first time is likely, on finding Antoni's document, to mistake it for the real thing.

<sup>612</sup> E.g., “I went to the National Archives in Trinidad, and to the British Library in London, and I gathered together everything I could find about Etzler and his society—including his own published treatises [...] I began to pour [sic] through the mountain of photocopies [...]”, Robert Antoni, interview by Ed Battista, 7 April, 2014, transcript at <http://literaryashland.org/?p=3952> (accessed 2019-08-26) [emphasis mine]. For a similar account which likewise emphasises Antoni's supposedly painstaking engagement with archival sources, see also: Robert Antoni, ‘A Counterfeit Utopia’, *Cabinet: A Quarterly of Art and Culture*, no. 51 (2013): 68.

In giving these and similar statements about the novel's research process, to my knowledge Antoni has never once offered any corrective to the reasonable (but in fact untrue) assumption that the fabricated stage play and other materials of recent origin he circulates online are faithful copies of the authentic Etzler materials he invokes above.



Figs. 6, 7, & 8. A facsimile of the authentic frontispiece from Etzler's rare 1843 *Dialogue* pamphlet (above left) alongside the first page of the document Antoni circulated in 2013 (above right). Note that Antoni has mistaken a cataloguing inscription on the authentic document (made by a twentieth-century archivist when this copy was bequeathed to Harvard's Kress Library),<sup>613</sup> for Etzler's own handwriting, and tries to authenticate the defamatory version by approximating this 'signature' himself. Compare Etzler's real signature (below) from his 1844 marriage certificate.<sup>614</sup>



<sup>613</sup> The words "Kress Room May 15, 1944" are written conspicuously in the same hand elsewhere in the frontmatter—so perhaps Antoni did not trouble himself to read beyond the first page of Etzler's original *Dialogue* before writing his own edition. "The wise examine before they judge", as Etzler delighted in saying.

<sup>614</sup> Knowledge of the existence of this document owes itself to the diligence of James Gregory (*Poetry and the Politics*, 58); an especially laudable find given that his book is not even principally about Etzler. Stoll, the author of the most widely relied-upon published account of Etzler's life, missed this public document during his own research. By itself this would surely be a forgivable oversight, if not for the fact that he labours to develop his own negligence of the source into an accusation of sexism against Etzler, telling us that "[o]nly at this [6 February 1845] moment in the story do the surviving documents reveal that [Etzler] was married [...] [v]ery likely she had been with him since 1831, never acknowledged" (*Great Delusion*, 116). Stoll would not have needed to discover the marriage certificate to disconfirm this spiteful hypothesis; her existence is also attested in the *New Age, Concordium Gazette & Temperance Advocate*; see e.g., no. 17 (1 May 1844): 244. Regina Etzler (née Soergel) lodged with her husband John at Ham Common Concordium after their wedding, until they moved to London on 17 July 1844 to play a more active role in the Etzlerist movement there together. She was by no means invisible to her husband and his comrades, but Stoll certainly seems to have had difficulty seeing her.

Back in the actual Caribbean of 1840, the historical Etzler—a staunch critic of European chauvinism and a committed anti-racist and abolitionist—was preparing to settle in for a retirement which would render him the legal and social inferior, in perpetuity, to the free black landowning citizens of Haiti, a prospect with which he was apparently quite comfortable. Indeed, if he felt any prejudice during this period, it was directed, in his words, against “the stupid European”.<sup>615</sup> By stark contrast with the self-liberated Haitians, Etzler now characterised the *white* inhabitants of the Northern hemisphere as a “disgusting throng of men who, like beasts, draw their accustomed slave carts without thinking of anything better, but how to snatch the morsels from the mouths of their neighbours”.<sup>616</sup> Brostowin, Stoll and Antoni cannot have had these extraordinary passages, nor the political context of their expression, in clear enough view when they each tried to unjustly monster Etzler as a proponent of white supremacy; future interpreters of Etzler must take great care to avoid the entrenchment of such a toxic myth by the uncritical repetition of their careless errors.

In the most introspective of his writings, the short poetical autobiography *Two Visions of J. A. Etzler: A Revelation of Futurity* (TVJAE), Etzler relates the inner turmoil he felt at this juncture about whether to ever return to the white-controlled portions of the globe at all. Through the allegory of a dialogue between himself and a benevolent providential spirit, stylised in a quasi-scriptural format, Etzler retraces his difficult decision to leave Haiti. The spirit, finding him at peaceful ease there, admonishes him to “[a]rouse from thy indolent selfishness”<sup>617</sup> in order to again “return to men towards the north” and resume the promotion of machine socialism to Europeans, against which Etzler protests, “[w]hy should I put myself to any further trouble for such a silly, hardened, worthless race? [...] let me live in peace, and in the enjoyment of this beautiful, lovely, glorious nature of perpetual summer”. Yet the entreaties of the importunate spirit are unrelenting: “not in vain have I shown to thee the powers and the tools, and the great things to be accomplished [...] [m]y revelation is not merely for the present generation, but chiefly for posterity [...]”. Etzler repeatedly has difficulty establishing a meaningful ethical connection with an unborn future humanity—“what is all that to me when I shall be no more? [...] such a generation as the present one is yet, possesses nothing to reward me with, and as to a future one, I shall never see it”—in response to which, the spirit offers a cryptic sermon about Etzler's position in time and his corresponding duty to the future:

“Thou art but a link in the infinite chain of beings, and unable to comprehend the connexion [...] The beings beget beings like themselves, and die. Canst thou comprehend why they do so, dying so soon, and living but for futurity

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<sup>615</sup> ETW, 12.

<sup>616</sup> TVJAE, 15.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid., 11.

which they never see? [...] Thus the progress continues perpetually in nature, the beings of the present time living for other beings of futurity.”<sup>618</sup>

Galvanized in part by his perceived responsibility to an as yet unrealised cosmopolitan humanity of the future—“a better, happier and more intelligent generation”—in March 1840 Etzler “arose, half unwillingly, and quitted the serene, ever beautiful, mild tropical world”,<sup>619</sup> betaking himself first to New York, then Philadelphia. During the period that followed, a set of auspicious encounters would set in motion the dramatic events which would ultimately lead to the apogee of his work-abolitionist experiments.

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<sup>618</sup> All of the above from TVJAE, 13–14.

<sup>619</sup> TVJAE, 15.

# **Part Three**

Late Etzlerism

(1840-1853)

# **Chapter Six**

Transatlantic Phalansterian,  
Owenite & Chartist Encounters

(1840-1843)

## 6.1 “Hail to thee, Stollmeyer! A Second Fourier!”: Etzler Among the Phalansterians

Secular utopian socialism in the United States came in two distinct identifiable waves or phases during the nineteenth century, at least as far as practical attempts at its application were concerned. The first wave, which corresponded with Robert Owen's experiment at New Harmony, Indiana, had taken place over the middle years of the 1820s and had culminated in the establishment of a number of North American intentional communities which, as Noyes put it, “all owed their birth to the general excitement that followed Owen's labo[u]rs”.<sup>620</sup> Though New Harmony itself persisted long afterwards as a centre of scientific and didactic innovation under the stewardship of Owen's children, the socialistic movement and experimental communities that grew up around it had virtually evaporated by the end of the 1820s. Just over a decade later, however, a new wave of enthusiasm for utopian socialist theories and experiments was once again simmering in the United States, this time inspired by the doctrines of the French socialist Charles Fourier. Unlike Owen, whose prodigious wealth had enabled him to finance and directly superintend ambitious attempts to put his ideas into practice within his own lifetime, Fourier's comparatively modest resources had left him in the Old World, so the story goes, “waiting [...] in a café for the benevolent capitalist to bankroll his scheme”.<sup>621</sup> Sadly, the whole bustling movement and “national excitement”<sup>622</sup> of American Fourierism (or “phalansterianism” as it became known, after the *phalanstère* building and unit of social organisation in Fourier's utopian plan) was entirely posthumous to its visionary intellectual source; at the time of his death in 1837, neither the ideas nor the man himself had made any traceable public appearance in the western hemisphere.<sup>623</sup>

It fell instead to a handful of dedicated admirers to spread the word of Fourier on the American continent, and recruit there a mass movement to build and live in the fabulous phalanxes recommended by his system of thought. Amongst these were figures such as Albert Brisbane, who had enjoyed one-to-one tutelage from Fourier in Paris in the early 1830s<sup>624</sup> and would become his first major proselyte in the Americas. By the end of the 1830s, Brisbane's efforts were already giving rise to a flourishing local scene with “quite a number of adherents”<sup>625</sup> in orbit around the activities of the New York Fourier Society, which convoked regular public lectures and discussions, using Brisbane's interpretation of Fourier's theories to interrogate the hypocrisies and injustices of the American

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<sup>620</sup> John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1870), 14.

<sup>621</sup> Matthew Adams, *Kropotkin, Read, and the Intellectual History of British Anarchism: Between Reason and Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 139.

<sup>622</sup> Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 23.

<sup>623</sup> Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr., ‘Albert Brisbane—Propagandist for Socialism in the 1840's’, *New York History* 28, no. 2 (April 1947): 129.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, 138–9.

<sup>625</sup> Albert Brisbane, *A Mental Biography* (Boston, MA: Arena Publishing Company, 1893), 204.

commercial system.<sup>626</sup> With the assistance of sympathetic newspapers and periodicals, especially as a result of Brisbane's friendship with the newspaper proprietor Horace Greeley,<sup>627</sup> the New York Fourierists “advocated new ideas of all kinds”<sup>628</sup> to a widening national audience, amongst whom “a great deal of enthusiasm was aroused and a hope excited for some practical experiment”.<sup>629</sup> Across the Atlantic, the promotion of phalansterianism to English-speaking audiences was concurrently under way in Britain. French Fourierists had deputed an English supporter, Hugh Doherty, to return from France in early 1840 and liaise closer co-operation with the Owenite movement,<sup>630</sup> which still flourished in Britain despite its comparative decline overseas. Doherty began the publication of an Anglophone periodical to popularise Fourier's ideas—the *Morning Star or Phalansterian Gazette*<sup>631</sup>—later the same year.

Fortuitously, Etzler's returning path from Haiti would catapult him directly into this intellectually fertile, international radical circuit. Intent, in the aftermath of his allegorical *visions of futurity*, on making a final last-ditch effort to communicate his inventions and political ideas to the rest of the world, Etzler sailed from Port-au-Prince to New York, arriving on 3 March 1840.<sup>632</sup>

It has been repeated almost ubiquitously<sup>633</sup> in existing Etzler scholarship that he first met both Brisbane and Brisbane's publisher, Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, at a celebration of Fourier's birthday held in New York on 7 April, 1840, which corresponded with similar ceremonies in Paris and Besancon.<sup>634</sup> The idea seemingly originates with Brostowin<sup>635</sup>, although the empirical basis for his

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<sup>626</sup> For more detail on the economic and political circumstances that gave Brisbane's anti-competitive message such broad appeal during this period, see Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 66–67.

<sup>627</sup> For an account of their meeting, see Brisbane, *A Mental Biography*, 204–205. Greeley published the short run of an early phalansterian paper of Brisbane's, *Future*, from May 1841 onwards. See ‘The Future’, *New-York Tribune* 1, no. 1. (10 April 1841): 3.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>630</sup> ‘Arrival of a Deputy from Paris’, *New Moral World* 7, no. 83 (23 May 1840): 1235.

<sup>631</sup> Doherty planned to use the abortive publication as a vehicle “to form and extend a Phalansterian Association in this country”, see Hugh Doherty, ‘Declaration of Principles’, *Morning Star or Phalansterian Gazette: A Weekly Herald of Universal Principles and Progressive Association, Industry, Science, Morality, Religion and Liberty* 1, no. 1 (21 October 1840): 2. The following Spring, Doherty would reboot the project as editor of the *London Phalanx*, bringing the name of his new paper into “conformity with a plan of general unity for all Phalansterian Periodicals” in coordination with Brisbane's now-lost [Buffalo] *Phalanx* and its French counterpart *La Phalange*. Compare Hugh Doherty, ‘Declaration of Principles’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 1 (3 April 1841): 9–10.

<sup>632</sup> Correctly established from shipping manifests in Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 37, 45. See also Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 92. Etzler travelled aboard the *Lexington* in this instance.

<sup>633</sup> Joel Nydahl, ‘Introduction’, in Joel Nydahl (ed.), *Collected Works of John Adolphus Etzler, 1833–1844* (Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), xvii; Gregory Claeys, ‘John Adolphus Etzler, Technological Utopianism, and British Socialism: the Tropical Emigration Society’s Venezuela Mission and its Social Context, 1833–1848’, *English Historical Review* 101 (1986), 352; Steven Stoll, *The Great Delusion: A Mad Inventor, Death in the Tropics, and the Utopian Origins of Economic Growth* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2008), 92–93; David McDermott Hughes, *Energy Without Conscience: Oil, Climate Change, and Complicity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 45.

<sup>634</sup> For reports of the French events of the same year, see *New Moral World* 7, no. 84 (30 May 1840): 1262.

<sup>635</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 39, 45, 136, 137.



confidence about this specific claim is unclear.<sup>636</sup>

Stollmeyer, himself a German emigrant and a veteran of the American abolitionist movement,<sup>637</sup> had operated a bookshop and publishing house in Philadelphia with his compatriot William Kiderlen since 1836.<sup>638</sup> The pair's selection of publications during the four year span preceding Etzler's arrival discloses Stollmeyer's prior attention to topics that would predispose him to the Etzlerism that would shortly become his *Weltanschauung*, profoundly altering the course of his life. In 1838 for instance, he and Kiderlen published an innovatively typeset trilingual exposition of a new type of steam engine,<sup>639</sup> demonstrating a nascent interest in both the popularisation of emerging technologies and the transcendence of national and linguistic boundaries. By 1840, the year of Etzler's arrival, Kiderlen's name had disappeared from the enterprise, and Stollmeyer's solo catalogue was evidently taking a decisively political turn; alongside a pamphlet of anecdotes about Napoleon Bonaparte<sup>640</sup> and the first of four volumes of von Rotteck's *General History of the World*,<sup>641</sup> in July<sup>642</sup> 1840 Stollmeyer also published Brisbane's early phalansterian monograph, the seminal *Social Destiny of Man*.<sup>643</sup> In contrast to Etzler's thoroughgoing work-abolitionism, Brisbane's message in this volume was the reorganisation and benignification of work on the basis of "attractive industry",<sup>644</sup> though the two thinkers sometimes came under similar general lines of attack by their ideological opponents. Of Brisbane and his rapidly expanding phalansterian circle, one reviewer of *Social Destiny of Man* returned the dismal judgement that

[t]heir wickedness consists [...] in the presumptuous supposition of the power of human wisdom, to avert the primeval curse, and reverse the sentence of God, which condemned man

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<sup>636</sup> Whilst Brostowin's citations establish Brisbane and Stollmeyer's attendance at the birthday, none of the sources he consults about it actually mention Etzler at all. See Bestor, 'Albert Brisbane', 143 n. 31; 'French Correspondence', *New Moral World* 8, no. 5 (1 August, 1840): 77. The Etzler-Stollmeyer birthday myth—if myth it is—has been subsequently picked up by other scholars (e.g., Claeys, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 352; Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 97).

<sup>637</sup> For capable surveys of Stollmeyer's early biography, including details of his emigration and anti-slavery campaigning, see Gregory, *Poetry and the Politics*, 59–61; Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 39–43. A less complete (and far more hostile) treatment of the same subject matter may be found in Stoll, *The Great Delusion*, 96–97.

<sup>638</sup> "Kiderlen & Stollmeyer [sic] hatten eine Buchhandlung hierselbst [i.e., Philadelphia] in den Jahren 1836–1840". Ernst Steiger, *Dreiundfünfzig Jahre Buchhändler in Deutschland und Amerika: Erinnerungen und Plaudereien, zur Verbreitung in engerem Kreise niedergeschrieben* (New York, NY: E. Steiger & Co., 1901), 85.

<sup>639</sup> William Norris, *Locomotive Steam Engine of William Norris, Philadelphia, United States* (Philadelphia, PA: Kiderlen & Stollmeyer, 1838). The manuscript arranges French, German and English descriptions of the machine in parallel columnar form.

<sup>640</sup> "An American" [pseud.], *Anecdotes and Characteristics of Napoleon Bonaparte* (Philadelphia, PA: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1840).

<sup>641</sup> Karl von Rotteck, *General History of the World, from the Earliest Times until the Year 1831*, trans. Frederick Jones, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, PA: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1840).

<sup>642</sup> For the fact that Brisbane's book appeared in July, not September as Brostowin claims ('John Adolphus Etzler', 139), see Andreas Bernardus Smolnikar, *The One Thing Needful: Namely, to Spread as Rapidly as Possible the Glorious Manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ [&c.]* (Philadelphia, PA: Barrett & Jones Printers, 1841), 239.

<sup>643</sup> Albert Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man: or, Association and Reorganization of Industry* (Philadelphia, PA: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1840).

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

to eat of the fruit of his labo[u]r in sorrow all the days of his life.<sup>645</sup>

To suffer in the course of survival, thought some anti-Brisbanites and anti-Etzlerites alike, was an ennobling and perhaps even divinely ordained rite of human passage; to dare to improve (per Brisbane), or even abolish (per Etzler) the abjection of work would tempt unacceptable adventure against a particular *way of the world*, earthly or supernal. Although his religious inflection was probably less literal than Brisbane's above-quoted reviewer, Henry David Thoreau's scathing attack on Etzler three years later would nonetheless plead the case of "a certain divine energy in every man [...] the small private, but both constant and accumulated force, which stands behind every spade in the field".<sup>646</sup> While Thoreau's *divinity* may have channelled more spirit-of-the-forest than God-of-the-Bible, in general outline, the sermon was similar: perpetual individual struggle to wrest subsistence from the earth, though difficult, is also natural and good, and human wants should accordingly never be "cheaply satisfied".<sup>647</sup>

To Etzler, pious exhortations to accept and embrace arduous conditions seemed an utterly repugnant, almost incomprehensible indulgence in the face of clear alternatives that might reduce widespread involuntary human suffering:

I may be allowed to speak of the great bulk of the people, the poor and labouring class, who, faithful to the commandment and "curse," "eat their bread in the sweat of their brows."

Those, who are not pleased with this "curse," and wish to get rid of it, are then hereby informed, that it is now placed into their power to become all wealthy and happy and free from any compulsive labour [...]

If there are pious people, who think their conscience ought not to allow them to deviate from that "curse," I beg leave to inform them, that they always will remain at liberty to work or keep holy-days just as they please [...]

They may still volunteer their pious work; they may, for instance, dig a hole one day and fill it up the next, and so on through life, if they choose. I hope there will be liberality of sentiments enough among the people, to *allow* only, and not to *compel* them, to keep every week seven holy-days instead of one.<sup>648</sup>

Etzler derisively called the bluff of those among his contemporaries who proclaimed the gospel of work. If menial toil truly had such special significance, then even once emancipatory automata were

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<sup>645</sup> Review of *Social Destiny of Man; or, Association and Reorganization of Industry* by Alfred [sic] Brisbane, *New-York Review* 7, no. 14 (October 1840): 525.

<sup>646</sup> Henry David Thoreau, 'Paradise (to be) Regained', review of *The Paradise Within the Reach of All Men, Without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery* (1842 edition), by John Adolphus Etzler, *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 13, no. 65 (November 1843): 460.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, 461.

<sup>648</sup> NWOMS, 50 [emphasis in original].

in place, its advocates may voluntarily continue their exertions—Thoreau may keep his divine spade, performing with it whatever sacrament (or curse) his faith may oblige of him—but all such enthusiasts must cease to wish the enforcement of compulsory work *onto others* as the general rule of society. In the era of Etzlerist machine-socialism, old-fashioned digging might be tolerated as an eccentric private pastime, freely chosen; under no circumstances must unwilling participants be made to depend for their livelihoods upon it.

Stollmeyer would eventually be totally won to this perspective—a few years down the line, he himself would critique the British Owenites as excessively “enamoured with the idea of *spade* cultivation, the very cause of ancient slavery [...] how much better it would be to substitute unfeeling powers and machines”<sup>649</sup>—but before his conversion to Etzlerism, Stollmeyer was already pre-radicalised by Brisbane's influence over the course of the year 1840, passing through a transitional awakening to the phalansterian doctrine of attractive industry. This drew some light-hearted ribbing from fellow anti-slavery campaigners, with one wry wordsmith dedicating a mock-encomium to him during the same year:

Hail to thee, Stollmeyer!  
A second Fourier!  
Thy system is surely a treasure;  
To Christian or Turk  
It makes all kinds of work  
By some *hocus pocus*, a pleasure,  
Stollmeyer!  
By some *hocus pocus*, a pleasure.<sup>650</sup>

The whimsical punchline of this ditty tracks a more serious critique of the Fourierist treatment of the problem of work, which helps to explain how Brisbanian phalansterianism could serve as a transitional gateway to Etzlerism in cases such as Stollmeyer's, whilst also showing how the distinctive features of Etzler's system fundamentally differed from Fourier's, conceptually resolving one of its major vulnerabilities. Both Fourierism and Etzlerism identified the profound unpleasantness of work as a central evil of contemporary social arrangements, and both systems proposed ambitious solutions to the problem: attractive industry and mechanical substitution, respectively. There was a degree of cross-pollination: Fourierists such as Brisbane were perfectly amenable to some degree of labour-saving machinery, especially in the attenuation of “excessive and

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<sup>649</sup> C. F. Stollmeyer to the Editor of the *New Moral World*, 10 June 1843, ‘Etzler and American Communities’, *New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society* 11, no. 51 (17 June 1843): 428.

<sup>650</sup> [Benjamin S. Jones], *Abolitioneries, or, Remarks on some of the members of the Pennsylvania State Anti-Slavery Society for the eastern district, and the American Anti-Slavery Society* (s. l., s. n., 1840), 29; also quoted in Gregory, *Poetry and the Politics*, 60.

brutalizing toil”.<sup>651</sup> But the central innovation of attractive industry was in fact the *total mobilisation* of the population for work—albeit in greatly improved form—in the shape of a world system where “[l]abor will be prosecuted with energy and enthusiasm, will be dignified and rendered honorable and [a]ttractive, and will lead all mankind to engage voluntarily in its pursuits”.<sup>652</sup> The apparent indispensability of coercion to the ongoing performance of human industrial activity was to evaporate in carefully-designed phalanxes, where the judicious cradle-to-grave application of Fourier's proto-psychology, the theory of *passional series*, would ensure that all members would “feel the same passion for [work] that sportsmen do for the pleasures of the chase”.<sup>653</sup> Nobody would be *forced* to work, because everybody would *want* to work. Yet to Fourier's critics, such a profound transformation of the aggregate human disposition towards work—especially if its success depended on meticulous conformity to unproven theories about the opaque contents of the human soul—had precisely enough of an air of mystical *hocus-pocus* to render it improbable. The friendly jibes of Jones' ode to Stollmeyer closely mirror the more serious critical reception that his edition of Brisbane's *Social Destiny of Man* attracted on this point. Even reviewers who could at least muster “respect for [Brisbane's] motive [...] to diminish the groans of suffering humanity”<sup>654</sup> still found the idea that the human spirit could “as if by magic, be smitten by a love of industry”<sup>655</sup> an insurmountable stumbling block to the overall plausibility of phalansterianism: “it presents a seemingly hopeless task to make such labors attractive”.<sup>656</sup>

The credibility of attractive industry seemed to its critics to rely on undue optimism about human nature: it promised to unlock a spontaneous, dynamic enthusiasm for work, conspicuous by its absence under existing conditions. Phalansterian theorists did their best to explain how this would come about: “man is naturally, spontaneously GOOD—”, wrote Brisbane in a representative passage, “artificially, negatively Bad; he tends to Good *spontaneously*; he is impelled to Evil *circumstantially*”.<sup>657</sup> Indolence, dissipation and inactivity, they argued, were not natural tendencies of human behaviour, but rather artificial impositions against an innate drive to energetic usefulness and activity—a sickness of the soul, inflicted by suboptimal environmental stimuli. If the downtrodden and weary workers of the present were transposed into circumstances “perfectly adapted to Human Nature, and giving free scope to the natural action and development of the Passions”,<sup>658</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Albert Brisbane, *Theory of the Functions of the Human Passions* (New York, NY: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856), 90.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–54.

<sup>653</sup> Review of *Social Destiny of Man* [&c.] by Albert Brisbane, *Boston Quarterly Review* 4, no. 1 (January 1841): 128.

<sup>654</sup> ‘Association and Reform’, review of *Social Destiny of Man* [&c.] by Albert Brisbane, *Arcturus: a Journal of Books and Opinion* 1, no. 4 (March 1841): 197–8.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>657</sup> Brisbane, *Theory of the Functions*, 43.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*

then their intrinsic ardour for work, hitherto suppressed, would assure the voluntary continuation of human industrial activity.

The doctrine of attractive industry therefore demanded strong evidential support for two fairly vulnerable premises: 1) that existing lassitude in the face of work was an unnatural pathology, concealing an authentic, spontaneously industrious human nature, and 2) that the psychological transformation which would permit this true nature to emerge could be reliably actuated by the deliberate adjustment of external workplace factors (e.g., conforming the structure of working groups to the theory of Serial Passions,<sup>659</sup> increasing the variety of individual activity by rotating work tasks,<sup>660</sup> physical beautification of the work environment,<sup>661</sup> etc.).

Sufficient doubt about either of these—whether the flattering picture of human nature itself, or just the viability of systematically influencing its expression by manipulating environmental variables—could still undermine the overall plausibility of phalansterianism, even to those who already recognised the justice of its humanitarian motives. The new system was not designed to mitigate people's material dependence on work, but to change how they felt about doing it—so if harmonized workers' actual enjoyment of materially obligate tasks ended up falling short of Fourier and Brisbane's generous projections, the *voluntary* basis of attractive industry could start to look rather hollow. Even if outright coercion did not creep back in, the backstop of material necessity would still ultimately cast an ugly shadow over “the noble mission assigned to Labor”.<sup>662</sup>

Etzler's system, by contrast, favoured the total mechanical elimination of obligate work over its renovation into attractive enough forms to guarantee voluntary participants, which insulated it against this particular pattern of criticism from the outset. If the chain of material dependence between survival and work could be taken out of the equation entirely—by the complete substitution of mechanical automata for all frontline human workers, and the unconditional moneyless distribution of everything the machines produced—then the precise contents of ‘true’ human nature did not particularly matter: the curse of unpleasant work could be lifted *even if* the inner workaholic was insufficiently responsive to the delicate passional manipulations of the phalanx; *even if* a streak of indolence turned out to be slightly more natural and ordinary than Fourier had hoped.

Brisbane and Etzler had similar general objectives in view, but this crucial difference gave Etzler's system a conceptual edge. The substance of his proposals left him relatively uncommitted to strong claims of human perfectibility, affording a degree of flexibility that Brisbane's system lacked. Etzlerism by no means entailed that the human spirit was irredeemably wicked or lazy, but it at least

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<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

acknowledged the possibility of a “natural animal apathy of men”,<sup>663</sup> allowing space for it within the solution rather than depending on its complete mutability. Etzler's system stood to lose little if Brisbane was right about the latent dynamism of human nature; the true power and extent of spontaneous productiveness might still be fruitfully tested against “boundless fields for human activity of a superior order”,<sup>664</sup> rather than squandered, comparatively speaking, on elementary (if agreeable) survival chores. But if Brisbane's gamble about innate human industriousness was too optimistic, then Etzlerism possessed a robust failsafe: even a naturally indolent humanity could be relieved from its agonies by the tireless action of the machines.

The relative indifference of Etzler's approach towards the unproven possibility of fine-tuning the inner passional realm also lent it an appealing rhetoric of demystification and immediacy: his focus on the physical design of needs-meeting infrastructure suggested “the plain material substances of our present world”<sup>665</sup> as the principal domain of transformative change. Once basic human survival could be guaranteed by automatic mechanical support, “[t]hen, and only then [...] will the time commence to reason on moral and intellectual improvements”.<sup>666</sup> To a phalansterian committed to the melioration of involuntary work, but still harbouring doubts about the ‘*hocus-pocus*’ of attractive industry, this thoroughgoing materialist shortcut must have seemed like the missing piece of a perplexing and urgent puzzle.

## 6.2 New Motive Powers: Second Wave Etzlerism Begins

In early April<sup>667</sup> 1841, Stollmeyer published Etzler's *New World or Mechanical System, to Perform the Labours of Man and Beast by Inanimate Powers, that Cost Nothing, for Producing and Preparing the Substances of Life*, which updated and refined the ideas of the *Paradise*, and for the first time included detailed diagrams of Etzler's machinery.

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<sup>663</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>664</sup> PWR2, 94.

<sup>665</sup> NWOMS, 9.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid., 52–53.

<sup>667</sup> Brostowin says the book was published in “April or May” (‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 138, n. 3). The *New-York Review* printed notice of it in April, and the National Institution for the Promotion of Science had likewise already received a copy for their library as early as 12 April 1841, so we may refine this guess to no later than the first two weeks of April. ‘Notices of New Books’, *New-York Review* 8, no. 16 (April 1841): 523; ‘Stated Meeting, April 12, 1841’, *Bulletin of the Proceedings of the National Institution for the Promotion of Science*, no. 2 (April, 1841): 77.

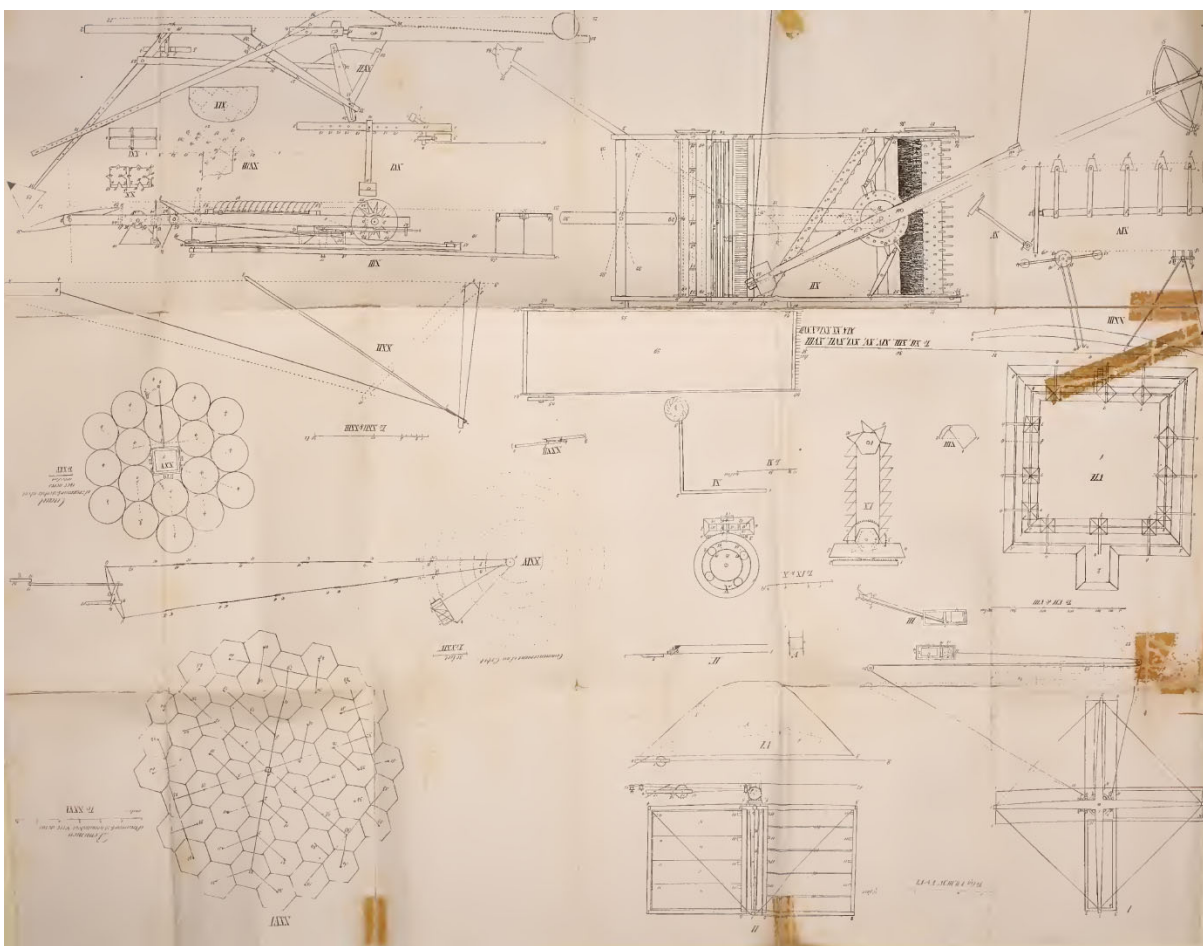


Fig. 9. The illustrations in Etzler's *New World or Mechanical System* (1841) include detailed blueprints of the autonomous satellite farming machine (evidently much improved since the patchy *Mammuth-Cultivator* trial of 1836), and also show some of the design elements of his vertically-axial windmill power-generation system.

Etzler was able to exploit some of the existing networks he had established in the 1830s to publicise the new book. The Prague weekly *Bohemia*, for example, which had already promoted Etzler to its German-speaking audience during the *Mammuth-Cultivator* period,<sup>668</sup> now very promptly received and reviewed a copy of the *New World or Mechanical System*.<sup>669</sup> However, Stollmeyer's evident talent for media engagement and extensive contacts in the publishing industry would take the promulgation of Etzler's ideas to an entirely new level, and his professional relationship with Etzler rapidly transcended his services as a mere publisher: the book launch coincided with the pair forming a company together<sup>670</sup> for the express purpose of patenting, constructing, testing and promoting Etzler's machines. Philadelphia would serve as Etzler and Stollmeyer's urban base of operations in North America as their partnership became more involved. The Slovene mystic and spiritual leader Andreas

<sup>668</sup> 'Mosaik', *Bohemia, Ein Unterhaltungsblatt* [Prague] 9, no. 90 (26 July 1836): 3–4.

<sup>669</sup> 'Mosaik', *Bohemia, Ein Unterhaltungsblatt* [Prague] 14, no. 58 (14 May 1841): 2.

<sup>670</sup> "Eine Gesellschaft in Philadelphia (die sich jedoch erst bilden wird—) wird seine [i.e., Etzler's] Ideen ausführen". (Ibid.).

Bernardus Smolnikar met Etzler in Philadelphia in 1841—not 1843, as mistakenly claimed by Brostowin<sup>671</sup>—Smolnikar first heard Etzler's name “in the same house where [Smolnikar] had found Mr. Brisbane's book”<sup>672</sup> (i.e., that of “the bookseller, Stollmeyer”<sup>673</sup>), and thereafter caught up with the “serious looking”<sup>674</sup> inventor at the hotel where they both happened to be staying. Smolnikar's acquaintance with Etzler would go on to provide a subsequent opportunity for further direct mechanical experiments.<sup>675</sup>

At around this time, according to unpublished sections of A. J. MacDonald's notes,<sup>676</sup> Etzler also made a trip from Philadelphia to Indiana, where he put in at New Harmony. This visit coincided with what has been called the “Scientific era in New Harmony history”;<sup>677</sup> David Dale Owen had been appointed State Geologist of Indiana in 1837, and the town underwent something of a renaissance as a hub of scientific investigation—albeit without the expressly communistic fervour of its 1820s heyday—drawing a range of notable luminaries and experimentalists in the physical and social sciences.<sup>678</sup> Together with the English chemist Samuel Bolton,<sup>679</sup> Etzler reportedly travelled down the Wabash and Ohio Rivers on one of New Harmony's iconic flatboats,<sup>680</sup> during which time the pair conducted solar energy experiments with reflecting mirrors, setting fire to brushwood near Louisville in order to test Etzler's theories about using concentrated sunlight as a source of energy.

Etzler's longstanding obsession with the construction of an artificial floating island, a project he and Stollmeyer would continue to pursue in the Tropics later on, may perhaps have been piqued still further by this formative experience of the convenience and security of flatboat river travel. It would also inspire in him a more immediate nautical turn that would coincide with his career comeback on two continents.

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<sup>671</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 183.

<sup>672</sup> Smolnikar, *The One Thing Needful*, 240.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid., 464.

<sup>674</sup> Smolnikar, *The One Thing Needful*, 240.

<sup>675</sup> See subsection 6.4 of this thesis.

<sup>676</sup> This handwritten manuscript, prepared by MacDonald in 1853, is held in Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library as part of the A. J. MacDonald Collection of Writings on American Utopian Communities (Call no. GEN MSS 1394). I am grateful to the staff of the Beinecke Library for the preparation and delivery of digital reproductions of this material during the course of my research.

<sup>677</sup> Nora C. Fretageot, *Historic New Harmony: A Guide*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (n.p., 1934), 7.

<sup>678</sup> Amongst these was the anarchist Josiah Warren, who in 1840 built the world's first continuous-feed printing machine at New Harmony—see George Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement* (New York, NY: D.Appleton and Company, 1905), 298. Given Etzler's own keen interest in novel machinery, it seems extremely likely that the two interacted at this juncture, although definite evidence of a Warren-Etzler meeting has not yet been uncovered. I am thankful to my colleague Shane Little for his diligent assistance in the search for a direct link.

For further information on the relationship between Josiah Warren and the New Harmony experiment, see also Gregory Claeys, *Machinery, Money, and the Millennium: From Moral Economy to Socialism, 1815–1860* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 54–56.

<sup>679</sup> Bolton resided at New Harmony and had “lectured frequently on his specialty” there since at least 1828. See George Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities* (Marion, IN: The Chronicle Company, 1902), 267.

<sup>680</sup> MacDonald writes that his “friend Mr. [sic] Bolton of [New] Harmony travelled for a short time with Etzler, in a flat boat on the Ohio river, and from him I learned many interesting anecdotes [...] especially the attempts he made to burn the brushwood in the vicinity of Louisville, by means of ‘burning mirrors’.” [Transcription mine].





Fig. 10. (Left) A photograph of New Harmony resident and chemist Dr. Samuel Bolton (1797–1870), who travelled with Etzler on the Ohio River in the early 1840s and conducted solar experiments with him.<sup>681</sup> Bolton's daughter Mary was also daughter-in-law to Robert Owen, having married the latter's son William in an extravagant geology-themed triple-wedding of the elder utopian's three sons in 1837.<sup>682</sup>

Fig. 11. (Below) A 1927 photograph of a New Harmony flatboat on the Wabash River.<sup>683</sup> The vessel pictured is named after the memory of Frank D. Bolton (1823–1900), the son of Etzler's 1841 travelling partner and solar co-experimentalist.



After getting his sea-legs back with Bolton on the Wabash River, Etzler's next project in

<sup>681</sup> I am indebted to Samuel Bolton's living descendants, the Mumfords of New Harmony, IN, for providing me with this photograph of their ancestor.

<sup>682</sup> Walter Brookfield Hendrickson, *David Dale Owen: Pioneer Geologist of the Midwest* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1943), 24.

<sup>683</sup> Don Blair, *F. D. Bolton Ferry on the Wabash River, New Harmony, IN*, 1927. Evansville Digital History Collection, University of Southern Indiana.

Philadelphia was the blueprint for the naval automaton, a new type of labour-saving boat with twin power sources—a windmill/sail combination above deck, and a wave-powered propulsion mechanism under the hull—an invention which once again would use renewable *powers of nature* to supersede both the direct application of human labour (in the crewing of a conventional sailing vessel) and the indirect application of human labour (through the use of labour-intensive finite combustible fuels such as the coal used in steam vessels).<sup>684</sup> Mariners would no longer be confronted by “a bungling patchwork, which requires much labour, hardship, and exposure to great perils, with but the small efficiency of their feeble arms”.<sup>685</sup>

At Stollmeyer's behest, the *New-York Tribune* immediately sprang into action to publicise the new machine, with Greeley bragging that he was “personally acquainted with one of the princial [sic] proprietors [i.e., with Stollmeyer]”.<sup>686</sup> The naval automaton, the *Tribune* proclaimed to the American public, was “confidently expected to supersede steam in navigating the ocean”.<sup>687</sup> Just over a week later, Etzler was again lauded in the pages of the *Tribune* as “a bold, an origina[l] thinker, [...] a man of a high order of Talent”, and as a historic figure who

has conceived the gigantic plan of applying [machinery] to the daily works of society [...] [which] does not make use of costly powers, like beasts of burthen and steam, but of powers that cost nothing, such as the heat of the sun [...] no one has undertaken before him to invent a general system of machinery for obviating [work].<sup>688</sup>

Stollmeyer's media connections turned out to be a significant resource in the renewed promotion of Etzler's ideas and plans. Besides his own broad readership, Greeley had journalistic clout far beyond the relatively specialised political circuit of phalansterian activism; throughout July and August of 1841 large sections of the American public learned of the naval automaton as a slew of out-of-state newspapers<sup>689</sup> rehearsed the Etzlerist adulations of the *New-York Tribune's* “able and judicious”<sup>690</sup> editor.

With Etzler's *Automaton* making a splash in the mainstream US press with Greeley's assistance, Stollmeyer now undertook to promote Etzler's machines internationally, travelling to the Old World

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<sup>684</sup> This multifactorial labour-saving rationale was made explicit by Etzler himself: “[t]here is hereafter no ship's crew, no engineer, no coals, no costly engines, no immense capital for bulky vessels, no deposits of coals in intermediate seaports necessary”. See DOTNA, 3.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>686</sup> ‘New Invention for Navigating the Ocean’, *New-York Tribune* 1, no. 75 (7 July 1841): 2.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>688</sup> Review of NWOMS, *New-York Tribune* 1, no. 83 (16 July 1841): 4.

<sup>689</sup> E.g., ‘A New Invention’, *North-Carolinian* [Fayetteville, NC] 3, no. 125 (17 July 1841): 3; ‘A New Invention’, *Edgefield Advertiser* [Edgefield, SC] 6, no. 25 (22 July 1841): 4; ‘New Kind of Navigation’, *Bloomington Herald* [Bloomington, IA] 1, no. 42 (13 August 1831): 3.

<sup>690</sup> ‘New Kind of Navigation’, 3.

in order to obtain patents in England, France and Germany<sup>691</sup> whilst Etzler remained in Philadelphia to complete the US patent process.<sup>692</sup> Stollmeyer worked especially quickly: he obtained the English patent on 17 September 1841,<sup>693</sup> and had already “returned to London from the Continent, where patents are secured”<sup>694</sup> by 23 October. His attention now turned to replicating in Britain the media success that the pair had recently experienced in the United States. The international Fourierist press was naturally already on-side. In Paris, *La Phalange* approvingly clamoured over “les projets de l'ingénieur mécanicien”,<sup>695</sup> and specifically praised Stollmeyer's involvement as a paradigmatic example of phalansterian munificence:

Il [Etzler] a fallu qu'il rencontrât enfin un de ces hommes qui, pleins de foi dans la Providence, prêtent volontiers l'oreille à tout projet susceptible d'améliorer la condition de l'humanité. Un phalanstérien fut le premier qui n'opposa point à M. Etzler l'objection des impossibilistes [...]<sup>696</sup>

Anglophone socialist publications on both sides of the Atlantic sang from the same hymn-sheet as their French counterpart; in England, Doherty followed Greeley's lead in adoring “Mr. Etzler's beautiful inventions”.<sup>697</sup> Stollmeyer also consulted representatives of the British Owenite movement, who from “the tone of quiet confidence [...] in which Mr. S. spoke of the subject” were initially persuaded that “the changes which the introduction of these wonderful machines will effect [...] will be impossible for the most determined and inveterate prejudices to resist”.<sup>698</sup> A follow-up meeting, however, yielded slightly more guarded analysis of the specifics: although the *Automaton* potentially marked “a decided improvement on the existing modes of navigation”, the editors of *New Moral*

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<sup>691</sup> Doherty's *London Phalanx* reported Stollmeyer's presence in London in September, “on his way to France and Germany, and other European nations, where he intends to take out patents for these powerful machines”. See ‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 24 (11 September 1841): 375. Brostowin has misread this source, mistakenly asserting that Stollmeyer made the trip together with “an unidentified director of the company” (‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 138). In fact, Doherty was clearly describing two attributes of the same person (i.e., friendship and directorship) when he wrote of “[...] Mr. Stollmeyer, the friend of Mr. Etzler, and one of the directors of the company in question [...]” (‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, 375). There is no evidence that anyone besides Stollmeyer and Etzler served as director in the Philadelphia company, nor that Stollmeyer travelled with any unknown third partner.

<sup>692</sup> Brostowin reported that his own “search of the United States patents for this period proved negative” (‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 138, n. 5), but Etzler did in fact succeed in obtaining US patents for both the satellite and the naval automaton, see USP1 and USP2.

<sup>693</sup> ‘List of English Patents Granted Between the 24th of August and 22nd of September, 1841’, *Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal and Gazette*, no. 942 (25 September 1841): 256. He is identified here as “Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer [sic], of Golden-terrace, Barnsbury Road, Islington”.

<sup>694</sup> ‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 30 (23 October 1841): 471.

<sup>695</sup> ‘Inventions de M. Etzler’, *La Phalange* 4, 8 (17 September 1841): 133.

<sup>696</sup> “He [Etzler] had only to finally meet one of those men who, full of providential faith, gladly lend their ears to any project likely to ameliorate the human condition. A phalansterian [i.e., Stollmeyer] was the first who did not oppose Mr. Etzler with the objection of the impossibilists [...]” (Ibid., 132–133 [translation mine]).

<sup>697</sup> ‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 24 (11 September 1841): 375.

<sup>698</sup> ‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, *New Moral World: And Gazette of the Rational Society* 10, no. 15 (9 October 1841): 115–116.

*World* confessed a “fear that the action of the waves and winds in stormy weather, upon the floats [...] would in many cases lead to their injury”, conceding nonetheless that “the invention is in its infancy, and [...] the mere attempt [...] must direct the current of thought into new channels”.<sup>699</sup>

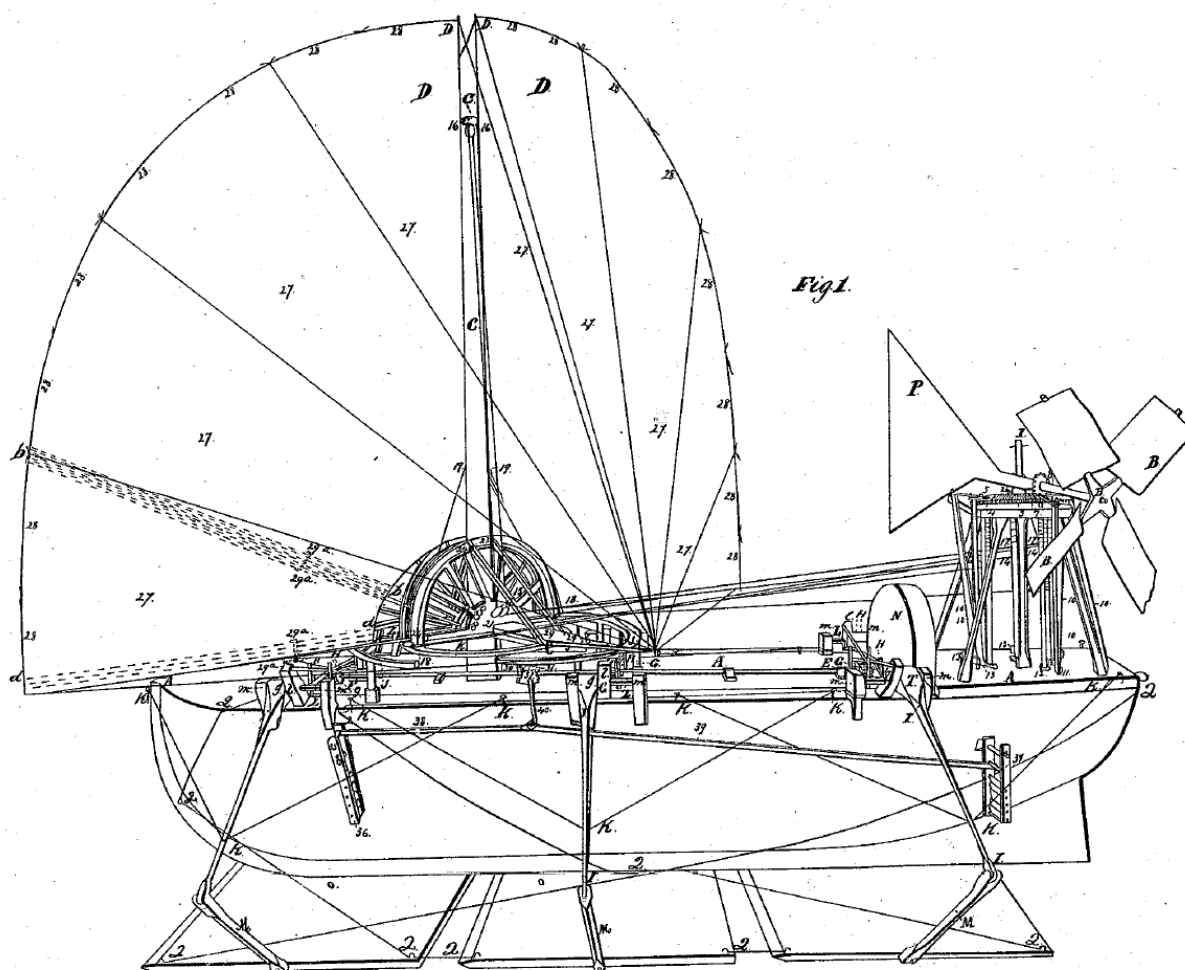


Fig. 12. The naval automaton, as depicted in its US patent application.<sup>700</sup> The submarine float manifold, rear windmill and automated ‘fan sail’ channel the combined motive force of wind and waves into a central propulsion mechanism, ostensibly rendering the dangerous and arduous duties of crewing conventional sail and steam vessels obsolete.

Stollmeyer knew he could count on broadly favourable publicity for Etzler's inventions in the pages of socialist periodicals, given the explicit orientation of the latter's machine-building programme towards the emancipation of working people from misery and hardship. Mainstream scientific and technical journals, on the other hand, were less sentimental about the philanthropic motives of inventors; convincing the editors of these to take the advent of the satellite and naval automaton

<sup>699</sup> ‘The Naval Automaton’, *New Moral World: And Gazette of the Rational Society* 10, no. 20 (13 November 1841): 158.

<sup>700</sup> John Adolphus Etzler, *Navigating and Propelling Vessels by the Action of the Wind and Waves*, US Patent 2,533, issued 1 April 1842.

seriously would require greater initiative.

Formal engagement with the patent process may already have helped lend a degree of credibility to the whole enterprise in the eyes of those without the requisite political sympathies, but Stollmeyer was equipped with a still more compelling strategic aid to his courtship of the respectable scientific press, as well as the general public. “Through the favour of Mr. Stollmeyer”, enthused a correspondent to the *Inventor's Advocate* in October, “we have seen *the models* of Mr. Etzler's inventions, and have been astonished at their simplicity, and their manifest superiority over every application of motive powers now known”.<sup>701</sup> Public exhibition of working scale models of Etzler's flagship machines would hereafter form a key part of Stollmeyer's campaign for wider recognition. Throughout the final quarter of 1841, the *Automaton* model was displayed to “ship-owners, steamship companies, capitalists, merchants, and the public in general”<sup>702</sup> by appointment “any day from 11 o'clock to 4 [...] at No. 70, Cheapside”.<sup>703</sup> Interested parties were instructed to apply via the Covent Garden offices of the *London Phalanx*,<sup>704</sup> signalling Doherty's growing proximity to Etzlerism. Although he remained a faithful exponent of the Fourierist doctrine of attractive industry—unlike Stollmeyer, Doherty persisted in the classic phalansterian view that “the natural destiny of man upon earth is to be active and industrious”<sup>705</sup>—he nonetheless also saw “[t]he progressive invention of science and mechanical power [as] the necessary groundwork of civilization”,<sup>706</sup> and in this connection, both the project of the naval automaton and Etzler's call for “printing establishments, by which the composing of words may be effected as quick as one speaks”<sup>707</sup> would now capture his imagination with a particular intensity.

### 6.3 Just My Type: Etzlerist Invents Keyboard and Word-Processes the *Paradise*

As the year drew to a close, the *Inventor's Advocate* spontaneously volunteered additional publicity for Etzler—“if he accomplish [sic] one-fiftieth part of what is professed, he will produce a complete revolution in steam navigation”<sup>708</sup>—while the *London Phalanx*'s earlier reports of the *Automaton* model were recirculated verbatim in New York through Stollmeyer's existing phalansterian and anti-

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<sup>701</sup> ‘New Motive Powers’, *Inventors' Advocate, and Journal of Industry* 5, no. 115 (9 October 1841): 233 [emphasis mine].

<sup>702</sup> ‘Naval Automaton’, *Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.*, no. 1293 (30 October 1841): 703.

<sup>703</sup> ‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 30 (23 October 1841): 471.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>705</sup> Hugh Doherty, *False Association and Its Remedy; or, a Critical Introduction to the Late Charles Fourier's Theory of Attractive Industry, and the Moral Harmony of the Passions* (London: London Phalanx, 1841), 32.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, 31–32.

<sup>707</sup> PWR2, 87.

<sup>708</sup> ‘Naval Automaton’, *Inventors' Advocate, and Journal of Industry* 5, no. 121 (20 November 1841): 330.

slavery channels.<sup>709</sup> Doherty's passion for new inventions also rendered a new and valuable convert to the Etzlerist cause. James Hadden Young, formerly a silk merchant in Lille, had contrived his own “beautiful machine [...] destined to produce a complete revolution in labour”,<sup>710</sup> which he now patented and constructed in London.<sup>711</sup> Young became close friends with Henry Bessemer, for whom the Bessemer process in steel manufacturing is named. In Bessemer's autobiography, his friendship with Young is fondly recounted, and he provides a detailed description of the machine's working principles and research and development process.<sup>712</sup> It is no unjust exaggeration to credit Young as the *inventor of typing*, in the sense commonly understood today: his invention, the first of its kind, was a piano-like compositing tool, the keys of which were “marked with the letters, and, when touched with the finger, the corresponding type falls into its place with the rapidity of spelling”.<sup>713</sup> Because letters were now typed simply by touching a keyboard as opposed to being manually arranged, the machine allowed the typesetting of approximately 6000 characters per hour<sup>714</sup> without significantly fatiguing the (seated) operator. As Young's machine and others based on it spread through the Victorian printing industry in the years that followed, the change would dramatically equalise the gender composition of the printing industry, eliminating the physically demanding and previously male-dominated toil of traditional composition.<sup>715</sup>

With his finger ever on the pulse of emerging technology, Hugh Doherty heard about Young's project during its development, sought out and befriended the talented technician, and thrilled at the opportunity to involve himself in “the first piece of periodical literature which has ever been typographed in this manner”,<sup>716</sup> namely the *London Phalanx* for 18 December 1841, on which Young

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<sup>709</sup> ‘Mr. Etzler's Inventions’, *New-York Tribune* 1, no. 200 (30 November 1841): 1; ‘Remarkable Inventions?’, *National Anti-Slavery Standard* [New York, NY] 2, no. 28 (16 December 1841): 112.

<sup>710</sup> ‘A New Invention’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 22 (28 August 1841): 351.

<sup>711</sup> He obtained the British patent in March 1840. See ‘Verzeichniß der vom 29. Febr. bis 28. März 1840 in England Ertheilten Patente’, *Polytechnisches Journal* 76 (March 1840): 231.

<sup>712</sup> See Henry Bessemer, *Sir Henry Bessemer, F.R.S.: An Autobiography* (London: Offices of ‘Engineering’, 1905), 43–46.

<sup>713</sup> ‘Review of the Week’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 38 (18 December 1841): 594. For additional triumphal analysis by Doherty about Hadden's invention, see also ‘The New Composing Machine’, *London Phalanx* 1, no. 36 (4 December 1841): 567–68.

<sup>714</sup> Colin Clair, *A History of Printing in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 221.

<sup>715</sup> For a more complete history of the shockwaves Young's typing machine sent through the gendered politics of the printing industry, see François Jarrige, ‘Le Mauvais Genre de la Machine’, *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 54, no. 1 (2007): 193–221.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*

gladly acquiesced to test his keyboard<sup>717</sup> before obtaining work from other clients.<sup>718</sup> Doherty's infectious enthusiasm for Etzler's visions of an automated utopian future found a receptive host in the already mechanically-minded Young, who would now go on to become a leading figure in the Etzlerist movement in his own right.



Fig. 13. The Etzlerist technician James Hadden Young's new Type-Composing Machine (right), as it appeared on the masthead of 'Shepherd' Smith's *Family Herald*. Its conspicuous operation by women in this picture is intentional and significant: before the invention of Young's machine, manual composition of text was an almost exclusively male-dominated profession. Young's invention delivered on Etzler's longstanding anticipation of "printing establishments, by which the composing of words may be effected as quick as one speaks, and the copies multiplied without labour".<sup>719</sup> The 1842 edition of Etzler's *Paradise*, prepared and printed on Young's own prototype of the machine shortly after it was built, has the distinction of being the first *typed* monograph in human history.

While Doherty sang the praises of Young's new typing machine to his British readership and Stollmeyer continued to display the naval automaton model and secure European patents on Etzler's behalf, Etzler's parallel work continued apace across the Atlantic. As 1841 drew to a close, he

<sup>717</sup> See particularly the recollections of the Fourierist James "Shepherd" Smith—posthumously published by his son W. Anderson Smith as *'Shepherd' Smith the Universalist: The Story of a Mind* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1892)—for confirmation that Doherty's *Phalanx* was indeed Young's very first periodical test-run. Smith (sr.) went on to become the editor of the *Family Herald*, and first learned of Young's machine through his association with Doherty (see *ibid.*, 212). He commissioned it for use on the *Herald* for 17 December 1842 (*ibid.*, 219–220), almost exactly a year after it was first tested on Doherty's *Phalanx*.

<sup>718</sup> For further reception of the machine in connection with James Hadden Young's later client base, see 'M. T.', 'The Composing Machine', *Compositor's Chronicle: an Epitome of Events Interesting to Printers*, no. 30 (1 January 1843): 233. The correspondent discusses the role of Young's machine in producing the *Family Herald* 1, no. 1 (17 December 1842), and wrongly conjectures that Young himself is the proprietor and editor. 'M. T.' doubts the possibility of what is now known as touch-typing, scoffing that "[t]here are few persons in the world who have got an *ear* for *music*, but, alas, not one who has got an *ear* for *type*" ('The Composing Machine', 233 [emphasis in original]).

<sup>719</sup> PWR2, 87.



obtained the US Patent for the keystone of Etzlerist technology: the satellite, filed under the title *Mode of Propelling Locomotives by Stationary Power*.<sup>720</sup>

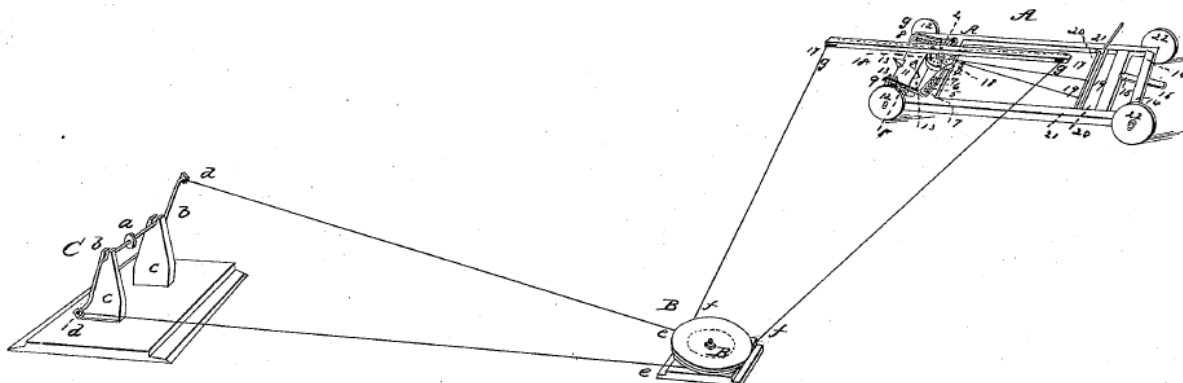


Fig. 15, Diagram from Etzler's 1841 patent,<sup>721</sup> showing a prototypical satellite chassis (A) attached via its connecting means and double roller (B) to the site of stationary power (C), which could be any one of Etzler's proposed wind, tidal or solar-steam generators depending on optimal local conditions.

During 1842 Etzler continued to reside in Philadelphia<sup>722</sup> whilst Stollmeyer, Doherty and Young's incipient British Etzlerist movement continued to build momentum. The *London Phalanx*, now rapidly typed-up on Young's keyboard, remained the principal vehicle of Etzlerist propaganda throughout the year—NWOMS was repeatedly advertised<sup>723</sup> and then serialised<sup>724</sup> there by Doherty over the winter and early spring. Doherty became increasingly preoccupied with Etzlerism over this period, often referring to Etzler's ideas in otherwise unrelated *Phalanx* articles.<sup>725</sup>

With corresponding patents already in place by April,<sup>726</sup> the British team immediately<sup>727</sup> arranged

<sup>720</sup> John A. Etzler, 'Mode of Propelling Locomotives by Stationary Power', US Patent 2396, issued 23 December 1841.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> His residence at 89 Locust Street—between Rittenhouse Square and Washington Square—is attested by *M'Elroy's Philadelphia Directory for 1842*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Orrin Rogers, 1842), 80.

<sup>723</sup> 'Etzler's Mechanical System [...]', *London Phalanx* 1, no. 44 (29 January 1842): 704; 'Etzler's Mechanical System [...]', *London Phalanx* 1, no. 47 (19 February 1842): 752.

<sup>724</sup> The full text (sans diagrams and calculations, which Doherty deems "too complex for general readers") is reprinted across four issues: first as 'Etzler's Mechanical System', *London Phalanx* 1, no. 46 (12 February 1842): 730–32, then continued twice under the title 'Mr. Etzler and His Mechanism' in *London Phalanx* 1, no. 47 (19 February 1842): 741–43; *London Phalanx* 1, no. 49 (5 March 1842): 773–75; and finally concluded under the title 'Etzler's Advice to His Critics', *London Phalanx* 1, no. 50 (12 March 1842): 792.

<sup>725</sup> E.g., 'Modern Warfare', *London Phalanx* 1, no. 45 (5 February 1842): 713–14.

<sup>726</sup> John Adolphus Etzler, *Navigating and Propelling Vessels by the Action of the Wind and Waves*, US Patent 2533, issued 1 April 1842.

<sup>727</sup> Readers and future researchers should beware that this pamphlet's date of publication has been very widely misreported as 1844, even by libraries and institutions holding copies of it. Though DOTNA itself bears no explicit date, it cannot have been published as late as 1844, since it is already reviewed in *Northern Star* 5, no. 241 (25 June 1842): 3—one of the first recorded instances of Etzler's exposure-in-print to the chartist audiences who would populate the Tropical Emigration Society two years later. It makes perfect sense that Stollmeyer would arrange for its publication immediately after the patent was obtained (i.e., April 1842) rather than waiting for two years, as is implied by the ubiquitous latter-day misdating.



the publication of the DOTNA<sup>728</sup> pamphlet to popularise the invention more widely.

Between April and July 1842<sup>729</sup> after a successful printing trial with Doherty's *London Phalanx*, James Hadden Young used his new keyboard typing machine to prepare the "second English [sic]" (PWR3a/b) edition of the *Paradise within the Reach of All Men*. Since it could be quickly reproduced using Young's new technology, PWR3a/b helped the Etzlerist movement reach much broader audiences than Brooks' 1836 "pirate" edition (PWR2), which, as Young remarks in the front matter of his own edition, "was on account of some peculiar circumstances, only circulated amongst a small number of persons". However, he went on, "as it is desirable, that the great discoveries of J. A. ETZLER should become generally known", the new mass-produced edition was now "presented to the public in such a way and form that its purchase may come 'within the reach of every man', thereby ensuring an immediate and most extensive circulation".<sup>730</sup> To this effect, it was published in two sixpenny parts, Doherty reiterated in the pages of the *Phalanx*, "so as to be within the reach of all classes, and no intelligent person should be without it".<sup>731</sup>

After finishing the typed-up edition of Etzler's *Paradise*, James Hadden Young's machine would again be commissioned in the closing months of 1842 in order to expedite the publication of Dr. Edward Binns' influential *Anatomy of Sleep*.<sup>732</sup> Though the actual content of Binns' monograph was widely regarded as having made a ground-breaking contribution to the scientific study of sleep, some reviewers were still more excited by the Etzlerist manner of its composition than about the topic of the text itself:

The first thing we shall notice about this beautifully-*got-up* volume is that it has been typographically composed by machinery,—by means of an apparatus somewhat after the construction of a piano-forte, which touched, it may be by female fingers, drops the letters into their proper places; dispensing with the usual number, and certain of the usual operations, of regular compositors.<sup>733</sup>

Binns' reviewer in the *Medical Times* incorrectly conjectured that the typed manuscript of *Anatomy*

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<sup>728</sup> *Description of the Naval Automaton Invented by J. A. Etzler, and Lately Patented in England, France, Holland, Belgium, and the United States of North America* (London: Wilson & Ogilvy, 1842). Stoll very carelessly misdates this pamphlet to 1846 (*Great Delusion*, 190); others have misdated it to 1844 (e.g., Brostowin, Nydahl, Claeys, LSE Library).

<sup>729</sup> James Hadden Young's edition (i.e., PWR3a/b) contains parenthetical annotations not present in either PWR1a/b or PWR2. Hadden's notes typically direct the reader to other titles in Etzler's growing bibliography. The note "(See Description of the Naval Automaton)" has been inserted by Young at PWR3a, 17, so it cannot have been published any earlier than April 1842. Conversely, PWR3a/b began to receive reviews as early as 30 July 1842 (see below).

<sup>730</sup> PWR3a, 2.

<sup>731</sup> Review of PWR3a/b, *London Phalanx* 2, no. 60 (August 1842): 80–82.

<sup>732</sup> Edward Binns, *The Anatomy of Sleep; or, the Art of Procuring Sound and Refreshing Slumber at Will* (London: John Churchill, 1842).

<sup>733</sup> Review of Edward Binns, *The Anatomy of Sleep* [&c.], *Monthly Review* (November 1842): 275 [emphasis in original].

of *Sleep* was “the first of its kind, we believe, in the annals of typography”,<sup>734</sup> a mistaken belief not much helped by Binns’ own bloviating prefatory comments about his book’s status “as an epoch in the history of typography, from which it is possible to conceive, a new era in the history of literature may be dated”.<sup>735</sup>

As a result of these two misleading statements, generations of subsequent scholars in the history of print and publishing have understandably misidentified Binns’ *Anatomy of Sleep* as the first book ever typed.<sup>736</sup> However, a pre-publication advertisement shows that the *Anatomy* had not yet been published as late as 20 August 1842,<sup>737</sup> meaning James Hadden Young definitely finished his typed edition of Etzler’s *Paradise* first, in time for it to be reviewed in both the *Literary Gazette*<sup>738</sup> and *Spectator*<sup>739</sup> in July 1842, well before Binn’s book landed on any reviewer’s desk. It is therefore John Adolphus Etzler, not Edward Binns, who should rightfully be commemorated as the author of the first book in human history ever to be typed up on a keyboard.

The technologies of the *Paradise*, given a new airing with the help of Young’s composing machine, drew the ire of conservative religious elements in the mainstream British press. Etzlerism was denounced as “mad” in the *Era*, where Etzler’s ambition to press the sun, wind and tides into human service was rubbished on the basis that they already “serve mankind now under the superintendence of the great deity by whom they were formed, and by whom they are guided”.<sup>740</sup> Unhampered by these sermons, Etzlerism evidently struck a chord in the growing and increasingly vocal British atheist movement: the following month, Maltus Questell Ryall touted the *Paradise* as “a work of the highest genius” in Holyoake’s *Oracle of Reason*,<sup>741</sup> enthusiastically taking up the motif of Etzler’s imaginary museum of the future<sup>742</sup> and hoping that amongst the relics of old-fashioned human work, one might find the equally obsolete remnants of Christianity.<sup>743</sup>

Young’s typed-up “very cheap and popular edition”<sup>744</sup> of Etzler’s *Paradise* made its way deep into

<sup>734</sup> Review of Edward Binns, *The Anatomy of Sleep* [&c.], *Medical Times* 6, no. 156 (17 September 1842): 396.

<sup>735</sup> Binns, *Anatomy of Sleep*, x.

<sup>736</sup> E.g., Colin Clair, *A History of European Printing* (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1976), 377. See also Jeremy Norman, ‘Binns’ *Anatomy of Sleep*: the First Book Known to Have Been Typeset by a Composing Machine (Young & Delcambre’s Pianotyp), *History of Information* [website], <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=3202> (accessed 2021-05-18).

<sup>737</sup> ‘Sleep at Will’, *Medical Times* 6, no. 152 (20 August 1842): 336 [N.b., mispaginated 310 by publisher].

<sup>738</sup> “‘New Paradise on Earth (Not Fool’s)”. Review of the *Paradise* [&c.]’, *Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.*, no. 1332 (30 July 1842): 531–32.

<sup>739</sup> ‘Publications Received’, *Spectator*, no. 735 (30 July 1842): 739.

<sup>740</sup> ‘A Mechanical Paradise’, *Era* 4, no. 204 (21 August 1842): 6.

<sup>741</sup> M[altus] Q[uestell] R[yall], ‘Symbolic Worship’, *Oracle of Reason; or Philosophy Vindicated* 1, no. 43 (15 October 1842): 357–59.

<sup>742</sup> “So whatever can be bought with money now, will have no value. If the artificial products [of work-based civilization] should be of any use at all, it must be to place some of them into the museum, merely to preserve them for after ages” (PWR2, 130).

<sup>743</sup> Ryall, ‘Symbolic Worship’, 358.

<sup>744</sup> ‘Paradise within the Reach [...]’, *London Phalanx* 2, no. 61 (1 September 1842): 128.

previously unreachable recesses of British institutional life. Languishing in the “glory-hole”<sup>745</sup>—a subterranean gaol beneath Stafford’s Shire Hall Courthouse complex—following his role in the Plug Plot riots of 1842,<sup>746</sup> the Leicestershire chartist Thomas Cooper found himself in an extraordinary conversation with his cellmate William Ellis.<sup>747</sup>

“I esteem it remarkable”, Cooper explained to his fellow chartists in a subsequent letter to the *Northern Star*,

when I find a working-man who can tell me of a book on an important subject that I have not heard of. Ellis can do this. He described to me “Etzler’s *Paradise in [sic] the Reach of all Men* and, from his description of it, I shall feel restless until I see it. Every subject that was touched upon he could handle in a way that I was not prepared for.”<sup>748</sup>

“So ho!” he signed off his correspondence to the editor, “we are converts to some new faith, are we, at Leicester?—Ha ha!”<sup>749</sup> Cooper would go on to spread his discovery of Etzler to his comrades at home upon his temporary release, with the result that the town would develop a substantial branch of the Etzlerist Tropical Emigration Society as the decade progressed. Cooper himself was incarcerated again<sup>750</sup> for much of the TES’s period of domestic activity, but at least three Leicester Etzlerists made the voyage to Trinidad in 1845, including Enoch Payne,<sup>751</sup> whose infant son would become a ward of the TES *in situ* for several months when his father tragically perished there the following year. Before his second stint in prison, Cooper campaigned for the annulment of “the horrid injustice done to our banished friend [Ellis]”,<sup>752</sup> but his efforts were unsuccessful; Etzler’s one-time jailhouse propagandist was transported as planned in 1843.<sup>753</sup>

With one Etzlerist about to travel involuntarily over the waves as 1842 drew to a close, two other Etzlerists purposed to do the same under their own steam. Not content to merely patent and publicise Etzler’s naval automaton, Doherty and Stollmeyer resolved to build their own prototype. “Doherty is keenly employed upon an automaton vessel at present”, wrote ‘Shepherd’ Smith in his diary on 18

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<sup>745</sup> Thomas Cooper, *The Life of Thomas Cooper: Written by Himself* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1872), 217.

<sup>746</sup> So called because they involved the industrial sabotage of mills by the removal of plugs. See *Ibid.*, 190–191.

<sup>747</sup> Ellis was later transported to Australia, ostensibly for “feloniously destroying a house”; see Robert Fyson, ‘The Transported Chartist: The Case of William Ellis’, in Ashton, Fyson & Roberts, *The Chartist Legacy* (Rendlesham: Merlin Press, 1999), 80–101.

<sup>748</sup> Thomas Cooper, ‘To the Editor of the Evening [sic] Star’, *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 263 (26 November 1842): 7.

<sup>749</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>750</sup> Cooper, *Life of Thomas Cooper*, 235–236.

<sup>751</sup> See my recovery of this individual’s remarkable history discussed further in subsection 7.8 of this thesis.

<sup>752</sup> Thomas Cooper, ‘To the Editor of the Morning Star’, *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 263 (26 November 1842): 7.

<sup>753</sup> See Stephen Roberts, ‘Chartists A–Z’, *Chartism & the Chartists: Musings, Information & Illustrations about the Chartists from Stephen Roberts* [website], <https://www.thepeoplescharter.co.uk/profiles.htm> (accessed 2021-05-08).

October 1842, “and expects to go to sea this month in it”.<sup>754</sup> Smith jotted a summary of the naval automaton’s working principle—an array of paddles actuated by the motion of waves against a submarine float (“the heavier the sea the stronger the power[!]”<sup>755</sup>)—but doubted its prospects when executed in practice.

Smith’s concerns were well-founded: “Doherty’s boat [sic] went down”, reads his entry for 31 December 1842. “The float pulled it in head foremost, and Stollmeyer had to jump for his life. Doherty [...] lost his razors, &c., which he had put in it, intending to take a trip to France. He was not in it when it sunk”.<sup>756</sup> With a total outlay of £45, the pair were able to retrieve and repair the *Automaton* shortly after the accident, which Stollmeyer attributed to incorrect attachment of the float. Since the only permanent casualty of the experiment was Doherty’s shaving kit, the Etzlerist duo experienced the sinking of the *Automaton* only as a minor setback, though it earned them plenty of jocular gloating from Smith, who “used to bother [Stollmeyer] long ago with the idea of its going down, when he invited me to go to France in it. I asked him if France lay at the bottom of the sea.”<sup>757</sup>

Stollmeyer and Doherty entered the new year apparently undaunted and ready to push on with their promotion of Etzlerism in Britain. At the invitation of the Rational Society, Stollmeyer delivered lectures on Etzler’s *Paradise* at the John Street Institute on 31 January<sup>758</sup> and 7 February,<sup>759</sup> instructing London’s Owenites on “the vast mechanical power which would be derived from the wind and waves, by very simple machinery”.<sup>760</sup> Meanwhile, Doherty continued to plug Etzler in the pages of the *London Phalanx*. In an April editorial urging the British government to apportion a million pounds annually for investment in utopian experiments,<sup>761</sup> Doherty appraised Etzlerism, Owenism and Fourierism as the three leading tendencies “being, in our estimation, the most certain of success”,<sup>762</sup> and therefore proposed an equal allocation of £300,000 per annum from the Treasury to representatives of each movement, with £100,000 left over for bureaucratic overheads. The possibility that any members of Robert Peel’s cabinet were readers of the *London Phalanx* seems remote; at any rate, suffice it to say that Doherty’s budgetary advice went unfollowed.

#### 6.4 Warren, we have a Problem: Haunted Cow Sabotages Smolnikarite Satellite Launch

Etzler had remained in Philadelphia during the first half of 1843, but in May, Andreas Bernardus

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<sup>754</sup> W. Anderson Smith, *‘Shepherd’ Smith the Universalist: The Story of a Mind* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1892), 215.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid.

<sup>758</sup> ‘London Branch [...]’, *New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society* 11, no. 31 (28 January 1843): 252.

<sup>759</sup> ‘London Branch [...]’, *New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society* 11, no. 32 (4 February 1843): 260.

<sup>760</sup> ‘London Branch [...]’, *New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society* 11, no. 34 (18 February 1843): 275.

<sup>761</sup> ‘Industrial Slavery and Silent Revolution’, *London Phalanx* 2, no. 68 (1 April 1843): 322–30.

<sup>762</sup> Ibid., 328.

Smolnikar, the Slovene mystic and religious leader who had met Etzler two years before at Stollmeyer's bookshop,<sup>763</sup> now wrote to the inventor asking for assistance. Smolnikar had since established a millenarian religious commune in Warren County, PA under the auspices of his *Friedens-Verein* ['Peace-Union'] group,<sup>764</sup> and wanted Etzler to visit as a consultant in order to oversee the construction of mechanical farming equipment there. The Smolnikarites espoused an elaborate spiritualist theology in which ghosts and demons were believed to interact directly and often violently with mortal humans on a daily basis. Despite his fantastic speculations about the spirit realm, Smolnikar was also deeply influenced (at least on the material plane) by the ideas of the secular socialist movement. Members of his church were expected to practice full communism of property:

Every individual who determines to enter into our community, brings all his property into it, after having settled all his business in the world. This property, according to our principles will be taken in possession by the community<sup>765</sup>

Stollmeyer immediately undertook to publicise this collaboration in Britain,<sup>766</sup> writing to Owen's *New Moral World* that "Mr. Etzler, after the receipt of the invitation, immediately repaired to Warren"<sup>767</sup> in order to assist the project. Stollmeyer also took the opportunity to observe that the Owenites at Harmony Hall might do well to learn from the example of the seemingly tech-savvy Smolnikarites by adopting Etzlerist machinery rather than relying on "*spade* cultivation, the very cause of ancient slavery".<sup>768</sup>

Etzler's degree of actual success in automating Smolnikar's commune is difficult to ascertain. In keeping with his dogmatic insistence that Etzler was entirely incompetent, Steven Stoll assumes the

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<sup>763</sup> See Andreas B. Smolnikar, *The One Thing Needful: Namely, to Spread as Rapidly as Possible the Glorious Manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia, PA: Barrett & Jones Printers, 1841), 240, 464.

<sup>764</sup> See 'Great Movements in Limestone, Warren County, Penn.', *The Present* 1, no. 9 (1 March 1844): 353–54.

<sup>765</sup> Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism*, 184.

<sup>766</sup> Despite ample evidence to the contrary, Stoll's *Great Delusion* falsely represents Etzler's work with Smolnikar's group as something that was deliberately kept secret from the British movement, claiming that in 1845 "Stollmeyer knew something that no one else did [...] Etzler had tested a satellite in 1843 at the Universal [sic] Peace Union in Butler [sic] County, Pennsylvania [...] there is no journalistic record of the event" (Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 120). Besides the basic inaccuracy of this claim, note that Stoll also gives an incorrect location for Smolnikar's Warren County commune, and even appears to conflate its name with that of Alfred Love's much later pacifist campaign group—not founded until 1866—on whose executive board Stollmeyer would, in much later life, serve as Vice-President. For accurate information about this (unrelated) lobbying organisation, including Stollmeyer's involvement, see: Alfred H. Love, *A Brief Synopsis of Some of the Work Proposed, Aided and Accomplished by the Universal Peace Union, during Twenty-five Years, from 1866 to 1891* (Philadelphia, PA: Universal Peace Union, 1891). For another brief description of Stollmeyer's ample 1843 publicity for the Warren satellite trial—from which, even without recourse to primary sources, Stoll could have learned that it was *not* kept secret in the manner he mendaciously suggests—see Claeys, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 359.

<sup>767</sup> C. F. Stollmeyer, 'Etzler and American Communities', *New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society* 11, no. 51 (17 June 1843): 428.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, [emphasis in original].

worst,<sup>769</sup> misreading Smolnikar's 1859 outlandish supernatural tract *Enemies of True Republicanism*<sup>770</sup> as the disgruntled testimony of an unsatisfied customer.

Smolnikar's full recollection of his experience with Etzler's machine is certainly strikingly bizarre, but also far more flattering to Etzler than Stoll allows. Smolnikar alleged that one of his "most zealous students",<sup>771</sup> George Karle, attempted to make some repairs to the already-completed satellite several months after Etzler's departure, but during the process<sup>772</sup> was tempted to a watery grave in the Allegheny River by the murderous ghost of "the departed Mormon Prophet Joe Smith, not directly but indirectly by the instrumentality of a cow".<sup>773</sup>

However, Karle's untimely assassination by the siren-song of the commune's possessed livestock was not in vain, Smolnikar assured the reader, since anyway he "had an important mission in the spirit world, [in which] he continues to be engaged".<sup>774</sup> Not content with culling Smolnikar's brightest satellite mechanics, a week later<sup>775</sup> Smith's vengeful shade supposedly escaped its bovine host and "was allowed to attack [Smolnikar] directly, to show how he [the human form of the ghost] would be able to kill a man in a minute, if he would be permitted".<sup>776</sup> Smolnikar, caught by surprise while fast asleep in bed, felt himself almost overpowered by the smouldering charcoal fingers of Smith's "most degraded, lewd and lascivious spirit",<sup>777</sup> but was, he said, able to defeat the disembodied Mormon patriarch at the last moment by summoning his own spirit guardian, which seized Smith and "cast [him] into a combustible matter which was by his infernal electricity instantly kindled".<sup>778</sup> With the vanquished ghoul safely transformed into an "artificially made heap of soot"<sup>779</sup> in Smolnikar's fireplace (his spirit guardian evidently so considerate as not merely to protect his life, but to keep his bedroom tidy), the victorious mystic subsequently travelled to the Mormon stronghold of Nauvoo<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>769</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 120.

<sup>770</sup> Andrew B. Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism: Most Important Developments Regarding the Inner Life of Man and the Spirit World, in Order to Abolish Revolutions and Wars and to Establish Permanent Peace on Earth, Also: the Plan for Redemption of Nations from Monarchical and other Oppressive Speculations and for the Introduction of the Promised New Era of Harmony, Truth and Righteousness on the Wohle [sic] Globe* (Springhill, PA: Peace Union Centre, 1859).

<sup>771</sup> Andrew B. Smolnikar, *The Great Message to All Governments and All Nations, for the Introduction of Christ's Peaceable Reign on Earth, which will be the Promised Universal Republic of Truth and Righteousness, also, an Extraordinary Case Providentially Prepared for Judges, Lawyers, Courts and Citizens of the States in General, to Awaken and Move Them for Co-Operation with Us to Introduce the Promised Universal Republic* (Philadelphia, PA: King & Baird, 1864), 85.

<sup>772</sup> Stoll incorrectly claims that Smolnikar believed the ghost to have attacked the machine itself, which is directly contradicted by the source (*Great Delusion*, 120, n. 29).

<sup>773</sup> Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism*, 176.

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>775</sup> Smolnikar dates the phantom's attempt on his life very precisely to 11pm on the night of 30 July 1844 (see *Great Message*, 85).

<sup>776</sup> Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism*, 176.

<sup>777</sup> Smolnikar, *Great Message*, 86.

<sup>778</sup> Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism*, 176.

<sup>779</sup> Smolnikar, *Great Message*, 86.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–87.

to remonstrate with Smith's terrestrial followers about the unprovoked attack, by which he had been all the more incensed given that he "did not know [Smith] personally in his mortal body".<sup>781</sup>

Haunted cow attack notwithstanding, Smolnikar did not regard the satellite itself as a categorical failure. In fact, even though "[p]eople were ridiculing [him] and reproaching the machine", after George Karle's death, he instructed another follower to resume the maintenance tasks Karle had been attempting: even if certain pieces of the machine needed to be fixed, he guessed they could easily "be repaired and the mistake of the inventor corrected, if they would persevere in the work of the Lord".<sup>782</sup> However, even without further supernatural interruption, the Smolnikarite commune were unable to make the necessary repairs by themselves with their best technician dead and Etzler already out of the country by the time they came to need his expert assistance. Yet to the last, Smolnikar viewed the project of fixing the Peace-Union satellite as merely postponed rather than abandoned, ruminating that "when we will be in all directions secured with abundant means, we will [continue to] support inventions for the common welfare [sic]".<sup>783</sup>

Stoll's account of the Smolnikarite Peace-Union satellite trial is very misleading, despite its ostensible recourse to primary sources. Rather than describe the events in chronological order, he waits until the TES satellite trial of September 1845 appears in his main narrative,<sup>784</sup> and then springs the Smolnikar trial on the reader in order to make it seem as if Etzler and Stollmeyer concealed the earlier (1843) trial at Warren, PA, from the TES colonists. "Stollmeyer knew something that no one else did [...] Etzler had tested a satellite in 1843",<sup>785</sup> he writes. But this is simply false: cursory examination of the relevant primary evidence shows that Stollmeyer ceaselessly foisted the fact of the trial at Peace Union<sup>786</sup> on everyone who would listen—he mentions it countless times in letters to *New Moral World* and the *Northern Star* throughout 1843, using it as a promotional warm-up before Etzler's move to London in November, and even trying to tout it as evidence of Etzlerism's superiority to Owenism on account of the comparatively crude farming methods under use at Harmony Hall. The idea that nobody in the TES in 1845—bearing in mind many of their leading members came directly from the chartist and Owenite movements—had heard of the Warren satellite trial is therefore ludicrous.

Stoll's misrepresentation of the Smolnikarite satellite trial goes further. After incorrectly telling the reader that it took place in Butler County, PA,<sup>787</sup> he says that Smolnikar's seeress foresaw "that it [the

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<sup>781</sup> Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism*, 176.

<sup>782</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>783</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>784</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 120.

<sup>785</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>786</sup> Here Stoll also confuses Smolnikar's Peace Union [*Friedens-Verein*] commune with the totally unrelated (and much later) Universal Peace Union of Alfred Love.

<sup>787</sup> A relatively minor geographical muddle by the standard Stoll sets elsewhere in *Great Delusion*; once he begins to describe events in Venezuela the margin of error widens to hundreds of miles.

Warren satellite] splintered into a thousand pieces [...]. [Etzler] built his machine and watched it splinter into a thousand pieces.”<sup>788</sup> Since on the same page Stoll directly quotes text from the requisite location in Smolnikar’s book,<sup>789</sup> he *must* know that this is not at all what the passage says or implies. Smolnikar discusses (mind the phrase) pieces *of* the satellite, i.e., its parts (further up he calls them “portions”). At no point is it said or implied that the satellite “splinter[ed] into a thousand pieces”, this is an invention of Stoll’s. Stoll repeats that there “is no journalistic record of the event”, despite the numerous accounts that were circulated about it, which I have difficulty believing that Stoll has not seen. Every element and detail that Stoll exaggerates, omits or misinterprets from these sources is calculated to portray Etzler as deceitful and incompetent, in order to persuade the reader to accept the asinine verdict that the satellite “could [not] have worked [...] in a million years”.<sup>790</sup> If Stoll had done a little more research he would have discovered that Atkins, the engineer of the Bicester satellite, continued to produce and develop commercial farming machinery based on similar working principles to the satellite throughout the 1850s, and that his designs were discussed and imitated in earnest by other manufacturers of agricultural machinery for some time afterwards (though they knew him as ‘Atzlar’, as I have established in my literature review).

## 6.5 “Friends and Believers”: Etzler Joins his Growing Fanbase in Britain

As Etzler oversaw mechanical experimentation for Smolnikar during the second half of 1843 with his work blissfully undeterred by ghost attacks (Joseph Smith’s spirit would remain peaceably within its mortal confines until June 1844, by which time Etzler was already safely in Britain), and in full communication with the public about his work, the growing Etzlerist support network in London meanwhile continued their promotional efforts. Etzler had prepared a new dialogic text which rhetorically pitted the prejudices of three hypothetical anti-Etzlerists (Messrs. Flat, Duncie and Grudge) against an Etzlerist interlocutor (Mr. Clear). James ‘Bronterre’ O’Brien and James Hadden Young teamed up and used the latter’s newly-invented Type-Composing Machine—which had been successfully pressed into service for the *Paradise*’s third edition the previous year<sup>791</sup>—to mass-produce stand-alone copies in pamphlet form. One sympathetic reviewer called it “a forcible exposure of the ignorance, selfishness, indolence and arrogance” of Etzler’s detractors and “a spirited reply to all the follies by which the advent of new discoveries is usually hailed”.<sup>792</sup> The chartist bookseller John Cleave became involved in the distribution of the polemic, and it was also advertised in July

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<sup>788</sup> *Great Delusion*, 120.

<sup>789</sup> Smolnikar, *Secret Enemies of True Republicanism*, 175.

<sup>790</sup> *Great Delusion*, 121–22.

<sup>791</sup> See 6.3.

<sup>792</sup> Review of *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men* [&c.] and *Dialogue on Etzler’s Paradise*, by John Adolphus Etzler, *Fire-Side Journal, and Odd Fellow: A Miscellany of Literature, Amusement, and Romance*, no. 32 (22 July 1843): 273.



1843 in the *Northern Star*.<sup>793</sup> Later that month, evidently spotting a new entry point for Etzlerist propaganda in the chartist movement, Stollmeyer began an exhaustive campaign of promotional correspondence to the same periodical, submitting a volley of seven lengthy editorial letters presenting a thorough exposition of Etzlerist ideas to a chartist audience.

Stollmeyer's pitch to the chartists began by establishing the idea that the profound socio-political consequences associated with emerging technologies often bely the apparent simplicity or insignificance of the inventions themselves, citing the upheavals caused by gunpowder, the compass and the printing press as three specific examples of "the great changes, which apparently small inventions have brought about in the condition and history of mankind".<sup>794</sup>

The vast majority of new inventions were nonetheless "*merely improvements in tools*, which enabled a smaller number of men to produce more and superior articles of wealth".<sup>795</sup> However, two recent discoveries—steam-power and electro-magnetism—hinted at the possibility not only of economizing existing work tasks through superior tools, but of wholly displacing human and animal exertion as the primary source of power: "power to drive the machines; power to handle the tools; power to do the work".<sup>796</sup> Etzler's innovations, Stollmeyer explained, were of a similar technical character: they were not merely refinements of existing manual tools, but entirely new systems for replacing living operatives with inanimate powers of nature. Moreover, Stollmeyer continued, Etzler recognised the profound socio-political implications of such technical possibilities; it was therefore "not his wish to monopolize machinery or to use his discoveries merely for his own advantage [...] [but] to benefit his fellow-men, and to live with them in a state of peace and happiness". By providing unconditional mechanized access to the necessities of life, the machines should be used to abolish the work-based society, since "[w]ork is not the end, it is simply the means at present [...] [t]he end is provisions, happiness[,] the satisfaction of all our rational desires".<sup>797</sup>

Stollmeyer simultaneously curried favour with his working-class audience whilst militating against work itself, heaping scorn on the hypocrisy of the British aristocracy in their expectation that most of the population should actively desire work whilst they themselves were content to remain idle. He particularly lampooned statements apparently made by the Duke of Wellington not long before about the British employment situation and work ethic:

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<sup>793</sup> 'Dialogue on Etzler's Paradise [...]', *Northern Star; and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 296 (15 July 1843): 5.

<sup>794</sup> C. T. [sic] Stollmeyer, 'Paradise [...] Letter I', *Northern Star; and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 297 (22 July 1843): 3.

<sup>795</sup> C. F. Stollmeyer, 'Paradise [...] Letter II', *Northern Star; and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 298 (29 July 1843): 7 [emphasis in original].

<sup>796</sup> Ibid.

<sup>797</sup> C. T. [sic] Stollmeyer, 'The Paradise [...] Letter III', *Northern Star; and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 300 (12 August 1843): 3.

Did he [Wellington] ever “want to work” in the same manner as he thinks the people ought to work? No; he and every one [sic] who can do without work; every one who can get provisions and the satisfaction of his desires, without digging and slaving for it, do so. The burden of work must therefore be double [sic] heavy upon those who are so unfortunate as to be compelled to work [...]<sup>798</sup>

Since agricultural labourers under the existing system especially came to be “regarded and treated as machines”,<sup>799</sup> Stollmeyer reasoned, it was little wonder that the mechanization of agriculture had not hitherto been considered a high priority by the proprietary classes who regarded them in this way, “as it would only have been like substituting one set of machines for another”.<sup>800</sup> Mechanization *had* begun to occur in manufacturing, particularly in Britain, but far from emancipating workers, its profit-driven application at the behest of capitalists by “minds who constructed machines, [but] worked not for the labourers who afterwards handled them, merely requiring their bodies” had reduced formerly better-off skilled tradespeople “to a mere animal existence [...] to the same scale as the labourers of the fields”. Labour-displacing machinery under capitalism was therefore no guarantee of freedom; in fact, as the British case showed, it could be used to immiserate workers further: “Arkwright and Peel have become richer than princes; but their labourers have become as miserable as slaves and serfs”. Etzlerism sought to provide answers to these problems, in the form of a system for the emancipatory application of labour-displacing machinery by labourers themselves. The current neglect of agricultural automation would be remedied by the deployment of Etzler’s satellites, creating a superabundance of the necessities of life, but the gross unfairness of employment relations that had tainted the capitalist mechanization of manufacturing would at the same time need to be superseded by the free universal distribution of the machine-produced goods.

In his fifth letter to the readers of the *Northern Star* in September 1843, Stollmeyer interrupted his exegesis of Etzlerist theory to provide important practical news. Etzler’s consultancy work on the Smolnikar commune in Pennsylvania was almost concluded—Smolnikar’s *Friedens-Verein* experimentalists, Stollmeyer claimed, were “entirely satisfied” with “the first agricultural machines upon Etzler’s plans [...] constructed under his direction”<sup>801</sup>—and once released from his duties with the Smolnikarites, Etzler would immediately embark for England. To drum up excitement for this

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<sup>798</sup> Ibid.

<sup>799</sup> C. F. Stollmeyer, ‘Paradise [...] Letter IV’, *Northern Star; and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 303 (2 September 1843): 4.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid.

<sup>801</sup> C. F. Stollmeyer, ‘Paradise [...] Letter V’, *Northern Star; and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 304 (9 September 1843): 7.

visit, Stollmeyer subjoined new material from Etzler himself: a short but rousing piece of propaganda entitled *Address to All People who Desire to Free Themselves from Want, Fear of Want, and Slavery, for Ever*<sup>802</sup> which had also been run at Stollmeyer's request the previous week in the Owenite *New Moral World*.<sup>803</sup>

Like Stollmeyer's earlier missives, Etzler's opening salvo in his own words to readers of the British radical press emphasised the non-deterministic relationship between technological change and social change. Mechanization did not inevitably have to further impoverish working people through technological unemployment; the fact that it did so at present was really a consequence of its proprietorship and configuration for the selective enrichment of capitalists, not an intrinsic menace of the machinery itself:

Machines have been the enemies to some classes of labourers, depriving them of the unenviable chance of labouring for their living. Machines are hereafter to be your best friends and slaves, requiring neither food nor wages, driven by mighty powers, day and night perpetually, to make your land a paradise of abundance for you, not merely for your more fortunate fellow beings.<sup>804</sup>

Perhaps seeking to capitalise on disillusionment about parliamentary prospects in the wake of the rejected chartist suffrage petition of 1842, Etzler's address also prominently underscored the fact that his system was implementable as a direct alternative to parliamentary reform—"[y]ou need neither your government, nor this, nor that, [n]or any particular circumstances which you may at present desire and discuss, for the [sic] liberation from your distress and want, and fear of want".<sup>805</sup>

Instead, he outlined a political strategy amounting to utopian socialism *sensu stricto*:<sup>806</sup> "You have to form (yourselves) joint stock companies [...] You have then to rent lands on the best terms you can obtain".<sup>807</sup> Even on temporarily rented land, Etzler thought, the application of automated satellite farming should generate such profuse agricultural outputs that a utopian joint-stock finding its feet might not only feed its own members, but also use the sale of excess crops to bridge the gap and offset ongoing rent and other overheads while the mechanical system was established, though he also mused

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<sup>802</sup> AAP, 7.

<sup>803</sup> C. F. Stollmeyer, 'To the Editor of the *New Moral World*', *New Moral World: And Gazette of the Rational Society* 12, no. 10 (2 September 1843): 79–80.

<sup>804</sup> AAP, 7.

<sup>805</sup> AAP, 7.

<sup>806</sup> Etzler's proposed strategy in this *Address* bears obvious similarities to the quintessentially utopian method characterised by Engels when he described movements that proceeded "by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments". Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*, in *The Collected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, Vol. 24, 281–326. (Moscow: Progress, [1880] 1989), 290.

<sup>807</sup> AAP, 7.

that “[t]hose who prefer to emigrate may obtain land in abundance, as property, for nothing, and cultivate it by the same means”. His tentative manner of referring to the possibility of overseas settlement at this stage shows however that he still fundamentally conceived of the implementation of his system by British activists as a project of Home Colonisation; it was not until mid-1844 that he and his supporters would firmly alight on tropical emigration as a strategic pillar of their experiment.<sup>808</sup>

In the *Address* of 1843, it was clear that international Etzlerism was expected to come about as a secondary phenomenon, through an imitative bandwagon effect initialised by the proof-of-concept embodied in the successful implementation of a domestic settlement organised on Etzlerist principles:

Once the example is set; this system cannot fail to spread from land to land all over the inhabitable world. The means of living well will become more and more plenty, abundance universally [sic], and ultimately as plenty and cheap as water, requiring no labour, neither of man nor beast; even the transport of men and things, by land and water, will be effected by the same system.<sup>809</sup>

By this memetic process, it was hoped, an initially small team of chartists-turned-Etzlerists might gradually scale the system to global proportions even without institutional support. However, just as with his North American strategy a decade earlier, when he had attempted to establish the independent civil society AIHC group whilst simultaneously submitting petitions on the outside chance of US Presidential and Congressional funding in 1833, Etzler’s initial British overtures in 1843 retained similar optimistic opportunism about finding patronage and material support for his experiments. Despite having previously told the chartists that they did not *need* parliamentary assistance to carry out Etzlerism, Stollmeyer’s sixth *Northern Star* letter nonetheless presented the text of a *Memorial of J. A. Etzler to Both Houses of the British Parliament* that urged for a committee to be immediately formed to carry out “examination and negotiation”<sup>810</sup> regarding Etzler’s system. After all, he warned the parliamentarians, a method of independent self-organisation was already suggested “which would

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<sup>808</sup> For a discussion of the general emigrationist turn in British radical politics in 1844, see in particular Claeys, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 369. The decision to pursue a strategy of overseas socialistic experimentation rather than the earlier policy of domestic home colonisation was by no means the unique preserve of the TES, but reflected broader tendencies and debates in the chartist, Owenite and other radical circuits of the time. That the TES project would specifically involve overseas emigration should therefore be regarded as fairly incidental to the real political substance of Etzlerism—which as late as September 1843 was evidently imagined by its progenitor as being carried out as a principally domestic project by his British supporters.

<sup>809</sup> AAP, 7.

<sup>810</sup> John Adolphus Etzler, ‘Memorial of J. A. Etzler to Both Houses of the British Parliament’, in C. F. Stollmeyer, ‘Paradise [...] Letter VI’, *Northern Star*, and *Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 305 (16 September 1843): 7.

enable all poor people to participate immediately in the great benefits of the system for their permanent liberation of want, fear of want, and compulsive labour”<sup>811</sup>, so if the government wished to make itself “adored and adorable by all” by participating in the project which would abolish the toil and poverty of its citizens, it must act “now, when not yet too late”.

Parallels between Etzler’s American strategy of 1833 and his British strategy of 1843 demonstrate a coherent line of thinking about the precise role of existing governments in the achievement of radical social change, one which differs markedly from liberal reform but is at the same time differentiable from the position taken by other nineteenth-century socialisms.

Per the *Paradise*, the full actualization of Etzler’s programme would be synonymous with the dissolution of existing governments, since in a world with “no occasion for complicated laws for the protection of private property”, the “system of society will be far less complicated”.<sup>812</sup> Whatever administrative or deliberative tasks remained for future humanity could eventually be discharged through the democratic channels of the confederal Etzlerist organisation itself, with these participatory decision-making processes having already been honed during the transition between the work-based and workless modes of human civilization. Government in the traditional sense of the word was destined to join work, want and money as another obsolete artefact of the old order.

Since Etzlerism purposed to create a state of affairs in which states would no longer be necessary, a key priority of Etzlerist political activism was the establishment of a powerful alternative institution outside of the state, capable of project-managing the various elements of the transition away from work-based economics: research and development, land acquisition, construction of paradise buildings and deployment of agricultural satellites, and so on. Within the tripartite model of emancipatory societal transformation formulated by Erik Olin Wright,<sup>813</sup> Etzlerism’s strategic logic therefore corresponded with what Wright calls *Interstitial Metamorphosis*, the strategic vision he associates most closely with the political tradition of anarchism. The stateless, workless utopia envisioned as the endpoint of Etzlerism moreover bore significant similarities to later nineteenth-century anarchism. Yet in the short-term, Etzler did not share most anarchists’ anathema against the instrumental use of state support. Just as he had petitioned various levels of US government in the 1830s, he now sought to do the same from Britain.

Though Etzler’s plans did not receive official recognition from parliament itself in 1843, they garnered some unlikely support from its administrative periphery. Writing under the pseudonym ‘Minor Hugo’, Luke James Hansard<sup>814</sup> released a sympathetic three-volume exploration of

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<sup>811</sup> Ibid.

<sup>812</sup> PWR2, 132.

<sup>813</sup> See in particular: Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (London: Verso, 2010), 304.

<sup>814</sup> The nephew of Westminster’s official printer, Thomas Curson Hansard (1776–1833), for whom British parliamentary transcripts are named to this day.

contemporary socialist currents entitled *Hints and Reflections for Railway Travellers and Others, or, A Journey to the Phalanx*, in which Etzler's ideas featured prominently and extremely favourably.

Hansard's first volume consecrated a short chapter entirely to "Remarks on Mr. Etzler's Inventions",<sup>815</sup> although the rest of the book was also peppered with concomitant expositions of Etzler's "talent and genius".<sup>816</sup> In an imaginative passage, Hansard floated the hypothetical use of Etzlerist machinery as an aid to the pacifistic retraining of British military personnel and assets. Advocating a rather literal transformation of swords into ploughshares (or, more precisely, into satellites), Hansard conjectured that the regiments of the British Army might return to their homes and families with greater honour and higher morale if they were deployed the peaceable paradisation of the British countryside—"such as the transportation of a hill, a cliff, a rock, or the diversion of the course of a river [...] [with] one of Etzler's Machines"<sup>817</sup>—than they could from overseas campaigns of violent subjugation against the Irish, or indeed their own countrymen when domestically employed "in riding down a mob of more than half-starved mechanics, stupified chartists, and corn-law agitators".<sup>818</sup> Hansard's swords-into-ploughshares ethic in these passages was consistent with Etzler's own explicit millenarian techno-pacifism:

Your present destructive means, that hitherto have absorbed the mind, will soon cease to be effective [...] 100 intelligent men will defeat all the glories and heroisms of mere sanguinary military chieftains—and do more than armies of millions, whose soft flesh and bones cannot resist to [sic] a few small unfeeling machines driven by some of those gigantic powers of nature, (pointed out in my "Paradise,") [...] and renders [sic] all bloody heroism abortive, and wars impossible.<sup>819</sup>

It was yet another good omen of Etzler's favourable reception in Britain. On 10 November 1843, Etzler set sail for England, "in the expectation of there receiving aid in reducing his system to practice".<sup>820</sup>

Stollmeyer's intensive focus on the *Northern Star* as a propaganda conduit during this period important geographic consequences for Etzlerist movement-building in Britain: Yorkshire interest in Etzlerism would build markedly from this point onwards, culminating in the creation of an independent Etzlerist society for "in Bradford on 26 November 1843, comprised of a group of "friends and believers in the practiacability of Mr. Etzler's Plan of Machinery for the regeneration of

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<sup>815</sup> 'Minor Hugo' [pseud. Luke James Hansard], *Hints and Reflections for Railway Travellers and Others, or, A Journey to the Phalanx*, vol. 1 (London: George Earle, 1843), 96–99.

<sup>816</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>817</sup>

<sup>818</sup>

<sup>819</sup> NWOMS, 67.

<sup>820</sup> 'Mr. Etzler [...]', *New-York Daily Tribune* 3, no. 184 (10 November 1843): 2.

the world, and for superceding [sic] human labour”.<sup>821</sup> Led by John Greenwood, these Bradford Etzlerists were the first group in Britain to organise themselves on an explicitly Etzlerist basis. Though they were formally subsumed into the Tropical Emigration Society’s main national organisation the following year, they retained a strong-minded independence from the London-based executive, as well as a fierce loyalty to the person of Etzler himself—factors that would both prove significant during the TES factional split of 1846 that utterly foreclosed the possibility of the Society’s success in Venezuela.

Stollmeyer had previously delivered copies of the PWR3a/b and NWOMS to the jailed Yorkshire philanthropist and ten-hour-day advocate Richard Oastler<sup>822</sup> (whose incarceration was at that time a *cause célèbre* in chartist and radical circles),<sup>823</sup> a factor that may further have contributed to Etzler’s own special popularity in Bradford and the West Riding of Yorkshire generally.

Although the activist core of the British TES recruited heavily from already-existing radical networks associated with chartism, Owenism and similar movements, Stollmeyer’s diverse promotional strategies also aimed at the creation of more general public interest in the run-up to Etzler’s arrival. Throughout 1843, Stollmeyer’s intensive engagement with radical periodicals such as the *Northern Star* and *New Moral World* dovetailed with broader publicity, the latter often emphasising the technologically innovative problem-solving aspects of Etzler’s machines whilst moderating or even omitting discussion of the more radical socio-economic implications that Stollmeyer much more freely and directly addressed when courting politically developed audiences. For instance, in a letter to the *Naval and Military Gazette* in July, he cautiously presented Etzler’s maritime inventions strictly “as a means of preventing shipwrecks &c.”<sup>824</sup>—a far cry from their fully-fledged purpose in the Etzlerist system, viz. the permanent colonisation of the world’s oceans by vast mechanized pleasure fleets worklessly crewed by utopian socialists. Another ubiquitously reprinted<sup>825</sup> Stollmeyer boilerplate entitled *The Motion of Vessels Caused by Waves as a Motive Power* was

<sup>821</sup> ‘Etzler’s Machines’, *Northern Star, and Leeds General Advertiser* 7, no. 316 (2 December 1843): 4.

<sup>822</sup> See Richard Oastler, *Fleet Papers* 3, no. 28 (15 July 1843): 224. Oastler misreports his benefactor’s identity here as “C. T. [sic] Stollmeyer”.

<sup>823</sup> The *Northern Star*’s reportage on the founding of the Bradford Etzlerist group, for instance, shares page-space with a bulletin attesting the existence of a Bradford “Oastler Liberation Central Committee”—evidence of the substantial community activism occasioned in Yorkshire by his imprisonment. ‘Mr. R. Oastler’, *Northern Star, and Leeds General Advertiser* 7, no. 316 (2 December 1843): 4.

<sup>824</sup> *Naval and Military Gazette, and East India and Colonial Chronicle*, no. 551 (29 July 1843): 473. Note that a careless editor misattributes him here as “C. F. Hollmeyer [sic]”.

<sup>825</sup> See e.g.: *India Review* (June 1843): 384; *Liverpool Mercury and Lancashire General Advertiser* 33, no. 1684 (18 August 1843): 271; *Scotsman, or Edinburgh Political and Literary Journal* 27, no. 2465 (23 August 1843): 4; *Builder* 1, no. 29 (26 August 1843): 346, etcetera. After an initial flurry of activity in the British press, the same text was further reproduced across the United States under variations of the abridged title ‘Waves of the Sea, A Motive Power’, see e.g.: *The Madisonian* [Washington, DC] 7, no. 9 (11 September 1843): 2; *Wheeling Times and Advertiser* [Wheeling, VA] 10, no. 217 (12 September 1843): 2; *The Dollar Farmer* [Louisville, KY] 2, no. 4 (October 1843): 51; *Democratic Standard* [Georgetown, OH] 4, no. 11 (10 October 1843): 1; *Voice of Freedom* [Montpelier, VT] 5, no. 18 (26 October 1843): 72; *Ottawa Free Trader* [Ottawa, IL] 4, no. 24 (1 December 1843): 1.

similarly clinical in its presentation of the subject matter as ostensibly just a clever way to propel an ocean-going craft. The piece alleged that a “perfectly successful experiment has been made off Margate” and encouraged the public to view the scale model in the Captain’s Room at Lloyds in London, but did not enter into any explicit discussion of the radical political programme for whose purpose the artefact was actually conceived.

In the November issue of *US Magazine*, Henry David Thoreau published his notoriously scathing commentary on some selectively edited passages from the *Paradise*.<sup>826</sup> Etzler likely had no chance to read it though, as he departed for Britain on 10 November 1843,<sup>827</sup> where Stollmeyer had found him a loving home.

On 14 December 1843, Etzler put in a pit-stop at the Owenite experiment Harmony Hall<sup>828</sup> before proceeding with Stollmeyer to meet his new housemates.

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<sup>826</sup> Henry David Thoreau, ‘Paradise (to be) Regained’, *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 13, no. 65 (November 1843): 451–63.

<sup>827</sup> ‘Mr. Etzler [...]’, *New-York Daily Tribune* 3, no. 184 (10 November 1843): 2.

<sup>828</sup> James Atkinson, ‘Harmony Hall, Dec. 17’, *New Moral World and Gazette of the Rational Society* 12, no. 26 (23 December 1843): 206.



# **Chapter Seven**

Movement Etzlerism & the  
Rise & Fall of the Tropical  
Emigration Society

(1844-1847)

## 7.1 “The Experiment of a Concordian Life”: The Etzlers at Ham Common

The tee-total editors of Ham Common Concordium’s monthly newsletter were up bright and early on New Year’s Day 1844 to announce the happy presence of a new inmate at their experimental vegetarian commune at Alcott House in Surrey: “Mr. J. A. Etzler has arrived in this country, and, we trust, will soon lay his later experiences before the public”.<sup>829</sup> For the next six months Etzler would lodge with the Concordians: followers of the self-styled *Sacred Socialist* James Pierrepont Greaves, a staunch opponent not only of alcohol, but also of meat. Greaves had already passed away by the time of Etzler’s stay, but the Concordians continued to rigorously uphold his principles, striving also to forge themselves into “instruments of Love to help forward the well-being of humanity”.<sup>830</sup>

Stollmeyer had first insinuated himself amongst the Concordians at a garden party in July, which had principally been held so that Robert Owen could deliver an address there on behalf of the Rational Society. However, “[a]fter the chief party, who took their refreshment on the lawn, had left [...] Mr. Stollmeyer also reported most favourably of the progress of Mr. Etzler, with regard to bringing into operation his great mechanical inventions”.<sup>831</sup> As a result, the Concordians followed Etzler’s “highly interesting”<sup>832</sup> progress with some excitement even before his arrival in Britain.

The Concordians were particularly pleased at the effect Etzler’s mechanical systems, if realised, would have on alleviating the subjugation of animals by human beings.<sup>833</sup> Draught horses and oxen could breathe a sigh of relief and rest their tired withers; better still, Etzler’s researches into synthetic “pliable stuffs [...] for garments, couches, and all other commodities and ornaments”<sup>834</sup> promised to skin the leather industry and fur trade once and for all.

Animal rights had become an increasingly important part of Etzler’s philosophy of life over the years—evident in the explicit inclusion of “Man *and* Beast” in the title of the 1841 NWOMS. Claeys suggests that Etzler may have fully converted to vegetarianism as a direct result of his stay at the Concordium,<sup>835</sup> which seems plausible, though his thinking was clearly moving in that direction even when he was still in the US in the years preceding it.

The Concordians had austere views about pleasures of the flesh—in life, Greaves had advocated celibacy—and his followers felt that during “the early stages of man’s bodily development, the lust-nature has to be subdued, the soul raised above the animal affections, the love-elements fixed indelibly in his bosom”.<sup>836</sup>

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<sup>829</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 13 (1 January 1844): 60.

<sup>830</sup> ‘Great American Congress’, *New Age* 1, no. 1 (6 May 1843): 7.

<sup>831</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 9 (9 September 1843): 91.

<sup>832</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 11 (1 November 1843): 127.

<sup>833</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 17 (1 May 1844): 221–24.

<sup>834</sup> See PWR2, 64–65.

<sup>835</sup> Claeys, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 360.

<sup>836</sup> ‘Protheic Scripture’, *New Age* 1, no. 19 (1 July 1844): 244.

Some combination of love-elements, lust-nature, and animal affections was evidently in the air for Etzler at this time, though: on 28 March 1844 he married Regina Carolina Soergel, and the happy couple shackled up together at the Concordium with Mr. and Mrs. Stollmeyer.

Regina had only recently come over from Ulm, likely as a consequence of some connection with Conrad Stollmeyer: Ulm was likewise his hometown in the old country before his emigration to the USA in 1836.

Despite an age gap—at 30 years old, Conrad and Regina were both 23 years Etzler's junior—the pair seem to have hit it off in a hurry. In any case, age was just a number to Etzler, since he expected the scientifically-selected foods, breathable clothing, stress-free lifestyle and “wholesome invigorating admixtures”<sup>837</sup> in the chemically purified air-conditioning systems of the *Structure for which We Have No Names Yet* to facilitate human lifespans of anywhere from 110–170 years.

By June, Etzler had fruitfully used the recuperative and loving environment of the Concordium to produce a significant quantity of new work. TVJAE and ETW were released simultaneously,<sup>838</sup> and a German-language edition of the *Paradise* was in the works as well.<sup>839</sup>

At this point, he was also delivering weekly lectures at the Concordium, to the great delight of the more permanent inmates, who recommended hearing him speak and perusing his written work “to all who are desirous of having their minds expanded regarding the stupendous natural powers that exist around us”.<sup>840</sup>

Although the Concordians were keen on simple living, their friendship with such technologically-literate utopians as Stollmeyer and Etzler appears to have occasionally been a great help to them. In August, the Concordians reported that they were having some trouble with their printer—he was finding it increasingly difficult to keep volunteering his printing and compositing services to them at the commune because he was “still occupied in the conventional arrangements of society”. Printing at the Concordium looked as if it was going to have to be cut back for the time being, to the remorse of the inhabitants, but Stollmeyer put them in touch with the Etzlerist inventor James Hadden Young so that they could look into acquiring one of his type-compositing keyboard systems.<sup>841</sup>

This comradely piece of tech-support would in fact be Etzler and Stollmeyer's parting gift to the Concordians. Etzler's plans were now “in such a state of forwardness as to require the chief portion of his time to be spent in London”,<sup>842</sup> so on 17 July 1844, he and Regina said goodbye to the Concordians and relocated to London. The following month, the Concordians were in a position to

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<sup>837</sup> PWR2, 169, 171.

<sup>838</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 18 (1 June 1844): 240.

<sup>839</sup> i.e., PWR4.

<sup>840</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 18 (1 June 1844): 240.

<sup>841</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age* 1, no. 20 (1 August 1844): 270.

<sup>842</sup> ‘Concordium Report’, *New Age, Concordium Gazette, & Temperance Advocate* 1, no. 19 (1 July 1844): 253–56.

report the following:

Mr. Etzler has an offer made him by the government of Venezuela of a grant of a large tract of land in the neighbourhood of the river Orinoco, of Cumaná, or of Caracas, without cost, and free of all taxes and military service for 15 years, on the condition of gradually bringing it into cultivation, and he intends immediately to avail himself of this offer, unless a more favourable one is presented.<sup>843</sup>

The Tropical Emigration Society was in birth; a concrete plan to actualise the mechanical utopia of the *Paradise* in South America was in view. On arrival in London, Etzler immediately rented an office at 266 Strand,<sup>844</sup> which would remain the headquarters of the TES even after his departure for Trinidad. The *Northern Star* letters of this period were decisive in drawing Etzler's plans to the attention of the chartist audience who would soon become the founding members of the Society.

## 7.2 A Brighter Dawn: The Rise of the Tropical Emigration Society

On 13 October 1844, Stollmeyer and Etzler held a planning meeting at the office, collecting the 33 signatures of those would become the founding members of the TES.<sup>845</sup> Another meeting was convened at the Regina and John Etzler's residence on 18 October 1844, followed by a series of public meetings over the next few months, usually in the Parthenium on St. Martin's Lane. At these early events, Etzler "lectured to a numerous and deeply interested audience"<sup>846</sup> as well as exhibiting and demonstrating the models of the satellite and naval automaton.

In November he released JAEMS,<sup>847</sup> which included new diagrams of the satellite which showed in greater detail the spiked cylinder system he alluded to in NWOMS. A detailed image of the *connecting means* was for the first time visible in the diagrams. Along with two other surnames, the final page of JAEMS bears James Hadden Young's name, attesting in both French and English that he has witnessed a successful trial of the working principle of the satellite on 11 April 1844.

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<sup>843</sup> 'Concordium Report', *New Age* 1, no. 20 (1 August 1844): 269–72.

<sup>844</sup> It can be inferred from the dates of NS1 and NS2 that he rented it within the first two weeks of July—he begins using the address only in NS2 (i.e., 17 July); it is absent in NS1 (i.e., 1 July), suggesting the latter is probably written at the Concordium before departure.

<sup>845</sup> See 'Report of the Directors', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 41 (18 October 1845): 325–27.

<sup>846</sup> 'The Tropical Emigration Society, its Present State and Proposed Constitution', *Morning Star, or Herald of Progression* 1, no. 1 (December 1844): 5.

<sup>847</sup> Brostowin misidentifies JAEMS as a reprint of NWOMS, thereby inadvertently demonstrating that he has not laid eyes on a copy of the former. See Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 182.



November 1844 onwards, lecturing at Bradford and the other Northern branches in order that his admirers there would have the chance to hear him speak and meet him in person before his planned departure to South America as the agent of the Society to select the site on which the TES would build its first mechanical city.

Venezuela had been decided collectively as the preferred destination, being, as the TES Constitution stated, one of “the steadiest of South American governments, since their emancipation, the most liberal in offers for settlers there, granting perfect liberty in religion and social managements”.<sup>849</sup> It was decided from the outset that Etzler should seek land consisting of

many thousands of acres, adequate to the wants of many thousand people, so that we have water power at hand, to drive the machines and irrigate the land, and to have grassy plains near by, that require little or no preparatory work for agriculture,<sup>850</sup>

and moreover that only once Etzler had found a site meeting these requirements, the Society should then prioritise the constructions of satellites by sending “only a few mechanics [...] at communal expense, only a few persons to establish and attend the said machinery” in order that they would have “a full store of provisions and lodgings for all the society before it arrive on the spot of the settlement”.<sup>851</sup> Anyone who wished to volunteer to assist Etzler was to read JAEMS with close attention, since they would have to understand the blueprint of the satellite they would build down to the last detail.<sup>852</sup>

The TES established a Scientific Committee for the self-taught future utopian engineers who would volunteer themselves from the ranks of the society so that steps could be “immediately taken to arrange for the instruction of the [S]atellites”.<sup>853</sup> James Hadden Young, the inventor of typing, took initiative in helping his co-members to participate in the utopian design tasks they would need to embark on in the Tropics. The Scientific Committee was not only focussed on satellite construction—many of the different aspects of the Etzlerist lifestyle would require bright innovators. He urged his co-members to join him in forming sub-committees<sup>854</sup> each with a focus on one the application of Etzlerist principles to a particular domain of scientific investigation—“Domestic, Mechanical, Agricultural, Manufactures, Botanical, Literary, Fine Arts, Chemical, and Educational”.<sup>855</sup> This

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<sup>849</sup> ‘The Tropical Emigration Society, its Present State and Proposed Constitution’, *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 1 (December 1844): 5.

<sup>850</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>853</sup> ‘Progress of Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 4 (1 February 1845): 5.

<sup>854</sup> ‘The Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 9 (8 March 1845): 70.

<sup>855</sup> John Bredell, ‘To the Members of the Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 44 (8 November 1845): 350–51.

programme of learning was received with relative disinterest by the membership at large though, and throughout 1845, the principal activity of James Hadden Young, Thomas Atkins, John Bredell and other Scientific Committee members was chiefly the construction of a satellite in Bicester,<sup>856</sup> of which more later. We get an idea of the radically participatory utopian philosophy of design to which the Committee subscribed from the serialised article ‘Go to a Practical Man’,<sup>857</sup> written by an author announcing themselves only as ‘One of the Scientific Committee’ (I suspect it may have been James Hadden Young). The author writes hoping to

encourage those who, although subscribers to the [TES], and therefore partially interested in the machine [i.e., the satellite], may not have thought for themselves, because they were not PRACTICAL MEN, and I think I shall be able to prove that any one of them, endued with ordinary capacity, will be able to maintain his good opinion of the satellite against any assertions of your practical man, however high he may stand.<sup>858</sup>

Activist inventors, the author supposes, will often encounter unjust criticism of experimental utopian technologies when they set off to give accounts of them “to some old wife (there are many old wives amongst YOUNG males and females) [...] and [are] told to go to a practical man”.<sup>859</sup> Using a parable that bears the clear influence of Etzler’s DEP, the reader doubtful of their own proficiency in technical matters is taken through a rhetorical gauntlet as “Mr. Search” who is forced to debate the practicability of the satellite with a series of fictitious *practical men*—‘Mr. Johnson’, ‘Mr. Luth’, ‘Farmer Dickens’, ‘Mr. Flower’, ‘Mr. Hemp’, ‘Mr. Compass’ and ‘Mr. Enquirer’—and therefore learns how to answer the presumed authority of technological conservatives to dismiss novel inventions as impractical. Sadly, the third installation of ‘Go to a Practical Man’ was printed in number 15 (19 April 1845), which is missing from the microfilm, but the surviving extracts nonetheless demonstrate the importance the Etzlerists placed on the democratisation of science and technology: those “endued with ordinary capacity” can hold their own against self-proclaimed *practical* doubters, and should never fear to take direct interest and participate in utopian mechanical experiments themselves.

Though the Scientific Committee was perhaps the most faithful expression of Etzlerist ideals that occurred within the TES during its existence, it did not have (nor sought) any formal political power—preoccupation with the use (and abuse) of organisational and procedural authority would fall to others

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<sup>856</sup> ‘The Tropical Emigration Society; *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 13 (5 April 1845): 101.

<sup>857</sup> *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 13 (5 April 1845): 104.

<sup>858</sup> ‘Go to a Practical Man’ [pt. 1], *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 13 (5 April 1845): 104 [emphasis in original].

<sup>859</sup> *Ibid.* [emphasis in original]. Though ostensibly emphasised in order to evince the contrast with the “old” of “old wives”, I believe that James Hadden Young has had the wit to type his own surname in capital letters here to signal his identity to those who know him.

within the TES.

On 19 January, the TES held an election to determine the composition of the advance party that would accompany Etzler on the initial expedition to secure land. Thomas Carr and Captain Charles Taylor, two popular—but scientifically disinterested—London members were chosen as Etzler’s ‘co-agents’ in the Tropics.

Although Etzler was ostensibly leading the expedition in the Tropics, a parallel domestic power structure was already developing within the TES. On 5 January 1845, the London TES elected its Executive Directorate, placing the veteran chartist agitator Thomas Powell as Secretary.<sup>860</sup> The same ballot had nominally elected Etzler President of the TES, but from the London office at 266 Strand, it was Powell who now controlled the Society’s funds, opening a bank account in the Society’s name, into which the subscriptions that were intended for land purchase in Venezuela would be retained under his authority “for the safer keeping of the money”.<sup>861</sup> Instead, Etzler and his advance party were instructed to support themselves in the Tropics by taking with them and selling cutlery donated by Thomas Rake, a TES member. The seemingly innocuous decision to place the Society’s funds at the disposal of the London Directorate rather than with Etzler himself in Trinidad would shape the subsequent course of the expedition.

Concerned at the increasingly convoluted decision-making and authorisation processes that were already being built into the TES by Powell and his associates, Etzler pressed Powell for clarity on how the authority vested in the agents in the Tropics was to be distributed in case of disagreement, especially since the land-purchase funds were now being controlled remotely from London rather than by the agents themselves. The Directorate has not thought ahead enough to foresee such an eventuality, and at a Wednesday meeting on 22 January, it pronounced that “in case of any difference of opinion arising, the agents shall arrange it between themselves”. At next week’s meeting though, this was rescinded—the idea of a two-thirds majority (i.e., two out of the three agents) being able to override a dissenting agent was floated, to which objections were raised, and discussion postponed. The question remained basically undecided by the Directorate, which disquieted Etzler—though he bore no special enmity towards the two strangers who had been elected as his co-agents in the Tropics, he was concerned at being outnumbered by parties whose intentions and character he did not know, especially given how unclear arrangements for the exercise of their authority had been left.

A week later, on 6 February 1845,<sup>862</sup> the advance party embarked on brig *James* (Capt. Whyte) for Trinidad, from where the group would then travel to Venezuela to scout the interior. Besides Carr,

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<sup>860</sup> ‘Report of the Directors of the Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star; or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 6 (15 February 1845): 44.

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>862</sup> ‘Departure of the Deputation’, *Morning Star; or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 6 (15 February 1845): 44.



Taylor and Etzler, Regina Etzler also accompanied her husband, bringing with her a party of three: John's mother-in-law Maria Catarina Soergel (*née* Hohl), together with Regina's sister and the sister's husband, the trio having come over from Ulm especially to make the voyage with her.

Though travelling by conventional means for the time being, the long-term plan of the Society, once a stable base had been established in Venezuela, was to construct mechanised floating islands with which to transport subsequent waves of colonists free of charge—a task to which Stollmeyer, still in London for the time being, now applied himself. A sister organisation the TES, the Venezuela Transit Company, was established for this purpose of solely preoccupying itself with the construction of floating islands,<sup>863</sup> with Stollmeyer serving as its Secretary-Treasurer.

On 21 March, Carr, Taylor and the Etzlers landed safely in Trinidad,<sup>864</sup> and the search for the site of the first TES settlement got fully under way. It would not go well.

### 7.3 *Diarios de Autómatatas: Carr & Taylor's Road Trip*

Much of what can be known about the activities of the TES agents during the Spring and Summer of 1845 can only be learned from their journal entries, which survive in unfortunately fragmented form in the incomplete *Morning Star* corpus.

We learn that Etzler's concerns about the vague countermanding authority that Powell and the Directorate had vested in Carr and Taylor was entirely justified. Before the brig *James* even landed, Taylor, judging before he examined, had already begun to importune the others "to buy or rent a spot of 40 or 100 acres on the nearest land opposite Trinidad",<sup>865</sup> to which Etzler "suggested to try to obtain first more information on the country, and circumstances of the time".

In accordance with the mission clearly stated to the agents before departure, Etzler needed to travel to Caracas (then the capital of Venezuela) to negotiate with the government and obtain a suitable tract of several thousand acres of cultivable land. Four days after landing in Trinidad he reminded Taylor of this fact on 25 March 1845, urging him to permit the party "to go at once to Caracas to obtain first full information, and be guided by the advices of government, and avoid guidance or influence of local prejudices, and to obtain lands in the shortest time possible."<sup>866</sup>

Full information did not interest Taylor. Against Etzler's advice he "insisted on the advantages in prospect in Paria by a small preliminary settlement". Taylor and Carr now rented a boat so that they could travel to the sparsely inhabited and densely forested Paria Peninsula and explore there in person. Despite his unequivocal opposition to this off-mission distraction, Etzler could not stop them: all he

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<sup>863</sup> *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 6 (15 February 1845): 47. See also 'Prospectus of the Venezuelan [sic] Transit Company', *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 8 (1 March 1845): 62–63.

<sup>864</sup> 'Mr. Etzler's Safe Arrival in Trinidad', *Morning Star, or, Herald of Progression* 1, no. 17 (3 May 1845): 134.

<sup>865</sup> EJa, 244.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid.

could do was wait in Trinidad and hope that after exhausting Taylor's mania for adventure they would return safely and quickly.

They did not. Regina and John waited in Trinidad without news for almost a month, sick with worry. They dutifully sold Rake's cutlery<sup>867</sup> to obtain the funds they were to survive on; there was nothing else which could usefully be done. On the night of 19 April, Taylor and Carr landed back in Trinidad exhausted, and breathlessly recounted their travels to the unimpressed Etzler family. Some of the land they saw "particularly took [their] fancy",<sup>868</sup> but they clearly had no idea what kind of land would be necessary to implement the plan of the Society to construct the satellites and the structure. The first place they took a liking to had "mangrove marsh and mountain sides" and would have set the TES back 3000 Venezuelan dollars (which they reckoned as £600).<sup>869</sup>

Etzler had been unable to do any negotiating with the government of Venezuela in the preceding month because he had been stuck in Trinidad waiting for Carr and Taylor to come back. In order to return from their adventure the pair had recklessly rowed approximately 85 miles in an open dinghy between Soro<sup>870</sup> and Port of Spain against strong currents and wind, and were utterly exhausted. Etzler was furious with them: "I have been kept in suspense and great anxiety for the last twelve days", he explained to the branches in Britain, "not knowing what had become of my colleagues".<sup>871</sup> For all that, they had found nothing of any use to the TES's stated purposes—only small, mountainous estates entirely unsuitable for satellite cultivation. They "saw no large navigable river, nor any natural savannah"—two prerequisites for the Etzlerist floating island and satellite cultivation plans, respectively, but this did not perturb them. At this early juncture, Taylor and Carr already appeared to have badly lost sight of what they were ostensibly sent to accomplish, if they ever had it clearly in mind at all.

Etzler implored Taylor to give up his fantasies of exploration and allow the TES's negotiations with the Venezuelan government to proceed as planned. He patiently explained that "after so much loss of time" he must "immediately go to Caracas, and do what [he] could there for the main objects [i.e., to secure for the TES a suitable land deal]".<sup>872</sup> Etzler even offered to give them £100 from the proceeds of the cutlery sale to do as they pleased with if they would only allow him to get to Caracas and conduct the negotiations—his (and ostensibly their) sole purpose in travelling to Venezuela—but Taylor responded that they had "come to the conclusion to have [Etzler] go with them to the

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<sup>867</sup> TLb, 151.

<sup>868</sup> Charles Taylor and Thomas Carr, 'Third Letter from the Agents of the Tropical Emigration Society', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 21 (31 May 1845): 166.

<sup>869</sup> Ibid.

<sup>870</sup> They misspelled this place name, which they presumably heard only from locals and never saw in writing, as "Zorra" in their communique to the TES: see *ibid.*

<sup>871</sup> TLc, 166.

<sup>872</sup> EJa, 244–245.

plantations in Paria for the purchase.”<sup>873</sup> Taylor was already set on buying a tiny and unsuitable plot, far from any settlement and incapable of satellite cultivation. Etzler refused to sanction this absurd plan “on the ground of not being authorized to involve the society in [losing thousands of dollars] for a few acres of ground, while the society all [justifiably] expected thousands of acres for nothing”.

Further delay to the negotiations would jeopardise the TES’s plans; it was imperative that Etzler get to Caracas in short order. But now Taylor came out with something extraordinary: he forbade Etzler to visit Caracas because he might be assassinated there. Who knows from where the ludicrous idea came; perhaps Taylor had read Ramon Gomez’s novel *The Conspirator of Caracas!*—a translation of which would be serialised later that year in the *Morning Star*, and it formed his entire impression of the city—but in any case, Etzler suggested that they should perhaps all go together to Caracas then, so as to reduce the possibility, to which Taylor sarcastically retorted, “well [...] let us then go all three and be assassinated, than suffer only one to be so”!<sup>874</sup>

Taylor now fixed his mind on an expedition to Angostura. Etzler continued to assure him that no special danger awaited them in Caracas—though of course there was danger to the objects of the society if *nobody* went—but these assurances went unheeded. Taylor was unrelenting and refused to let Etzler travel to Caracas, insisting that he pack for Angostura instead.

Etzler’s journal for this period makes for depressing reading. On 25 April 1845, he wrote, “[m]y co-agents not willing to consent to my proposition of my going to Caracas, and giving up Paria [...] wish to go for Angostura. They found a boat going to Angostura [...] which might take eight days”. Two days later, he went on,

I packed my things with a heavy heart—the rainy season commenced now—Carr had already a fever—six weeks had been lost, the very time admitting the possibility of our exploration in a wilderness of woods and swamps, and swollen rivers, and torrents and heavy rains, without shelter except our cloak—but I was crippled in my will and power.<sup>875</sup>

The party were on the cusp of leaving for Angostura, with Etzler now virtually Taylor’s prisoner, but fortunately Carr’s illness became so severe—“from our over exertions”, said Taylor—that they postponed the departure a little. Etzler recovered his composure and more forcefully stated his own intention to leave for Caracas immediately, to which Taylor finally assented “with some irrelevant objections”. Taylor and Carr would remain in Trinidad—safe from any Conspirators of Caracas—to get on with whatever project might pop into Taylor’s head next, while Etzler at last readied himself to make way to Caracas and secure appropriate land for the society.

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<sup>873</sup> EJb, 245.

<sup>874</sup> Ibid.

<sup>875</sup> EJa, 245.

Brostowin badly misinterprets this arrangement, claiming that “Etzler proposed to his co-agents Carr and Taylor that they choose the site of the temporary settlement in Paria, and that he would go to Caracas to seek the permanent site”.<sup>876</sup>

Before he left, Etzler was importuned by Taylor to surrender much of what was left of the cutlery sale proceeds so that he could buy himself and Carr a sailing boat. Etzler acquiesced, retaining however enough cash to get one person to Caracas and back—but Regina, Maria and the others would now need to hold down the fort in Trinidad until his return.

Taylor’s sloop, *Ellen*, would turn out to be a real fixer-upper: he would spend the next several months in Trinidad “fitting out, decking, keeling, masting, rigging, and sailing”<sup>877</sup> his new toy—he would not finish doing this until July—while Etzler was in Caracas conducting the business that all three of them were supposedly elected to undertake.

Lest the reader think I am being needlessly prosaic by examining in minute detail the comings and goings of Carr, Taylor and Etzler during this period, consider how utterly misrepresented the events I have just described are in Stoll’s *Great Delusion*—the only published monograph-length non-fiction treatment of Etzlerism. Here is how Stoll, ostensibly using the same source material (i.e., the *Morning Star* corpus), describes the same events (my own comments on the text are footnoted):

After studying the topography during the crossing, Etzler, Carr and Taylor agreed [sic!] to look on the peninsula of Paria<sup>878</sup> [...] for an initial settlement, while they approached the government for a larger “main grant” inland. Etzler remained in Trinidad while Carr and Taylor rigged up a boat and set off for Paria,<sup>879</sup> landing first at Guarapiche,<sup>880</sup> a bay at the western tip of the peninsula.<sup>881</sup> The excitable Carr ran around, “cutlass in hand,”<sup>882</sup> slashing the foliage aimlessly, covered in sweat [...] they told Etzler about a plantation they had found [...] the cost astounded Etzler, and no one had a plan to pay

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<sup>876</sup> Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, 296.

<sup>877</sup> ‘News from our Agents in Port-Spain’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 32 (16 August 1845): 255.

<sup>878</sup> At no point during the entirety of the expedition did Etzler agree that Taylor should seek land in Paria. On the voyage to Trinidad, and before both of Taylor’s expeditions to that purpose, Etzler unequivocally counselled against it, and begged the party to instead go immediately to Caracas, a fact which is multiply attested in several different numbers of the *Morning Star*.

<sup>879</sup> If Stoll is referring to Taylor’s first expedition to Paria (i.e., April 1845), he is wrong about the rigging up of the boat, which did not happen until July. If he is referring to the subsequent expedition to Paria, then he is wrong about Etzler remaining in Trinidad (as he was by then in Caracas). Either way, the passage as a whole cannot be true.

<sup>880</sup> Stoll reveals not only his ignorance of the source but his ignorance of the geography of Venezuela here; the Guarapiche river, which Carr mentions in his letter of 6 July 1845 (*Star* 1.32) runs alongside Maturin, over a hundred miles to the south of Carr and Taylor’s landing in Paria.

<sup>881</sup> I am unsure what Stoll can possibly mean by “the western tip of the peninsula” here. The Paria Peninsula juts due east from the Venezuelan mainland towards Trinidad and the Atlantic Ocean. It has no “western tip”.

<sup>882</sup> Stoll has borrowed from the Henry David Thoreau method of Etzler-interpretation here—he transplants this quotation from a much later document (Tucker’s letter of 20 January 1846, *Star* 2.8) which refers to an entirely different set of events.

for it.<sup>883</sup> They argued, couldn't decide what to do next, and finally agreed<sup>884</sup> to look somewhere else—Angostura, to the east.<sup>885</sup> [...] Yet Etzler prevailed upon Taylor to give up the plan; instead, he offered to travel alone to Caracas to negotiate directly with the government for a grant.<sup>886</sup> [...] Etzler set out for Caracas [...] soon after, he began to send entries from his journal<sup>887</sup> to London for publication.

Stoll primes the reader to think of Etzler as cowardly, indecisive and unprepared because it will support his later smears about Etzler's conduct, of which more later. Stoll's representation of the first months in the tropics also makes it sound as though Taylor's disastrous obsession with exploring random parts of the Paria Peninsula was in some way faithful to the original mission the three were supposed to discharge, and that Etzler gave his blessing to this sideshow when in fact he urged Taylor to immediately travel to Caracas for the negotiations from the very beginning.

Once Taylor finally relented, Etzler was able to reach Caracas quickly and straightforwardly, leaving his "assistants" in Trinidad "to buy a boat or not to buy one, and to act as they might please in Paria or somewhere else".<sup>888</sup> Regina and her party remained there as well, avoiding the substantial cost of transporting the whole family to Caracas. On 15 May 1845 he was greeted at the port by government officials, who had anxiously been awaiting his arrival (it had understandably been expected since the party arrived almost two months earlier, and had only been prevented by Taylor's wild schemes).

Etzler's belated reception in Caracas, he said "exceeded [his] expectations"<sup>889</sup>—the officials had seen copies of the *Morning Star*, and read copies of JAEMS, which had been sent to them by the Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs. Both the Foreign Affairs Minister and Minister of the Interior met him in person just over a week later, eager to assist him in his mission in any way they could. At last, after years of fruitless petitions to government officials on both sides of the Atlantic, Etzler's plans were being taken seriously by a state actor which was, moreover, evidently prepared to offer generous concessions of land and logistical support.

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<sup>883</sup> The reason nobody had a plan to pay for it, which Stoll omits to mention, is that the entire project of colonising Paria was something Taylor dreamt up on the voyage, it was nothing to do with the original plan of the TES or its agents.

<sup>884</sup> This is rather an unusual turn of phrase considering that Etzler "agreed" to pack for Angostura only because Taylor forbade him to travel to Caracas in case he was assassinated—none of which makes it into Stoll's narrative.

<sup>885</sup> Again, Stoll seems to have utterly lost his sense of direction here. To the east of what exactly? Angostura lies over 200 miles to the southwest of the Paria Peninsula. He seems to have had the map upside-down when he wrote this passage.

<sup>886</sup> This last sentence seems calculated by Stoll to present Etzler's urgent desire to go to Caracas as some sort of subterfuge against Taylor's legitimate desire to go exploring—at no point does Stoll trouble himself to mention that Etzler urged them from the very start to all proceed to Caracas as they were expected to do by the TES.

<sup>887</sup> This sentence really does indicate that Stoll has, at best, only read a small portion of the source material. Etzler already started sending his journal entries earlier in Trinidad, and these were published in earlier extant issues of the *Star*.

<sup>888</sup> MOJAEc, 210.

<sup>889</sup> EJb, 258.

Etzler's fluency in Spanish became a great asset both in negotiations and in generating popular interest in his system. He delivered public lectures to local residents and obtained detailed information on the legal, economic and agricultural niceties of the region. He was able to write memorials in Spanish to obtain documentation and information, and remain informed about current affairs through his perusal of Spanish-language newspapers. Working efficiently, by 27 May he had obtained letters of recommendation to the Governors of the different provinces and drawn up a range of intelligence about prospective sites which he reported to the British branches via the Venezuelan Legation in London.<sup>890</sup>

The legal situation was broadly favourable, since Venezuela's laws of immigration made extensive provision for loans, grants and other support for emigrants similar to those Etzler had admired in Haiti. Yet he had also discovered through his communication with the ministers a significant risk, should the Society specifically choose to obtain land belonging directly to the government. Grants for government-owned lands were subject to a time-limited stipulation: if a certain proportion was not deemed to have been sufficiently cultivated (to the subjective satisfaction of inspectors) within the space of four years, the government reserved the right to evict colonists and reclaim the land they inhabited. This was by no means an idle threat—In June Etzler witnessed the same fate befall an attempted settlement by the Italian geographer Agostino Codazzi. The site chosen by Codazzi's group had been less cultivable than anticipated, and "[t]he emigrants would not fulfil the engagements they entered into", Etzler observed in his journal, 'as they found they would never become possessed of the property. The Government [had] advanced Codazzi 15,000 dollars [...] which I see by some of the papers is [now] cancelled'.<sup>891</sup>

Etzler anticipated that the same thing could happen to the TES—what if, after all their (and the machines') hard work, the possession of the satellite-cultivated land became dependent "on the arbitrary judgement of two or three arbitrators, who, after four years, may or may not pronounce the cultivation [...] good"?<sup>892</sup>

Loans and other concessions could still be negotiated when colonists bought land from private sellers, and the fine detail of emigration law was also subject to frequent change, so Etzler had already begun to examine possible alternatives: the Society purchase land from a proprietor's private possession, or it could petition to have the law on the revocation of uncultivated government lands changed. He began to investigate other sites too, determining towards the end of July to travel to Valencia for that purpose.

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<sup>890</sup> CL, 218.

<sup>891</sup> EJe, 277.

<sup>892</sup> MOJAEc, 210.

#### 7.4 “Delightfully Cool and Salubrious”: Guataparo

Etzler sent a letter to the Directorate explaining his plan<sup>893</sup> and the reasoning behind it (i.e., the then travelled from Caracas to Valencia via Puerto Cabello, arriving in August. Immediately he set about examining adequate sites in the vicinity of Valencia, and communicating with government officials and local landowners there in order to broker an appropriate arrangement on behalf of the Society.

On 11 October 1845, he was in a position to update the Directors with some good news. Of the ten sites he had visited since arriving in Valencia, one in particular was perfectly suited to the society’s needs.

The parcel, adjacent to the *Embalse de Guataparo*,<sup>894</sup> comprised 2000 acres of flat, cultivable, mostly cleared land immediately adjacent to Valencia, with pre-existing buildings capable of housing around 240 individuals, a large body of fresh water suitable for mills and hydropower, and abundant timber for the citizen-scientists of the TES to build and maintain satellite farming machines and windmills to power them. Portions of the estate were pre-planted with banana, breadfruit and coffee crops. The property was valued at \$8000 dollars.

Etzler had, however, managed to negotiate the details of a provisional tripartite arrangement between the TES, the government and a group of local citizens which would enable the Society to obtain the land. Local supporters were prepared to pay \$5000 of sale price by subscription [i.e., they wished to become members of the TES], and the government would provide the Society with an interest-free \$3000 loan to cover the remainder, to be repaid at a rate of 5% annually (i.e., \$150 per annum).

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<sup>893</sup> The letter appears to be non-extant; a large proportion of *Morning Star* issues for September are missing from the corpus, so it may have been published in one of these. Its existence can however be inferred, both from VL and from ‘Report of the Directors’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 1, no. 41 (18 October 1845): 325–27.

<sup>894</sup> Etzler and the others render this “Guatapare” in their correspondence.



Fig. 19. A modern photograph taken from the Guataparo Country Club looks out over the *Embalse de Guataparo*, the large reservoir of fresh water adjacent to which Etzler had hoped for the TES to build their *Paradise Structures* and agricultural satellite machines.

Etzler suggested that the first division of the TES, no doubt anxious to complete the purchase and begin the project, could now “immediately proceed to Puerto Cabello and Valencia” in order to finalise the arrangement with the parties and take possession of the land. If there was to be some unexpected hitch or if the Guataparo site could not be taken up for whatever reason, he let them know that he had drafted other contingency plans—other sites they might be able to obtain, places in Valencia they would be able to stay if necessary, and so on.

Unbeknownst to Etzler, none of this mattered in the slightest, because in London, Powell had become impatient, and had already started to take matters into his own hands. on 14 June, he *unilaterally* sent a directive to Carr and Taylor instructing them to immediately buy a plot in Paria, without troubling himself to inform Etzler, and without even the consent or knowledge of his own co-directors in London. We learn this from *Star 2*, no. 42, where the following is recalled:

Urged by the eagerness of the members in England, Mr. Powell, the Secretary, the mail being on the eve of departing, wrote *instructions to secure Guinimita*,



*independent of the directors*, but was afterwards sanctioned for having done so. [...] The original intention seemed to be entirely forgotten.<sup>895</sup>

The day before, on 13 June 1845, Powell had also started to try and negotiate with the Venezuelan executive himself over Etzler's head, submitting a memorial to the President of Venezuela requesting a loan of £10,000 to defray the cost of shipping the Society to Venezuela (the loan was rejected, and the government were confused at receiving seemingly contradictory memorials from members of the same organisation). The decision to independently seek a shipping loan whilst Etzler was attempting to secure one for the Guataparo site purchase would turn out to severely convolute TES correspondence even to its members from this point forth—references to “the memorial”, “the loan”, “the main grant” were now ambiguous. It is at almost precisely this time that Powell will become the editor of the *Morning Star*, consolidating both the decision-making authority of the secretary and the choice of what gets published into the hands of a single individual.

By the time the London Directorate received VL (i.e., the news from Etzler that the Guataparo deal was arranged and ready to proceed), Powell had already instructed Carr and Taylor to buy a site in Paria, so incredibly, he wrote back to Etzler “declin[ing] to follow his recommendation for the present, requesting him to return to Trinidad to assist our agents there”.<sup>896</sup> He told him “information was received the estate [i.e., bought by Taylor and Carr] was already purchased; to have purchased another would have been beyond our limited means”.

This was the first Etzler heard about Guinimita, Taylor and Carr's “preliminary settlement” in Paria. He must have been gobsmacked. It also appeared that Powell had completely misunderstood Etzler's report—there was to be no upfront cost to deplete the “already limited means” of the Society, precisely because of the deal Etzler had arranged with the government and the locals. There was, however, tremendous expense in instructing Carr and Taylor to make a private upfront purchase, which the London Directorate in its wisdom had just ordered should take place.

After a lot of waiting around, the government were starting to question Etzler's authentic intention to bring emigrants to colonise the site at all—and Powell's letter to the President had not helped matters, confusing as it did which representatives of the TES the government was even supposed to be dealing with in its negotiations. Etzler saw the obvious folly of the Guinimita purchase immediately, and was astonished that the London Directorate was not only presuming to turn down the opportunity to obtain suitable land at no upfront cost, in order to squander a large upfront sum on a tiny and entirely unsuitable plot.<sup>897</sup>

With the government questioning him about why the Society would turn down the \$3000 loan whilst

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<sup>895</sup> *Morning Star*, and *People's Economist* 2, no. 42 (27 January 1847): 334.

<sup>896</sup> Thomas Powell, ‘Report of the Directors’, *Morning Star*, and *People's Economist* 2, no. 2 (17 January 1846): 10.

<sup>897</sup> He relates this post-fact in MOJAEc.

simultaneously asking for a £10,000 one, Etzler attempted to demonstrate his integrity and credentials by provisionally accepting the £3000 loan *at his own liability* rather than at the society's—he wrote to the Branches immediately explaining that he had done this and urging the colonists to come as soon as possible to take full possession of the site.

Powell, still not understanding, or not willing to understand what Etzler was doing, published in his next directorial report the statement,

In his [Etzler's] next letter we were sorry to find that he had purchased an estate for himself and still urged us to send out members to that neighbourhood.<sup>898</sup>

Whether deliberately or not, Powell has made it seem to the membership as if Etzler has self-interestedly defected from the society and bought his own private estate, when in fact the opposite is true—he has shown that he is prepared to incur the liability of the loan himself in order to secure the site for the TES, since Powell in his boorish obstinacy (and apparent ignorance of what the deal even entails) will not authorise Etzler to agree the loan on behalf of the Society.

In the misleading turn of phrase used by Powell in the above-quoted passage lies the entire basis for the slanderous myth that Etzler ran away and bought himself private land during the expedition. Powell ostensibly means that Etzler has acted *for himself* (i.e., at his own discretion; on his own initiative) in affirming to the government that the Society will indeed take the loan and secure the site. But Powell's choice of phrase easily leads to the false (and actually damning) conclusion that Etzler has *bought an estate for himself*, i.e., a personal estate. Since only Powell's report and not Etzler's letter to which it refers have been published in *Star* 2, no. 2, there is no immediate corrective to Powell's insinuation. It is this to which Etzler refers in MOJAEc when he says to Greenwood, "I hope the directors [i.e., Powell] have given you in full, and more correct than they have hitherto done, my last report on the subject [i.e., wherein Powell finds that Etzler concluded the deal *for himself*]." <sup>899</sup> Etzler is right to be incensed at this—not only does Powell run the risk of confusing the original readers of the *Morning Star*, but because of the missing numbers and the haphazard ordering of correspondence published retroactively in the periodical, Powell has also managed to confuse 175 years' worth of posterity.

Brostowin reads Powell's above-quoted statement and flatly repeats it as the truth: "[i]n the meantime, Etzler had already bought an estate for himself in Valencia".<sup>900</sup> This interpretative error renders large parts of the remaining corpus unintelligible to Brostowin, since he cannot now understand the true meaning of subsequent discussions by Etzler, Powell and by the secretaries of

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<sup>898</sup> Thomas Powell, 'Report of the Directors', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 2 (17 January 1846): 10.

<sup>899</sup> MOJAEc, 211.

<sup>900</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 312.

many of the regional branches about this question.

In Nydahl, Brostowin's error carries forward as "[Etzler] bought land *for himself* west of Caracas at Valencia [...] Carr and Taylor, in the meantime, *needing land on which the colonists could found the initial community*, bought [Guinimita]".<sup>901</sup>

In 1986, Claeys mistakenly affirms that "Etzler [...] was accused (apparently justly) of having *bought an estate there for himself and his family alone to use*."<sup>902</sup>

Stoll takes this and runs with it in the *Great Delusion*. Here is his account:

Etzler made his own deal [...] Etzler disregarded [the directors'] wishes, agreeing to pay \$8000 for the estate (it isn't clear where he found the money.) [...] The leadership seethed with resentment. An inventor who asserted that any wilderness could be cultivated and planted by his transforming machine had purchased an estate cleared and planted the old-fashioned way, possibly with slave labor. He apparently moved his family to the plantation and then set out to pursue various projects in the region.<sup>903</sup>

This last is utterly untrue—Regina Etzler and her family remained in Trinidad until their departure for Ulm in August 1846<sup>904</sup>—a fact attested in the *Morning Star*, the very source to which Stoll's endnote for this damning and entirely false passage supposedly points.

There is more misinterpretation to be had with Powell's *for himself* statement, however. It is frequently repeated in secondary literature that, in Brostowin's words, "[Etzler] bought the tract of land himself, a thousand-acre estate called Hervor".<sup>905</sup>

Given the comparative ease with which I was able to locate all other named places in Etzler's correspondence, (others have not been so fortunate) it was striking to me that no place called "Hervor" appears to exist or to have ever existed in or around Guataparo, nor in Valencia, nor for that matter anywhere else in Venezuela. I traced the word to its origin point in the *Morning Star* corpus, and I landed precisely back at Powell's misleading statement that Etzler had *bought for himself* an estate.

Etzler rebukes Powell for this turn of phrase in MOJAEc, in which context he is writing to Greenwood, the Secretary of Bradford Branch. Here is what he writes:

I had to meet strong opposition [i.e. from Powell], and I overcame it with honour, by (mind the phrase) *buying for myself* Hervor., a tract of about 1,000 acres, because the directors would not let me buy it for the Society, and showing thereby to that opposition [Powell] my determination to introduce

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<sup>901</sup> Nydahl, 'Introduction', xx.

<sup>902</sup> Claeys, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 363 [emphasis mine].

<sup>903</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 119.

<sup>904</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 35 (12 September 1846): 273–80.

<sup>905</sup> E.g., Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 322. See also *ibid.*: 344, 372, etc.

colonists there at all events, which altered the face of things.<sup>906</sup>

“Hervor” is not the name of a real place. It is an abbreviation of the German word *Hervorhebung*, which means, in the context of a text, *emphasis, italics, highlighting*, etc. In his exasperation (and I would be exasperated as well), Etzler has forgotten for a second that he is writing in English, and in order to emphasise still further (mind the phrase) *buying for myself*—to draw special attention to the devious dual-use of the phrase by Powell—he has written “Hervor., [i.e., *Hervorhebung* / *Hervorgehebung von mir*]” immediately after it. Since it is *not* in italics in the *Morning Star* text, the editor has clearly not *mind the phrase*, and in fact some of the correspondents of the *Star* would now in their ignorance begin to speak of “going to Hervor”, “the estate at Hervor”, and—in Etzler’s words—“other sense-destroying blunders too numerous to mention”.<sup>907</sup> The existence of the “Hervor estate” was assimilated by Brostowin at face value as a result of a non-systematic reading of the *Morning Star* corpus, and then repeated elsewhere.

For the harried colonists to get this wrong thanks to the *Star*’s sloppy editing is one thing, but the fact that this extraordinary misinterpretation—first of all uncritically accepting that Etzler *bought an estate for himself*, as opposed to bought an estate *for himself*, since the directors would not—but then actually misapprehending Etzler’s own exasperated correction to further bolster the view that he *bought a private estate for himself* [Hervor!], serves to show, in my view, how the *Morning Star* corpus has so far been handled by its most careful interpreters.

Moreover, whilst the imaginary place name—this *utopia*, literally, of Hervor—is inconsequential enough on its own, consider how drastically the universal promulgation of the *substance* of the “private estate” myth transforms our understanding of what went wrong during this phase of the expedition. We may now at the very least read with attenuated sympathy and understanding the cryptic twentieth rule of *The Manifesto of J. A. Etzler*: “20. Language. The *Object* Must be Known before the Knowledge of their *Names*”.<sup>908</sup>

On 12 November 1845,<sup>909</sup> the Venezuelan government put \$3550 at the disposal of John Adolphus Etzler, on his own liability, to secure the Guataparo estate for the use of the Tropical Emigration Society, an arrangement he was forced to undertake (mind the phrase) *for himself*, since Powell refused to authorise it from London, since he had already unilaterally ordered the purchase of Guinimita instead. Etzler made no secret of his moving to secure Guataparo for the colonists, and urged the TES to join him there to take immediate possession of the land. Having attempted to

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<sup>906</sup> MOJAEc, 211 [*Hervorgehebung von mir*].

<sup>907</sup> Ibid.

<sup>908</sup> MOJAEb, 225.

<sup>909</sup> ‘Communications from the Government of Venezuela’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 2, no. 27 (11 July 1846): 214.

sabotage its acquisition, Powell would later forbid the colonists to go there even when they demanded it, insinuating falsely that Etzler bought it for his own private use, and patronisingly describing the outraged colonists as “labouring under the impression that the estate had been purchased for the Society as its permanent settlement”,<sup>910</sup> which in fact it had.



Fig. 19. *Guataparo*, the site Etzler negotiated for. Today, the site contains university buildings, luxury apartments, a nature reserve, and a country club. The outskirts of Valencia can be seen immediately to the east. Image courtesy of GoogleMaps.

<sup>910</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 4 (31 January 1846): 28.

## 7.5 “Detrimental to Health and Life”: Guinimita

Having spent hundreds buying, and months renovating, the sloop *Ellen*, Taylor had (nearly) finished fixing her in time for some important news from London. It had been decided unilaterally by Powell on 14 June 1845 that Taylor and Carr were to immediately return to the Paria Peninsula to purchase the “preliminary settlement” that Taylor had got into his head on the voyage. Nothing of the sort had been proposed before departure, and Etzler had not consented to it and had emphatically counselled against it, and not even the London directors—with the sole exception of Powell—had given their blessing, yet here they were, with a mandate to make an immediate purchase. On 6 July 1845<sup>911</sup> they wrote back, confirming that they would set out and attempt to find somewhere to buy. “The formation of a preliminary settlement on the Peninsula of Paria”, wrote Powell in the *Star* for 19 July,

your directors, after much consideration, have thought advisable and have sent out instructions, to Messrs. Carr and Taylor, to rent or purchase a small estate [...] in consequence of the agents having separated, Mr. Etzler having gone to Caracas [...] your Directors thought it necessary to send out instructions to the effect, that each of them, whilst asunder, should act without the sanction of the other.<sup>912</sup>

Note that he conceals his wrongdoing in this turn of phrase—it is not the case that *the Directors* sent out instructions; he did it (mind the phrase) *for himself*—and at the time he decided to order the purchase, moreover, Powell had virtually no information except Taylor and Carr’s breathless reports of their adventure, and it was on the strength of this alone (and outside of his mandate as secretary) that he gave the order. The pair now set out in the “very leaky”<sup>913</sup> and barnacle-covered *Ellen*. Over the course of August and September they would send copious travelogues as they pottered haplessly around the Paria Peninsula trying to discharge their new mission.

A mania to reach the Tropics as quickly as possible now ricocheted through the Society in Britain (particularly the London Branch). The *Star* for 6 September 1845 carried an article entitled “AWAY! FOR VENEZUELA!!”<sup>914</sup> announcing that a group of London members had taken it upon themselves to prepare to unilaterally travel there and “assist the Agents to carry out the instructions of the Directors”. Etzler’s journals from as far back as May<sup>915</sup> were still being published in the same number, so there was a severe lag in the general receipt of information—most of the society were still entirely

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<sup>911</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 29 (26 July 1845): 255–256.

<sup>912</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 28 (19 July 1845): 222.

<sup>913</sup> Thomas Carr and Charles Taylor, ‘Journal of Messrs. Carr and Taylor’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 48 (6 December 1845): 377.

<sup>914</sup> ‘AWAY! FOR VENEZUELA!!’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 35 (6 September 1845): 277.

<sup>915</sup> EJC.

ignorant of anything that had transpired in Caracas except the fact of Etzler's having arrived there,<sup>916</sup> and the rhetoric of a "preliminary settlement" and "main grant" was now entrenching into the Society's correspondence, thanks in no small part to Powell's desire to make it seem like his own unilateral (and disastrous) decision had been the plan all along. Powell became editor of the *Morning Star* from 18 October 1845 onwards;<sup>917</sup> he wielded enormous power of what could be printed, especially since Stollmeyer—then co-editing—was increasingly preoccupied with the affairs of the Venezuela Transit Company. The wheels were in motion. Carr and Taylor, surveying the countless uninhabited bays on the south coast of the peninsula, meanderingly moved towards selecting a site.

The location they eventually decided upon—Guinimita—comprised 120 acres of thickly forested and swampy wilderness, overlooking a bay surrounded on all other sides by steep mountainous jungle. No buildings or other structures were present, and the nearest human settlement—the tiny fishing village of Guiria—was 20 miles away by boat (the site lacked any access by road). Having briefly returned to Port of Spain and obtained Powell's blessing from London, Carr and Taylor again returned to Paria on 3 October 1845,<sup>918</sup> immediately opening negotiations to buy the site, though the sale would not be concluded until 30 October.

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<sup>916</sup> I.e., they had read EJB, the first of Etzler's journal extracts to relate that he had left Carr and Taylor to their own devices so that he could go and arrange a proper land deal in Caracas.

<sup>917</sup> See 'To Our Readers', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 52 (3 January 1846): 414.

<sup>918</sup> Thomas Carr and Charles Taylor, 'News from Our Agents in Trinidad: From Messrs. Carr and Taylor', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 47 (29 November 1845): 372–73.





Fig. 21. Guinimita, the site purchased by Carr and Taylor, by orders issued at Powell's sole unilateral initiative.

Etzler, still in Valencia earnestly trying to negotiate the Guataparo site in good faith, knew none of this. The Directors had mistakenly started forwarding all his post to Trinidad, so he had no information about the reckless decisions now being taken both in London and in Paria. In VL (i.e., on 11 October 1845), he writes,

I am yet without any news from the society or my co-agents since I departed from Caracas. Nothing has arrived in Caracas. How is this? It is merely by chance that I saw the *Star* of Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>. In them I see nothing to direct me [...] I must now calmly wait for further intelligence from the society, and shall remain here until then.<sup>919</sup>

With Etzler kept totally in the dark, on 19 October 1845 Powell now permitted 57 of its members to depart for Guinimita aboard Brig *Rosalind* (Capt. Gate)—11 days before the purchase was even concluded. This was only the beginning. On 25 October, Powell was already inserting another

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<sup>919</sup> VL, 372.



advertisement soliciting more “CANDIDATES FOR VENEZUELA”<sup>920</sup> who were to go as quickly as possible to join those already sent. Utterly forgotten were the cautious strictures agreed before the departure of the Agents not to send any colonists until land had been safely secured.

With scores of men, women and children now already bobbing across the Atlantic towards them, Carr and Taylor undertook to prepare the pristine wilderness of the site for human habitation. Not only was the person of Etzler physically absent from—and as yet ignorant of—this debacle, but the emancipatory and egalitarian ideals of Etzlerism, too, began to vacate the minds of his co-agents, if indeed they were present there in the first place. The site Carr and Taylor had set their hearts on was covered in dense mangrove swamp, so they unilaterally spent additional TES funds hiring creole “peons” to assist with the clearance of undergrowth and the construction of rudimentary shelters.

Watching his peons grafting hard in the blistering heat one afternoon, Taylor became desperately sick after trying to slake his thirst with a large quantity of coconut milk<sup>921</sup> Carr dragged him back to Trinidad just in time to meet the *Rosalind* party, who arrived in Port of Spain on 3 December 1845.<sup>922</sup> Taylor died just two days after the ship's arrival, leaving Carr, for the time being, nominally responsible for both the underprepared wasteland and the 57 equally underprepared human beings who were now supposed to inhabit it.

The arrivees did not suspect (and why would they?) that Powell had inexplicably forbade Etzler to obtain Guataparo, and the correspondence that had so far been published made it seem as if both acquisitions were going ahead. Thomas Brooks, one of the pioneers aboard the *Rosalind*, wrote back to England that the members were “highly pleased to hear that both the ‘Main Grant’ [Guataparo] and the ‘Preliminary Settlement’ [Guinimita] are taken”, but that they were “about to have a meeting to settle whether some of the pioneers shall go to both settlements”.<sup>923</sup>

When they saw the abysmal condition of the Guinimita site, however, the choice was obvious, and they understandably demanded to be taken immediately to join Etzler at Guataparo. Etzler had at this point already had his negotiations sabotaged by Powell, but the *Rosalind* party were ignorant of this fact.

Acting on Powell's orders, Carr put his foot down and insisted to them that the Society was now committed, financially and logistically, to the Guinimita swamp he had chosen for them. “[T]here has been a *division of feeling* among our fellow members on board”, he delicately reported to London, “but I trust this will now close, as I can only look upon them as one body, and act [...] under your [Powell's] recent instructions”.<sup>924</sup> With Etzler absent and Taylor dead, Carr now asserted “sole

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<sup>920</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 44 (8 November 1846): 348.

<sup>921</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 2 (17 January 1846): 14.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–16.

<sup>923</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>924</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 2 (17 January 1846): 14.

Agency and controul [sic] of the Settlement”<sup>925</sup> on the Society’s (but really on Powell’s) behalf, and declined to release any TES funds for the forward passage of the *Rosalind* arrivals to Etzler’s proposed site.

They mutinied against Carr and “refused to obey his orders”,<sup>926</sup> demanding to be reunited with Etzler. In the next number of the *Morning Star*, Powell would laud Carr for “very properly” enforcing his will, since it was quite wrong for them to have “assumed equal right to carry out the instructions of the directors”.<sup>927</sup> With the resistance quashed, Carr put his de-facto captives to work, sending a substantial party from the *Rosalind* group to encamp at Guinimita and continue to try and develop the site under his direction.

Having already had some editorial oversight through his co-editorship with Stollmeyer, Powell now obtained sole control of the *Star*, since Stollmeyer departed for Trinidad himself in November. “The *Star* is now in the hands of a single individual”, wrote Powell in the 27 December number, referring to himself, “it is his sole property and upon him rests the whole responsibility of its publication.”<sup>928</sup>

Both Etzler and the *Rosalind* group had desired to immediately unite at Guataparo. Powell had sabotaged the deal from afar, then represented Etzler as buying Guataparo for his own private enjoyment, and finally had seen to it that the *Rosalind* party be prevented from reaching Etzler as they purposed to do. It is these events Powell is describing when he writes, in the *Star* for 17 January 1846, that he has

declined to follow [Etzler's] recommendation for the present requesting him to return to Trinidad to assist our agents there. In his next letter we were sorry to find that he had purchased an estate for himself and still urged us to send out members to that neighbourhood. We declined doing so, contenting ourselves with applying our united power to make our own property [Guinimita] successful<sup>929</sup>

To the best of my knowledge, *no* interpreter of the *Morning Star* corpus has correctly understood this phase of the TES expedition; they have taken Powell at his word that Etzler bought an estate *for himself*, and considered the matter settled.

At this juncture, Etzler was clearly at a loss as to what to do. Powell had usurped him, slandered him, ordered Carr to put himself between Etzler and the colonists and had the temerity to *demand* that he now return to Trinidad, a mere instrument of Powell’s will. Cut off from the Society at home, and unable to do anything more in Valencia, Etzler repaired to Trinidad in January to regroup with

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<sup>925</sup> Ibid.

<sup>926</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 4 (31 January 1846): 28.

<sup>927</sup> Ibid.

<sup>928</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 1, no. 51 (27 December 1845): 414.

<sup>929</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 2 (17 January 1846): 10.

Regina and the others, and where he was also met by Stollmeyer, who had arrived the month before.

Etzler was gobsmacked at the decision to pass up a vast fertile tract of arable land with pre-existing buildings in favour of a deadly and inaccessible swamp, but he had already been made completely marginal to the affairs of the Society by Powell's interference. Without adequate food and shelter, the colonists working under Carr's superintendence at Guinimita now started to die *en masse*. Carr had only been able to impel 37 members to encamp at Guinimita—the rest of the *Rosalind* passengers defected from his command successfully. Between December 1845 and March 1846, 14 of the 37 people sent to Guinimita by Powell and Carr including two children would die, and another 18 children and adults had to be evacuated to a hospital in Trinidad but would eventually recover.

Stewing powerlessly in Trinidad whilst the *Rosalind* party camped out under the stars at Guinimita, dying one by one, Etzler wrote a desperate plea to the Bradford TES, whom he reckoned (correctly) as loyalists, on 19 February 1846. In a frankly justified assessment of Powell and the London Directorate, whose “sense-destroying blunders too numerous to mention”<sup>930</sup> were now occasioning “sickness and death, and useless loss of time and money”,<sup>931</sup> he urged the Bradford branch to wrest control of both the *Morning Star* and the Society itself back from Powell's control, with the express intention that the Guataparo site should yet be established, in Etzler's words, “*not only* for myself and my family, but for whomsoever would like to join me on the basis of my manifesto”.<sup>932</sup> He enclosed a copy of MOJAEa/b, which he asked Bradford to distribute as quickly as possible to the other regional branches of the TES. At the end of MOJAEc (the cover letter), he notes the mounting death toll under Carr's superintendence with misery. It was Etzler's hope that MOJAEa/b could form the basis of a new TES constitution, enabling the regional branches in Britain, who almost universally supported him, as is revealed by later correspondence (see below) to regroup and take the Guataparo site.

Etzler additionally sent a copy of MOJAEa/b to the *Star* (now under Powell's exclusive control) along with another more innocuous letter (TCL) directed at the Venezuela Transit Company. Powell (not surprisingly, since it effectively calls for his resignation) suppresses MOJAEa/b when he writes the following in *Star* 2, no. 8:

I would here observe, that a letter has also arrived from Mr. Etzler, but as it is not so important the present time as the foregoing, we have reserved it for No. 9, *Star*. Also one from him and Mr. Stollmeyer addressed to the Transit Company.

Mr E. is in Trinidad, acting for, and with us again, and agrees that for the present, we ought to confine our operations to Guinimita.

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<sup>930</sup> MOJAEc, 211.

<sup>931</sup> MOJAEc, 212.

<sup>932</sup> MOJAEc, 211.

The “not so important” letter is clearly the *Manifesto of J. A. Etzler* (MOJAEa/b), by which Etzler hopes to reconstitute the society so that it can take healthy land and recover from the shock it has suffered under Powell’s abominable negligence. Powell has no intention of publishing MOJAEa/b in *Star* 2, no. 9—it will not be released in the *Star* until July 1846, by which time Powell has already removed himself to Trinidad and is therefore safe from the recriminations of the TES members he has betrayed in Britain (at this juncture he has already arranged for himself and 192 others to depart on the *Condor* on 13 March 1846). Powell arranges to have TCL published on its own in *Star* 2, no. 10<sup>934</sup>—the day after his departure—hoping that by this time nobody will remember that he mentioned there being an additional letter from Etzler.

There is considerable duplicity in his decision here; he has clearly received urgent demands from other members to publish it already, as in *Star* 2, no. 8 he replies to a correspondent:

P. G. F.—The present Editor [i.e., Powell] will be off to Venezuela in a few days. He will hand the letter [i.e., MOJAEa/b] to his successor.<sup>935</sup>

The 13 March 1846 statement of Bradford Branch, published in *Star* 2, no. 12 is a response to their own receipt of MOJAEa/b/c. Evidently they expected MOJAEa/b to be published in the same number of the *Star*, but it wasn’t—this obscures their intended meaning when they say that the matter is settled (i.e., by the reconstitution of the TES on the basis of MOJAEa/b). The following passage appears in their statement:

Many of us have thought, all along, that you were fully justified in *making a purchase of land for yourself*. [...] We are heartily glad that the matter is now settled, and all misunderstanding removed.<sup>936</sup>

The death count at Guinimita continued to climb, the *Manifesto* remained unpublished, the site at Guataparo remained unoccupied while the government of Venezuela steadily lost confidence in Etzler’s intention to even send colonists at all as Powell repeatedly countermanded him from afar. Meanwhile, Powell arranged his passage to Trinidad to take control of the Society *in-situ*. He and 192 others embarked on the Barque *Condor*<sup>937</sup> for Trinidad from Southampton on 13 March 1846.

<sup>933</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 8 (28 February 1845): 62.

<sup>934</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 10 (14 March 1845): 76–77.

<sup>935</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 8 (28 February 1845): 64.

<sup>936</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 12 (28 March 1845): 90 [emphasis theirs].

<sup>937</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 11): 91–92.

## 7.6 Attack of the Assassin Editor: Powell's Coup and the Fate of the *Condor*

At every stage, Etzler had tried to get the colonists to leave the fatal Guinimita site, which he never wished them to settle in the first place, and at every stage he was overruled by Powell. Powell kept sending more colonists, and Etzler kept trying to stop them, but failing that, to at least get them suitably housed on viable land. None of this information conforms easily with the preconceived narrative of *The Great Delusion*, so none of it is discussed by its author. For his part, Stoll only reports that Etzler “took off” for Georgetown “just the day before, anticipating the arrival of the [*Condor*] volunteers”.<sup>938</sup>

Stoll wants this to look like a cowardly desertion of duty when this is not at all the case. With the Venezuelan government losing confidence in his intention to bring colonists to occupy Guataparo, Etzler had been forced to look elsewhere to try to find a place whereto the TES at Trinidad might not only evacuate its existing members, but also house the new arrivals from the *Condor*. The Agricultural Association in Georgetown, Demerara (modern day Guyana) had been in touch with Etzler about an alternative site, so he went there to try and secure one, urging the TES colonists to join him there as quickly as possible. All this he plainly relates in FTSAG, there is no elision or concealment on his part from what survives of his correspondence.

Leaving his family in Trinidad, and expecting to see them and the rest of the Society again shortly, Etzler travelled to Georgetown well over a week (not a day, as Stoll claims) in advance, specifically to determine as a matter of urgency “whether government there, or any company of landowners, would be willing to afford an immediate home for whomsoever of us would settle there [...] also to have those destitute of all means to have their passage from Guinimita, or from Europe, advanced [...]”.<sup>939</sup> It seemed there was a slim chance of getting land on the upper banks of the Essequibo river; Etzler did his best to obtain it.

He made this last-ditch attempt to arrange the evacuation of the incoming colonists to a useable site, because he already understood what the *Condor* contingent themselves would learn soon enough for themselves on arrival: Guinimita was uninhabitable, as he had cautioned from the start. In the letter he left for them, he urged them to join him immediately, “to quit Guinimita and come over to some port in Demarara, to find there a *ready* home”.<sup>940</sup> Regina herself reiterated this plan to the arriving colonists, but Powell overruled her.<sup>941</sup> Her husband's mission in Georgetown, he wrote, “will be quite as useless to us as that to Valencia”.<sup>942</sup> Powell had successfully squeezed Etzler out,

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<sup>938</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 131.

<sup>939</sup> FTSAG, 229.

<sup>940</sup> Ibid.

<sup>941</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 228.

<sup>942</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 26 (4 July 1846): 202.

“separated [him] from the Society”,<sup>943</sup> and now Etzler's core supporters, who vocally opposed Powell's leadership, were stuck in Britain and could not meaningfully come to his aid.

When the *Condor* made landfall in April, the situation was dire. A bedraggled Carr informed the colonists that no less than fifteen of the Guinimita work party (including Taylor) had already died in the intervening four months, and that all remaining survivors, except for himself and Mr Handby, a member of the *Rosalind* party, had retreated to Trinidad, many of them to the hospital.<sup>944</sup> Handby and Carr had evidently done what little they could, but despite their exertions, the site was scarcely more developed now than it had been in January.

The combined circumstances triggered a mass revolt against Powell and Carr's presumptive leadership of the expedition among the passengers of the *Condor*. In the first instance, an absolute majority unsurprisingly voted against settling at the death-trap of Guinimita, bought on Powell's unilateral orders, i.e., *for himself* [Hervor!], without the consent of his co-directors. This majority itself was further split, however, between forward travel to Guataparo, to try and take up the site anyway, although of course Etzler had only been able to obtain it on workable terms “long ago, when they [the Government of Venezuela] had higher ideas of the Society than they must have now”<sup>945</sup>—while another group simply favoured categorical desertion to the United States. Three factions now existed: the minority [led by Powell and Carr] who still put their stock in the renovation of Guinimita, a more numerous section demanding to take up Guataparo as Etzler had urged them to since the Valencia Letter, and a third party now wishing to abandon the Tropics altogether. In an attempt to break the deadlock, The recently-arrived Stollmeyer advised Powell to use the dwindling funds of the TES to rent a small plot of land on Trinidad itself. The site, called the Erthig Estate, would now serve as a temporary base of operations from which colonists could send further work parties either to Guinimita or to other subsequently acquired sites. This meagre olive branch was too little too late, and the group intent on departing for the US grew rapidly in number, forcefully demanding that funds be released by Powell and Carr to pay their passage to New Orleans. Though he categorically refused to countenance following Etzler's advice and allowing his party to precede to the Essequibo, nevertheless with enough blood on his and Carr's hands already, Powell reluctantly acceded that it was unconscionable to maroon such a large body of people who so explicitly opposed remaining in the Tropics to do so against their will, so on May 11, 1846, two weeks after its arrival, the *Condor* departed Trinidad for New Orleans with around 100 of its original passengers *still aboard*, “taking with them a considerable portion of funds, provisions, stores, etc.”<sup>946</sup> Powell had gambled and lost.

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<sup>943</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 228.

<sup>944</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 24 (20 June 1846): 188.

<sup>945</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 228.

<sup>946</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 25 (27 June 1846): 196.

It seemed a still greater tragedy was afoot. Hearing no further news of the *Condor*, the remaining colonists and their supporters in England surmised a crowning horror: the *Condor* must never have made it to the United States.<sup>947</sup> The ship had run in to trouble and gone under, they thought, drowning a hundred men, women and children in the Gulf of Mexico. The casualties at Guinimita, harrowing as they were, paled in comparison to this enormous, pointless sacrifice of human life. A hundred innocent souls had been dragged beneath the waves. Since 1847, when news of this apparent tragedy was carried by the *National Reformer*, the few historians of Etzlerism had no definitive reason to suspect that the surviving colonists were mistaken, and the spectre of this catastrophe has certainly been a factor in the subsequent reception of the affair.

It therefore relieves me to disclose, contrary to prevailing understandings of the event, that the sinking of the *Condor* and the drowning of the hundred TES members categorically did not occur. The following combination of grey literature conclusively demonstrates their survival: knowing that the *Condor* left England on March 13, 1845,<sup>948</sup> the surname of its captain can be ascertained from the weekly shipping intelligence of the *London Daily News* of March 16, which reports, “SOUTHAMPTON, March 13. [...] Sailed, Condor, Whiting, for Venezuela”.<sup>949</sup> At the other end, the *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans has: “June 21, 1846. CLEARED YESTERDAY. [...] Barque Condor, Whiting”.<sup>950</sup> Evidently Captain Whiting, presumably no Etzlerist himself, cooled his heels in Trinidad for two weeks, looking on as the divided TES waged a fierce dispute over the future location of utopia, over the practicality of taming the jungle with robotic vehicles and traversing the sea with floating islands, and over the disposition of their principal ideologist, conspicuous only by his absence. When over half the embittered colonists finally announced their intention to proceed to New Orleans, both Whiting and his ship were at the ready. 41 days later, he delivered them safely to their new home in Louisiana. It must have been a stopover he never forgot. Though the survival of the *Condor* passengers is perhaps small comfort in an already horrific story, at least now its total loss of life can be reduced by orders of magnitude from previous estimates.

Powell and his followers rented the Erthig estate, and Powell dug his heels in, ridiculing Etzler in the *Star* for 4 July 1846 despite his earnest attempts to aid the colonists:

If the society intend to carry out this man's plan, other men must of necessity be chosen of less talent, or rather of less pretension to talent, to perform the task.<sup>951</sup>

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<sup>947</sup> ‘Tropical Emigration Society’, *National Reformer* [Douglas] no. 99 (13 March 1847): 4–6.

<sup>948</sup> See Brostowin, 1969: 316; Claeys, 1986: 363.

<sup>949</sup> ‘Shipping Intelligence’, *London Daily News* (16 March 1846).

<sup>950</sup> ‘Cleared Yesterday’, *Times-Picayune* [New Orleans, LA] (21 June 1846).

<sup>951</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 26 (4 July 1846): 202.

His help mockingly rejected, there was nothing left for Etzler to usefully do in Georgetown. Powell was now installed in his own personal fiefdom at Trinidad and had cut Etzler off from TES funds. Unable to subsist for much longer on the dwindling proceeds of the cutlery sale, Etzler sent the Demerara letters (DL1/2/3) and then left Demerara for New York aboard the Brig *Judson* in June 1846, explaining his movements to the TES and adding,

when they [Powell's faction] had rejected every thing I had advised them, I made the best the circumstances would allow, and advised them still how to save themselves. Finally, they dismiss my services, and tell me to go about my own business.<sup>952</sup>

To Powell himself, he wrote expressing surprise that the few remaining TES members at Trinidad did not “stand up to a man, as a whole body, and declare the truth to the public, to save honest and innocent persons [i.e., Etzler] [...] from the lying aspersions of assassin editors [i.e., Powell]”.<sup>953</sup>

In his evaluation of this subperiod of TES history, Stoll cannot quite decide whether the loss of Etzler to the TES was catastrophic, or no problem at all. From the outset he tells his reader that “the whole scheme depended [...] completely on Etzler's [inventions]”<sup>954</sup> but just 28 pages later he has decided that “Etzler's abandonment meant little to the project, which had never benefited from his inventions anyway”.<sup>955</sup>

Either way, in the wake of the mass-defection, Powell's rump-TES at Trinidad would now face further complications. Initially, some of the remaining colonists cultivated the rented estate at Erthig, implementing a 5-hour workday.<sup>956</sup> However, in a twist of cruel cosmic irony for a group originally intent on escaping obligate wage-labour, Powell's faction found it increasingly necessary to seek conventional full-time employment in Port of Spain in order to sustain themselves and maintain the activities of the Society *in situ*. Work on the machines and the floating island was abandoned by Powell, who was entirely disinterested in them unless they could be built for him by somebody else.

The majority of the TES in England were apoplectic at the mismanagement of the entire affair by Powell, and especially by the mind-boggling exclusion of Etzler. Newcastle Branch wrote to the *Star* to demand

[t]hat the Secretary, Mr. Powell, now heading the members at Port Spain, be requested to resign all office in the Society, owing to his having lost the confidence of so large a portion of the Society, as well as Mr. Etzler [...] In [*Star* 2, no. 26] appears a letter of Mr. Powell, which is deemed by this branch

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<sup>952</sup> DL2, 221.

<sup>953</sup> DL3, 222.

<sup>954</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 105.

<sup>955</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>956</sup> Brostowin, 1969: 326.



as the *most reprehensible production* which ever appeared in the organ of the Society.<sup>957</sup>

Yet they were stuck in Britain and he was in Trinidad—the strongest possible written remonstrations could do nothing to dethrone him. Fearing that Etzler would now return to Britain and resume control of the Society (which still largely supported him, as had most of the *Condor* passengers), Powell wrote to the *Star* on 5 August 1846 to demand loyalty and funds from the TES members in Britain, to be spent on his rented estate at Erthig.<sup>958</sup> “Mr Etzler has ran [sic] away to America”, he told his former comrades. “The rumour here is that he has written to England explaining his reason for such extraordinary proceedings”.

“Do not be deceived”, Powell warned those he had left behind, “the [TES] executive is now here. Depend upon it[,] if you treat us generously we shall deal with you friendly [sic]”.

A significant portion of the Guinimita survivors had by this point returned to England, and Powell unsurprisingly expected them to side with Etzler if he ever made it back to England and they were able to regroup, a possibility he tried to forestall: “Let not one be alarmed at what our pioneers and volunteers who have returned may say—not one of whom ought to be believed”. Powell now heaped ugly defamations and insults on the “fool” Brooks, Evans of “rather low” intellect, Beal, Blakely and Hemingway (he insinuated these last three were thieves)—these were surviving *Rosalind* pioneers who had demanded to be taken to Etzler at Guataparo, but had, on Powell’s orders, been sent instead to the swamp of Guinimita, where they had watched their comrades pointlessly die and in several cases fallen close to the bitter end themselves. “I repeat again believe not a word any such men will say—they are not worthy to mix with honest men”, declared Powell in a desperate bid to conceal his sabotage of the TES and his self-serving usurpation of Etzler.

The British TES branches were again outraged at Powell’s transparent mendacity. The West-End TES Branch passed the following resolution in September:

That it is the opinion of this meeting that the letter of Mr. Powell, Secretary to the Tropical Emigration Society, dated August 5th, 1846 and printed in the *Morning Star*, No. 35, contains so much that is false, dishonest, and arrogant, as to make him totally unfit to hold any office in the said Society, and that this opinion be forwarded to the editor of the *Morning Star*.<sup>959</sup>

Safe from the wrath of the members he purported to represent though, Powell continued to vociferously abuse Etzler in the pages of the *Morning Star*, calling him a “coward”, an “impudent

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<sup>957</sup> *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 227.

<sup>958</sup> Thomas Powell, ‘From Mr. Powell’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 2, no. 35 (12 September 1846): 278.

<sup>959</sup> E. Addison (Sec.), ‘West-End Branch’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 2, no. 36 (26 September 1846): 282.

charlatan”<sup>960</sup> and denouncing his “puerile objections to our [sic!] proceedings”.<sup>961</sup> Readers in Britain were appalled. “The Society remains yet safe”, Powell told them—this over the corpses of the 15 dead at Guinimita, the TES in ruins and almost entirely bereft of funds, Etzler hounded out of the organisation and his name blackened in the press, all hope of obtaining aid from the Venezuelan government lost, much of this directly owing to the egotistical intercessions of Powell himself—“it wants but the members individually to perform their duty”.

The entire organisational history of the TES in Trinidad and Venezuela is one of sabotage and usurpation of a community-spirited utopian construction project by an opportunist who had no interest in the mechanical emancipation of humanity, who abused and in the decisive moment actually violated the organisational processes of the group in order to obtain a favourable position for himself in the Tropics.<sup>962</sup> 15 died at Guinimita on the basis of Powell’s unilateral orders to Carr, and a further 8 died under his direct command at Erthig and La Unión. From the very beginning, Etzler implored against these decisions.

The parallels between this ‘late’ period betrayal of Etzler’s plans and the ‘early’ period defection and land-grab of Roebling in the *Mühlhausen Gesellschaft* are striking. But you will not learn any of this from any published source on the matter—neither story has ever been fully told. Consider, having read carefully all of the above, that Stoll eulogizes Powell as

the tough-minded secretary, Thomas Powell, a bookkeeper and early leader in the society who realized that he would need to whip the ill-prepared and grasping colonists into a group that might be capable of surviving.<sup>963</sup>

If Stoll is truly unaware of the evidence I have presented in this chapter, it discloses his negligence in his handling of the *Morning Star*, which he touts throughout the book in a manner that pretends at significant mastery of the source. If he *is* aware of it, and has omitted it deliberately, knowingly allowing the reader to believe that the actions and culpability of Powell and Etzler are almost completely reversed from their historical reality, then it is a totally unjustified slander against Etzler (never mind a profound disservice to history).

### **7.7 The Greater Delusion: Etzler Assassinated in the Gulf of Mexico**

Having obscured the details of the power struggle between Powell and Etzler, partly by omission and partly by invention, Stoll now transplants the *lost at sea* motif from the *Condor* passengers onto

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<sup>960</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 36 (26 September 1846):

<sup>961</sup> Thomas Powell, ‘From Mr. Powell’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 36 (26 September 1846): 281.

<sup>962</sup> For details of Powell’s relatively comfortable private life in Trinidad after his destruction of the TES, see Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 92–94.

<sup>963</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 129.

Etzler himself, describing his fate, and that of his family, as follows:

The [Etzler-Soergel] family secured a small boat on the beach [near Caracas], but none of them knew the tides or winds, and though Etzler had crossed the Atlantic six or eight times, he didn't know how to sail. [...] They missed [Curaçao] and slipped between Aruba and the Paraguaná peninsula, blown clear of land and into the open sea toward Mexico, burned and crying into the waves and the interminable wind. Inundated, they went over. The sun and tides surrounded them now; all distinctions vanished. They prayed to forces they once held in their hands as their own heat dissipated into the entropic universe.<sup>964</sup>

This grotesque portrait is calculated to support Stoll's single-minded presentation of Etzler as a reckless and incompetent megalomaniac, hoist by his own petard, with his loved ones, to boot, dying as the hapless victims of his arrogant hubris. It conforms perfectly with the Etzler whom Stoll has invented for the purpose of his anti-utopian thesis.

It is also ostensibly preceded by the discovery of new documentation, which creates the unduly favourable impression that Stoll may have at least partly 'discovered' rather than invented his account of Etzler's death: the Curaçao rumour is derived from a private letter of Conrad Stollmeyer's which Stoll undertook to obtain from descendants of the same who survive in present-day Trinidad.<sup>965</sup> Despite all of this, the whole above-quoted passage is nothing more than a sadistic fiction, categorically false in every particular. Stoll might at least have deduced the safety of Etzler's wife and mother-in-law from the *Morning Star* itself, but he either does not look for or cannot assimilate evidence of their true whereabouts; he has already written into his story that Etzler "moved his family to the plantation [i.e., Guataparo] and then set out to pursue various projects in the region".<sup>966</sup>

If all of the anti-Etzler canards in Stoll's narrative of the TES expedition are sustained at once, then Regina Etzler and her family, including her 61-year-old mother, travel 500 miles from Trinidad to Guataparo circa December 1845—once Etzler has "made his own deal"<sup>967</sup>—promptly clock another 500 miles back to Trinidad for May 1846 in time to tell Powell that Etzler is in Georgetown,<sup>968</sup> then teleport 375 miles in the reverse direction again to meet Etzler on the beach near Caracas, whence they all pile into a dinghy and sail to their deaths together. Presumably Etzler avails himself of the same distance-shrinking magic to traverse the 700 miles back and forth between Caracas and Georgetown so quickly as well. Perhaps this is what Stoll is trying to tell us when he says that

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<sup>964</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 138.

<sup>965</sup> Perhaps at the time they were—it can only be assumed—at least partly naïve to his purpose of so virulently maligning their ancestor's memory in the final product.

<sup>966</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 119.

<sup>967</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>968</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 26 (4 July 1846): 202. Since Stoll cites the Powell letter that discloses this information at *Great Delusion*, 132 n. 41, it is only fair to charitably take his word that he has, in fact, read it.

“nowhere and everywhere were the same for Etzler”.<sup>969</sup>

It is all completely false, of course, because whilst Stoll may well have read Powell’s 21 May letter in *Star 2*, no. 26, he certainly cannot have read the 5 August letter from *Star 2*, no. 35, in which Powell plainly states:

Mrs. Etzler has returned to Europe with her sister and mother. The ship sails to Dublin, thence she proceeds to Ulm, in Germany.<sup>970</sup>

Perhaps May–Aug 1846 marks the point at which Stoll lost interest in the *Morning Star* corpus and stopped reading. Had he persevered to the end, he could have learned of Regina Etzler’s survival solely from the materials he was already examining. However, even a revised, Etzler-only version of this horror story, although not explicitly contradicted by the *Morning Star* alone, would still have strained desperately against the basic physical geography of South America—Etzler unaccountably travelling 700 miles from Georgetown to Caracas, bypassing the most obvious intermediate waypoint, Trinidad, only to then take to the open ocean in a dinghy. The scholarly consensus before it was debased by the *Great Delusion* had been simply to concede that Etzler “vanished”.

Provisional evidence of Etzler’s survival surfaced as early as 2013, but it was promulgated through such a peculiar channel that I can only imagine it to have thus far escaped the attention of those it will most interest. Stoll’s book was evidently read by the life-extensionist R. Michael Perry, an employee of ALCOR Foundation, a US company whose principal service is to cryonically freeze its own customers in the hope that they may—aptly, to the nature of Perry’s findings about Etzler—someday be resurrected in a future human epoch. Though he lacked many of the archival resources available to (but not properly availed by) Stoll, Perry nevertheless conducted capable online research of his own, discovering a passenger manifest that indisputably authenticated Etzler’s safe transit from Georgetown to New York aboard the brig *Judson*, with Captain James Russell at the helm, disembarking on June 18, 1846. Perry’s discovery is praiseworthy on two counts—both as an example of the capacity of the digital humanities to augment historical understanding, and as a laurel to the competence of amateur citizen-researchers in the curation and correction of history—but since his findings were disclosed exclusively in ALCOR’s monthly *Cryonics* newsletter,<sup>971</sup> they remained on ice as far as the academic mainstream was concerned; Stoll’s published account of Etzler’s death remained authoritative even after untrained amateurs independently deduced its falsity.<sup>972</sup>

A notable fact emerging from Perry’s recovery of shipping information is that Etzler arrived in the

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<sup>969</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 122.

<sup>970</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 35 (12 September 1846): 279.

<sup>971</sup> See R. Michael Perry, ‘John Adolphus Etzler: Pioneer Prophet of Radical Abundance’, *Cryonics Magazine* 34, no. 2 (February 2013): 20–23.

<sup>972</sup> See e.g., Gregory, 2014: 232, n. 31.

United States three days before the *Condor* group, despite the fact that he departed several days after already hearing news of their decision to remove themselves from Powell and their subsequent departure.<sup>973</sup> This is because the Brig *Judson*, a small, light vessel with barely any passengers or cargo, would have sailed much faster than the heavily laden Barque *Condor*, meaning that Etzler—though he may not have realised it—overtook his comrades on the open ocean.

### 7.8 “Expiry without a Groan”: La Unión

After a few months of consolidation, and with a growing consensus that the Guinimita site would be insurmountably difficult to recolonise, Powell bought an additional mainland site—La Unión—at Chaguaramas,<sup>974</sup> in August 1846. Rudimentary construction and planting were undertaken by the nine colonists sent to develop it, but these efforts were completely undone by flooding in December of the same year.<sup>975</sup> Though the curse of Guinimita was to remain morbidly unmatched by the other sites, La Unión nevertheless claimed three more lives under Powell’s ongoing mismanagement. Thomas Marshall, Henry Von Oeson and Mrs. Dyer perished at La Unión, and many more were taken seriously ill.

However, even those who remained at Erthig were not in a position of perfect safety. Four children in the McGillvery, Stephens, Stillwell and Bayliss<sup>976</sup> families also died during this period. In July 1846, a Leicestershire Etzlerist, Enoch Payne Sr.—who came aboard the *Condor* with his two own children: Mary, a teenager, and Enoch Jr., a boy of just 3<sup>977</sup>—fell seriously ill, and after a partial recovery, worsened again and succumbed in September, leaving his two children as orphans. The colonists buried him on the Erthig Estate.<sup>978</sup> Mary obtained paid work in Port of Spain, and Enoch Payne Jr. remained as a ward of the Tropical Emigration Society for some months thereafter. TES

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<sup>973</sup> See his announcement of this in DL3.

<sup>974</sup> Not to be confused with the modern Trinidadian town of the same name—consult the map on page viii. See also *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 36 (26 September 1846): 281.

<sup>975</sup> E.g., ‘Tropical Emigration Society’, *National Reformer, and Manx Weekly Review of Home and Foreign Affairs*, no. 102 (10 April 1847): 5; ‘Tropical Emigration Society’, *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser*, no. 104 (17 April 1847): 5.

<sup>976</sup> Powell omits to mention this one in his catalogue of the deaths, but it is referred to at *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 34 (29 August 1846): 265–72.

<sup>977</sup> As the generations passed, memory of Enoch Payne Jr.’s extraordinary voyage to Venezuela at the age of 3—and the death there of his father, martyred to the cause of the Tropical Emigration Society—faded even from the recollection of his direct descendants. However, Payne Jr.’s great-great-grandson Andy Cadman, a lifelong enthusiast for local and family history, puzzled for 20 years about the fate of his ancestor Enoch Payne Sr., all apparent record of whom vanished utterly in 1843, despite his son’s evident survival. Cadman searched in vain through censuses, burial records and other available resources without discovering the slightest detail of Payne Sr.’s resting place.

Whilst researching this thesis, I came across his plea for information concerning these individuals (our public discussion can be seen at <https://www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=98914.9>), which led to a fruitful private correspondence in which the full details of his ancestors’ lives were established and consolidated. I am grateful to Andy for this exchange.

<sup>978</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 38 (24 October 1846): 298.

expense sheets from this time shows entries for “Payne’s boy”<sup>979</sup> and similar. In May 1847, Powell’s reports relate the following piece of news concerning the children:

A letter has been received from the grandfather of Enock [sic] Payne’s children, by a merchant of this town, requiring that they should be sent to England. Of course this request has been complied with. They are expected to sail on the 6th inst., in the *Fanny*, for Liverpool.<sup>980</sup>

After the TES executive had safely returned Mary and Enoch Payne Jr. to Britain, the boy was taken into the care of his uncle, John Payne, who moved with him to Loughborough.<sup>981</sup> Here he survived well into adulthood, and followed in the footsteps of his father’s radical politics, himself becoming an activist for chartism—he was arrested in 1869 in relation to his political activities, likely in connection with the Loughborough Frame-knitters’ Riots of the preceding year.

Powell’s La Unión site was a failure and was sold in the spring of 1847. The La Unión/Erthig phase of the expedition had added another 8 casualties to the 15 that had occurred at Guinimita. After approximately a year in Trinidad, Thomas Powell liquidated the assets of the TES, so that the it could—in words he might have chosen with a little more tact, after everything that had happened—“expire without a groan”.<sup>982</sup> Further details of Powell’s private life in Trinidad after the collapse of the TES may be had in Malcolm Chase’s *Chartism: A New History*.<sup>983</sup>

### **7.9 The Greatest Delusion: The Anti-Utopian Message of Stoll’s TES Account**

While there can be little doubt at this point that *The Great Delusion* gets its facts profoundly wrong, my purpose here is not simply to refute these errors for the sake of it (as much as it might be a worthwhile task in-and-of itself when basic historical information has been so severely misreported).

Stoll’s misunderstandings, elisions and guesswork serve to direct the reader towards a particular interpretation of the significance of the TES expedition and Etzler generally to the present day, namely that “[i]n his myopic calculations and outrageous conceits, Etzler predicted the capitalists who followed him”.<sup>984</sup> Modern capitalism is a moving target though, so rather than attacking it directly,

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<sup>979</sup> E.g., *National Reformer*, and *Manx Weekly Review of Home and Foreign Affairs*, no. 102 (10 April 1847): 5; *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser*, no. 104 (17 April 1847): 5; *National Reformer*, and *Manx Weekly Review of Home and Foreign Affairs*, no. 109 (22 May 1847): 5.

<sup>980</sup> *National Reformer*, and *Manx Weekly Review of Home and Foreign Affairs*, no. 109 (22 May 1847): 4–5.

<sup>981</sup> During my own exhaustive research into the TES for the preparation of this thesis, I came across Cadman’s plea for information about Enoch Payne Sr. on an ancestry-tracing website (the public discussion can be viewed at <https://www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=98914.9>) and entered into a fruitful private correspondence with him through which the biographical details of his two extraordinary ancestors, Enoch Payne Sr. and Jr., were established and consolidated.

<sup>982</sup> *National Reformer*, and *Manx Weekly Review of Home and Foreign Affairs*, no. 107 (8 May 1847): 5.

<sup>983</sup> Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 2007), 92–94.

<sup>984</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 115.

Stoll's strategy is to convince the reader that Etzler was similar enough to a capitalist that his assassination of Etzler's personality and ideas is transitively applicable to present-day proponents of "economic growth as a social program [...] [and] the constant creation of wealth"<sup>985</sup> such as Alan Greenspan<sup>986</sup> and the neoconservative US Republican congressman Jack Kemp,<sup>987</sup> both of whom Stoll compares to Etzler. Etzler's obscurity and the inaccessibility of the primary sources guarantee that he will have few defenders, and secondary sources such as Brostowin can already be plied for hostile interpretations of Etzler, so this is an astute move. Like Thoreau, Stoll is from the outset "more interested in establishing a thesis of his own"<sup>988</sup> than in a faithful interpretation of the political theories and historical reality of Etzlerism. In Stoll's case, the thesis is an explicitly anti-utopian variant of the Horseshoe Theory:<sup>989</sup> "Kemp the conservative and Etzler the Hegelian [sic] socialist" are critiqued on the basis of a shared 'utopianism' imputed to both disparate figures. 'Utopianism', when it is used by Stoll, is a purestrain pejorative; it means just that one is reckless of technical and environmental limits to growth and consumption.

Unfortunately for Stoll, the subtitled "Utopian Origins of Economic Growth" which the *Great Delusion* supposedly imparts (i.e., Etzler's utopian ideas) cannot be pretended as a literal relationship of ideological influence—as my literature review has shown, Etzler is barely cited by later socialists, much less by free-market ideologists—so instead the *Great Delusion* must vehemently insist, against any and all contrary evidence, that Etzler's viewpoint is actually an epitome of mainstream nineteenth-century political and economic thought: "Etzler was no different from other believers in material progress from his time to our own".<sup>990</sup>

Stoll put himself in a difficult position by making this claim axiomatic to his book, because it now meant the evidence of Etzler's works and of the *Morning Star* corpus had to be very selectively cited to avoid self-contradiction. Etzler's ideas were entirely at odds with many of the fundamental assumptions of Victorian capitalism.

For example, to contradict Stoll's imputation to Etzler of a naïve sanguinity about the inevitable march of material progress and the idea that European societies were a civilizing force, we need look no further than this passage, from the *second page* of Etzler's most famous monograph:

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<sup>985</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 71.

<sup>986</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>987</sup> Ibid., 7–8.

<sup>988</sup> Glick, 'Thoreau's Use of His Sources', 104.

<sup>989</sup> This theory of political ideologies, epitomised by Jean Pierre Faye's *Le Siècle des Idéologies* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1996), regards the seemingly opposed radicalisms of the left and the right as in fact ideologically convergent, and proposes a typology which organises political thought along a 'moderate'–'extreme' axis instead of a left–right one, emphasising the similarity of radical left and right and their shared dissimilarity to liberal centrism. A paradigmatic example of Faye's framework in its subsequent historical operationalisation is Bullock's *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (London: Fontana, 1998). Stoll does not cite Faye, so perhaps the inheritance of a modified version of Faye's framework is unconscious.

<sup>990</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 123.

[Earlier societies] passed thousands of years in ignorance and errors, thinking always themselves to have reached the summit of human perfection. History teaches but too plainly, that the progress of human knowledges and intelligence was every where [sic] most tediously slow [...] Our present age is yet liable to the same great evil<sup>991</sup>

Etzler's understanding of historical 'progress' was girded all the way through by improvements in the human condition are sporadic, non-linear, precarious, and reversible, e.g.:

Ancient nations, several thousand years ago, in Asia and Africa, were further advanced in many knowledges than we are now; their ruins and monuments, left to us, show this.<sup>992</sup>

To further attach Etzler to the excesses of capitalism and infinite growth, Stoll claims that his plans were "strikingly similar"<sup>993</sup> to the actual development of American consumer culture in the twentieth century.

But Etzler proposed an entirely new material culture for consumer goods produced by his utopian machinery, one which, though superior in function to the artefacts produced and marketed by consumer capitalism, was fundamentally unlike them, since it was contrived to efficiently and directly meet needs and desires rather than merely to generate profit, a fact he abhorred:

[manufacturers] little care about the real benefit the produces of [their] industry may afford to the buyer, provided [they] get pay for them, and make money by their sale. There is an endless variety of artificial productions of every kind, resulting from competition of the producers [...] To imitate minutely all the infinite variety [...] would be an endless, ungrateful, and foolish undertaking [...]<sup>994</sup>

Stoll would not be able to discuss passages such as this without contradicting his book's central claims, so he ignores them. He also entirely overlooks the primary purpose of Etzler's systems: the abolition of work, money, and the individual experience of scarcity. It is difficult to understand how he can have reflected on Etzler's plans and been reminded of an economic system in which work, money, and the individual experience of scarcity are the central organising principles of human life.

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<sup>991</sup> PWR2, 2.

<sup>992</sup> PWR2, 57.

<sup>993</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 139.

<sup>994</sup> PWR2, 60.



Many significant details are steamrolled by Stoll in his attempt to condemn Etzler to his readers. Supporters of Etzler like Luke James Hansard<sup>995</sup> and Andreas Bernardus Smolnikar<sup>996</sup> are transformed into his critics by Stoll's selective misreading of evidence. His unsupportable allegations range from petty insults—e.g., Etzler “[didn’t] have friends since everyone serv[ed] the instrumental purpose of advancing [his] views”<sup>997</sup>—to completely toxic slanders that seek to put Etzler beyond the pail—e.g., “Etzler’s call for the annihilation of Indians”.<sup>998</sup> Stoll extraordinary claim that “Etzler could not be bothered with the details”<sup>999</sup> is undermined by the fact that large sections of his major works are almost tediously replete with details—with figures and illustrations of the working-out he has done with respect to the minute details of his mechanical plans.

Stoll’s *a priori* commitment to maximally damaging Etzler’s reputation additionally requires that other members of the TES (with perhaps the sole exception of Stollmeyer)<sup>1000</sup> are bereft of all agency and independence of thought and action, impoverishing his understanding of the struggles between different factions of the organisation with opposing views. The colonists are patronizingly regarded as bewitched victims of Etzler’s charisma, which prevents Stoll from understanding (or wanting to understand) the power struggle between Powell and Etzler, which was in fact, as my more careful history of the events has demonstrated, decisive in the outcome of the entire expedition.

Etzler necessarily becomes the sole author of every decision taken by the TES—“*he held a congress to settle the constitution and arranged for his journey to Venezuela [...] He revealed then that he planned to find a location in cooperation with the Venezuelan government*”<sup>1001</sup>—and this convention is even applied to decisions which the historical Etzler vehemently opposed and was powerless to countermand. This is how Stoll, incredibly, lays the Guinimita deaths at Etzler’s own feet instead of Powell’s, even though there is every evidence that he not only implored against the colonisation of Guinimita as soon as he found out about it, but thereafter even made a determined attempt to rescue the colonists and arrange a proper tract, first at Guataparo and then in Demerara, all the while urging them to remove themselves from Powell and quit the Guinimita site. In Stoll’s imagination “Etzler skipped out because staying to manage the crisis would have forced him into practicality”,<sup>1002</sup> while “Powell kept discipline through the summer of 1846 to make the settlement in Trinidad [...] stable”.<sup>1003</sup>

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<sup>995</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 103.

<sup>996</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>997</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>998</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>999</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>1000</sup> E.g., *ibid.*, 96–97.

<sup>1001</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>1002</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>1003</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

The real lesson of the TES expedition might be that individuals such as Powell, who regard utopian technicians purely instrumentally, as third party providers of a service rather than as equal collaborators, can very easily ruin attempts to construct technologically-aided post-work utopias. Powell's attitude to the development and testing of the satellite by the TES Scientific Committee was one of total disinterest except insofar as he might be able to become its beneficiary. He took no meaningful role in satellite testing except to complain "that Mr. Atkins [of the Scientific Committee] should have so often disappointed us as to the time of its completion"<sup>1004</sup> and to order "several letters to be written to inquire why Mr. Atkins does not fulfil his promise".<sup>1005</sup>

Compare this reductive, impertinent customer-service mindset with that of James Hadden Young, who tirelessly urged<sup>1006</sup> ordinary members of the TES, even those without prior training in engineering or other technical pursuits to join practical committees and actively participate in the research and development of the many technological prerequisites to the socialist utopia described in Etzler's *Paradise*. If Powell had possessed a little more curiosity about the technologies themselves, he might have better understood what types of land parcel would be suitable to their requirements, rather than acquiring three different estates on which a total of 23 people would lose their lives in the space of a little over a year.

The letter of Newcastle Branch which calls for his resignation reflects this view of Powell's disinterest in the machines when it suggests the reconstituted society amend its laws such that

no member of it shall be eligible for any office in the said body excepting he has examined, or at least be a believer in the practicability of Mr. Etzler's plans, so far as they refer to the independence of man by the means he has pointed out [i.e., full mechanisation of human work]. Because [...] [nobody is] likely to aid in carrying out what he believes (much more wishes) to be impracticable [...] a belief in and an ardent but judicious zeal to forward the views of Mr. Etzler seem to be essential qualifications for those who hold office.<sup>1007</sup>

Young tendered his resignation from the TES and returned to France in November 1845, after Powell (who had badgered and pestered the Scientific Committee about the timeframe for the satellite's completion without actually helping to bring it about) had shipped the first 57 colonists and taken over the sole editorship of the *Star*. Perhaps Young saw that under the influence of such a person, the scheme was mutating into a form very dissimilar from the exciting DIY-technology movement he had become involved with 4 years previously (with Doherty and Stollmeyer).

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<sup>1004</sup> 'Report of the Directors', *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 2 (17 January 1846): 10.

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>1006</sup> E.g., *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 1, no. 44 (8 November 1845): 350.

<sup>1007</sup> *Morning Star, and People's Economist* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 228.

This latter aspect of Etzlerism as a form of participatory utopian mechanical experimentation is written out of the story by Stoll—Powell’s grasping, mercenary approach to the inventions of the Etzlerist technicians is studiously ignored so that responsibility for the deaths that occur under his command can be transposed onto Etzler.

# **Chapter Eight**

## **Etzler's Post-Venezuelan Career**

**(1848-1853)**

## 8.1 “I am Going to the United States”: Etzler Returns to the United States

Stoll reasons that “Etzler did not return to the United States. If he had, he would have surfaced somewhere, published something, and pursued some other project”.<sup>1008</sup> Stoll’s confidence is misplaced.

After writing to the *Condor* arrivees in advance to explain his attempt to obtain suitable land on the Essequibo, urging them therefore to immediately “come over to some port in Demerara, to find there a ready home”<sup>1009</sup> and receiving only Powell’s insulting rebukes as a response, Etzler determined there was little he could do to bend the Secretary’s will and rescue the remaining colonists. He would be unable to subsist much longer without funds in Georgetown, so on 30 May 1846 he wrote to the British members, “I am going to the United States in the meantime, that you may reconstitute the Society [i.e., outside of Powell’s control], and recover from the shock as well as you can”.<sup>1010</sup>

This he did, arriving from Georgetown in New York, per Brig *Judson*, on 18 June 1846,<sup>1011</sup> then proceeded to Philadelphia to liaise with Samuel S. Rex, his longstanding agent there. From Philadelphia, he likely submitted the petition—not responded to by Congress until 9 February 1847—“of John Adolphus Etzler, of Philadelphia, seeking the appointment of a committee to examine certain valuable inventions which propose an immense saving of power, money, time, &c.”.<sup>1012</sup>

Etzler’s return to the USA coincides very closely with the Second Tropical Emigration Society’s sudden decision to favour US emigration instead of Venezuelan emigration,<sup>1013</sup> upon which Edward Evans, its secretary, convoked an emergency meeting in the first week of August 1846 in order to “strike out the words Venezeula out [sic] of the Laws, and to reorganise the Laws relating thereto”.<sup>1014</sup>

I suspect these are related—it seems likely to me that Etzler corresponded with Evans once the former reached Philadelphia, to propose that the Second TES immediately orient itself towards US emigration in order to further separate itself from Powell and to reconstitute in a way that would prevent similar abuses of authority from taking place in the future. This would also explain Powell’s statement in August that “[t]he rumour here [Trinidad] is that [Etzler] has written to England explaining his reason for such extraordinary proceedings [i.e., ‘running away’ to America]”.<sup>1015</sup>

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<sup>1008</sup> Stoll, *Great Delusion*, 137.

<sup>1009</sup> FTSAG, 229.

<sup>1010</sup> DL2, 221.

<sup>1011</sup> ‘Passengers Arrived’, *New-York Herald* 12, no. 168 (18 June 1846): 5.

<sup>1012</sup> U.S. *House Journal*. 1847. 29<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2nd session, 9 February.

<sup>1013</sup> ‘Report of the Directors of the Second Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 30 (1 August 1846): 238.

<sup>1014</sup> ‘Second Tropical Emigration Society’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 30 (1 August 1846): 240.

<sup>1015</sup> *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 35 (12 September 1846): 278.

## 8.2 Fighting for Control: Adelphos is Born

The offices of the Tropical Emigration Society in London were originally leased in 1844 the name of “J. A. Etzler & Co., merchants”, and would remain so even after Etzler’s departure for Trinidad, though the TES London Directorate would continue to operate from there for much of its existence.

However, the Directorate announced on 25 July 1846 that it was unaccountably forced to move offices for reasons it did not care to explain.<sup>1016</sup>

It then almost immediately countermanded the order on 15 August 1846, “arrangements having been entered into, to continue the office at 266, Strand, as heretofore”.<sup>1017</sup> This itself is countermanded again the following week, and the *Star* editors state that “arrangements were made affecting the meeting of the committee in the old office, which we could not foresee, and over which we have no controul [sic]”.<sup>1018</sup>

From then on, 266 Strand ceased to be occupied by the London Directorate of the TES. Here is what I propose as an explanation, for which further evidence for or against might yet be forthcoming.

I propose that Etzler, on returning to Philadelphia, wrote to Evans and the Second TES urging them to aim at relocating—in the words he used in DL2—“to the United States [...] that you may reconstitute the Society, and recover from the shock as well as you can”.<sup>1019</sup> They supported him, agreeing that Powell’s mismanagement of the Society at Guinimita and Erthig was dreadful. To assist them, he petitioned Congress again, then sought by legal means to assert the tenancy of the 266 Strand Office (still in his name) so that the pro-Powell faction would no longer have access to it. This would explain the bizarre flip-flop of July and August 1846, in which contradictory memos about being forced out of the office (or not) are repeatedly published in the *Star*. The eventual removal of the London directorate from the office suggests that this attempt was successful. He then came back from Philadelphia to London and began using the office himself (possibly in combination with his loyalists in the TES).

The reason for my confidence in this interpretation is something missed by Stoll, Brostowin and others. During 1847, the following advertisement appeared in the *Athenaeum*:

SUB-EDITOR.—The Advertiser offers his services in this capacity. He possesses a thorough practical knowledge of Printing, and has had extensive experience in preparing MMS. For the press, in correcting the press, and in the general management of periodicals.—Address, Adelphos, 266, Strand.<sup>1020</sup>

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<sup>1016</sup> ‘To the Members of the First and Second Tropical Emigration Societies and the Venezeulian [sic] Transit Company’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 228.

<sup>1017</sup> ‘To the Members of the First and Second Tropical Emigration Societies and the Venezeulian [sic] Transit Company’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 32 (15 August 1846): 256.

<sup>1018</sup> ‘To the Members of the First and Second Tropical Emigration Societies and the Venezeulian [sic] Transit Company’, *Morning Star, and People’s Economist* 2, no. 33 (22 August 1846): 264.

<sup>1019</sup> DL2, 221.

<sup>1020</sup> ‘Adelphos’ [pseud. John Adolphus Etzler], ‘Sub-Editor’, *Athenaeum*, no. 1039 (25 September 1847): 993.

Another advertisement, published on 30 October 1847 and addressed to “Gentlemen Wanting Profitable Occupation”, read:

ADELPHOS would undertake thoroughly to teach a gentleman, and to superintend for him as long as desirable, a most respectable and profitable business,—which would yield remuneration from the first, and might, by an educated man, be made subservient to the attainment both of wealth and of an eminent literary and social position.—Address (free), Adelphos, 266 Strand.<sup>1021</sup>

I think there can be little doubt that the pseudonymous *Adelphos*, writing from the office registered to Etzler’s name almost immediately after the London Directorate has been evicted from it, is none other than John *Adolphus* Etzler. Both advertisements moreover fit closely with what we know of Etzler: the first advertises his editing work as a source of income, something we know he resorted to at several points in his earlier career, and the second sounds like a covert attempt to obtain a financial backer either for the US emigration scheme of the Second TES, or for some other attempt to create the satellites and emigrate.

Under his new pseudonym, Etzler wrote to ‘Shepherd’ Smith’s *Family Herald* in March 1848, perhaps hoping it would publish a new statement of his doctrines, but Smith, who had known Etzlerists such as Stollmeyer, Doherty and Young since the early 1840s, likely discerned the true identity of the author, and published only the following reply:

Adelphos is actuated by very honourable motives, but we think his scruples, speaking in general terms, are unnecessary. We do not know what is likely to be best either for ourselves or others. Providence has means of providing for us all, which we cannot foresee. It is good for many even to be compelled to exert themselves for their own support. Necessity makes fortunes for some, and comfortable homes for many.<sup>1022</sup>

It appears that Etzler then contemplated taking a project to Australia—perhaps after making contact with his dedicated admirer William Ellis, the transported chartist<sup>1023</sup>—but must have reconsidered after learning that his overall public reception there would be tepid: in December 1848 (as ‘Adelphos’) he submitted an address to the *Maitland Mercury*, but they declined to publish it on the

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<sup>1021</sup> ‘Adelphos’ [pseud. John Adolphus Etzler], ‘To Gentlemen Wanting Profitable Occupation’, *Athenaeum*, no. 1044 (30 October 1847): 1113.

<sup>1022</sup> ‘To Correspondents’, *Family Herald* 7 (18 March 1848): 721.

<sup>1023</sup> Thomas Cooper, ‘To the Editor of the Evening [sic] Star’, *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* 6, no. 263 (26 November 1842): 7.

grounds that it was “[n]ot suitable to [their] columns”.<sup>1024</sup> Whether the editors figured out Etzler’s identity or merely disapproved of the text’s contents regardless of authorship remains to be discovered.

Etzler relinquished his tenancy of 266 Strand to the tailor Thomas Bartle in early 1850,<sup>1025</sup> however he may have remained in Britain a little longer. Having come to the realisation that *Adelphos* would not serve as a particularly strong cover for his identity to those who knew him well, Etzler wrote again to the *Family Herald* in August 1850 enquiring about the legality of changing his name by more formal processes, to which the following reply was printed:

Adelphos may change his name, and arms too; but if he do it not by authority, it may do him more harm than good, by confounding the evidence of his identity. The Queen's sign-manual [i.e., signature] is necessary for the one; the Heralds' College will settle the other. He may use his maternal crest at pleasure: but all legitimate arms are registered at Herald's College. To the other question—optional.<sup>1026</sup>

The infamy of the Tropical Emigration Society evidently concerned him as something that might tar his name by association. Since he intended to carry on promoting the supersession of all human labour, he wished not to jeopardize the attempt with bad press.

A visitor to the Great Exhibition in London observed, in one corner of the agricultural gallery, a scale model of a machine bearing very striking resemblance to the satellite, designed for the automatic circular cultivation of land:

A quantity of would-be demonstrative writing is attached to this [exhibit], but without a name, the modesty of the author having hidden his candle under a bushel; but we think we recognise the scheme of the philanthropic Mr. Etzler, for the regeneration of humanity—a scheme, which we thought, had been exported to Venezuela, where the Tropical Emigration Society went to settle on a terrestrial paradise of waste lands said to exist there without owners, and which this, or some similar machine was to cultivate without the necessity for human labour.<sup>1027</sup>

The display of a satellite at the Great Exhibition in 1851 shows that Etzler did not give up his mechanical experimentation after the Venezuela expedition of the TES. For a long time I was hopeful this was Etzler; my discovery of the *Adelphos* materials increased my confidence in this hypothesis (after all, his “hiding his name under a bushel” concords well with his enquiries to the *Family Herald*

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<sup>1024</sup> ‘To Correspondents’, *Maitland Mercury* 6, no. 461 (2 December 1848): 2.

<sup>1025</sup> ‘To Tailors. The Art of Cutting Coats Taught in a Few Lessons’, *Family Herald* 7, no. 353 (9 February 1850): 650.

<sup>1026</sup> ‘To Correspondents’, *Family Herald* 8, no. 380 (17 August 1850): 250.

<sup>1027</sup> ‘Helix’, ‘Official Catalogues of the Industrial Exhibition, Spicer & Co.’, *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* 55, no. 109 (July 1851): 178–204.



about a legal name change). However, it was not until I made a final set of discoveries that I became quite certain it was he who was responsible for this exhibit.

The entry of a satellite at the Great Exhibition was not the work of an imitator; in fact, Etzler was in the midst of another attempt to launch a programme of revised tropical utopian experimentation using labour-saving machines, my new knowledge of which I will now relate.

### 8.3 Juan Adolfo

The Republic of New Granada (with borders corresponding approximately to those of modern-day Colombia) emerged as an independent state as a result of the dissolution of Gran Colombia in 1830. Slave labour persisted in New Granada for somewhat longer than in other Latin American Republics, but in 1849, the radical liberal José Hilario López ascended to the Presidency.

His determination to abolish slavery in New Granada resulted in a period of tremendous political, social and economic change. Like Haiti in the 1830s, New Granada in the 1850s became a focal point of abolitionist politics. Russell Lohse captures the spirit of the time when he illustratively notes that

[i]n October 1850, readers opened the government newspaper *Gaceta Oficial* to read an article [...] [which] celebrated Toussaint L'Ouverture as the “savior and regenerator” of his country and applauded Plácido, the Cuban mulatto poet executed in 1844 for his involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow slavery.<sup>1028</sup>

To any longstanding admirer of Haiti,<sup>1029</sup> or to any despiser of slavery and toil generally, 1850s Bogotá must have been the place to be, as Neogranadian slaves were at last on the cusp of attaining the liberty their Haytian brethren had seized from the jaws of European colonialism 60 years before.

In October 1853, readers opened the *Gaceta Oficial* to something a little different. A bulletin from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs led with some unusual material—an American inventor, resident in Bogotá, had applied to the President of the Republic for patents on two labour-saving devices: an adding machine and a sawing machine—and provided brief descriptions of each.

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<sup>1028</sup> Russell Lohse, ‘Reconciling Freedom with the Rights of Property: Slave Emancipation in Colombia, 1821–1852, with Special Reference to La Plata’, *The Journal of Negro History* 86, no. 3 (2001): 203–27.

<sup>1029</sup> For my assessment of the likely influence of Haitian emancipatory politics on Etzler’s political development, see subsection 5.3.

### *Maquina para sumar*

El objeto de la invención es ahorrar tiempo i fatigas en sumar largas i muchas columnas de libros i cuentas considerables, i asegurarse con prontitud de los errores, repitiendo dos veces cada operación mecánica que debe dar la misma suma; evitándose así cargarse la memoria de números cuyo trabajo es penoso cuando es largo i continuo, i el pensar en lo que se suma, como, por ejemplo 3 i 4 hacen 7, i 8 suman 15 & \*, ocupando muchas horas. Por medio de la maquina un jovencito que pueda leer números sencillos, da vuelta a un manguillo, i entretanto que otro, si se quiere, lee los números de un guarismo, se presentan las sumas inmediatamente que se leen.

### *Maquina Para Aserrar*

Hacer jirar por medio de animales un carruaje, pararlo, i fijarlo prontamente haciendo vibrar una sierra, sin nada mas, es la invención. Creo no existe tal invento, pues si existiera no emplearía el hombre sus brazos, ni ejecutaría un trabajo costoso para cortar árboles, pudiendo verificarlo por medio de animales, con mas facilidad i con menores fastos.

### *Adding Machine*

The purpose of this invention is to save time and energy in adding very long and numerous columns of numbers in large accounts and books, and to promptly assuage errors by twice repeating a mechanical operation that gives the same sum; thereby alleviating the burden of having to remember a lot of different numbers, which is arduous if it is done continuously for a long time: for example,  $3 + 4 = 7$ ,  $+ 8 = 15 + *$ , occupying many hours. Using this machine, even a child who knows only basic numbers can simply rotate a sleeve, and meanwhile another, as it were, *reads* the numbers of a figure, the answers are presented as quickly as they are read.<sup>1030</sup>

### *Sawing Machine*

This invention is nothing more than making a carriage rotate by means of animals, stopping it and affixing it to a rapidly vibrating saw. I believe this invention must not exist, because if it did, people would not use their arms or undertake costly work cutting down trees, since they would be easily able to do it by means of animals, with verifiably less hassle and greater facility.<sup>1031</sup>

*Juan Adolfo Etzler*

This was not the first time that Juan Adolfo Etzler had written to the *Gaceta Oficial de la Nueva Granada*. In April 1852, he had sent a much longer letter to the Neogranadian Executive.<sup>1032</sup> Writing from Jamaica, he explained his curriculum vitae to the President and proposing a system to establish Neogranadian communities in which

each member is maintained for his entire life, supplied with of all kinds of communal products, without obligation or to work, or to pay anything more than he has paid before his admission to the community.<sup>1033</sup>

Juan was particularly interested to know if he could obtain a Patent of Privilege in accordance with the Law of 15 May 1848, in connection with an invention he had developed: “a kind of chariot, of no

<sup>1030</sup> ‘Maquina Para Sumar’, *Gaceta Oficial* [Bogotá] 22, no. 1609 (12 October 1853): 806 [translation mine].

<sup>1031</sup> ‘Maquina Para Aserrar’, *Gaceta Oficial* [Bogotá] 22, no. 1609 (12 October 1853): 805 [translation mine].

<sup>1032</sup> ‘Reresentacion’, *Gaceta Oficial* [Bogotá] 21, no. 1337 (8 April 1852): 250.

<sup>1033</sup> *Ibid.* [translation mine].

resemblance to anything existing in the world, for transportation, agricultural work of all kinds, to build roads, canals, wooden or stone houses [...]”.<sup>1034</sup> Rather than being powered by fossil fuels or renewable energy, however, he proposed that this iteration of the machine could be powered by hundreds of animals—“tame or not[!]”—through clever adaptations of machinery that would direct all of their energy into single selective applications of force. Precisely how he hoped to direct the exertions of wild animals into the machinery is not especially clear from the description he provides, nor is it clear the extent to which this new device is a modified satellite or an entirely new contraption. The animal-powered sawing machine he advertises in his patents of the following year does not seem to quite match the description of the concept outlined in the 1852 letter, though it evidently uses the same power source.

It is perhaps a little disappointing to see Etzler fall back on animal power for this device, given the technologically and politically radical potential of his earlier renewable energy designs. For one thing, it represents a surprising retreat from the animal rights orientation he demonstrated during the period of his stay at Ham Common. One wonders if he retained his vegetarianism in this New Granada period; it seems unlikely given the trajectory of his research in this period.

To illustrate quite how steep a decadence in Etzler’s thought this animal-powered farming machine is, consider that as late as 1846, he was emphatic in his desire that there should be

much less suffering [...] against animals, which are capable of pains and pleasant sensations, passions and affections, memory and reflection—and are but other species of creatures of the same material as we, and much resembling us. The study of nature will lead us to sane conceptions and feelings, and render us sympathising with all that has life and feelings, and is part of the universe as well as we, whence we derive every moment existence, and whence we were created, to which we give part of our existence every moment, and finally our all.<sup>1035</sup>

The sensations, passions, affections, memory and reflection of wild animals seem a distant dream in 1853 if Etzler seriously proposes to power this machine by forcibly depleting the energies of cleverly ensnared tapirs, bears, jaguars or whatever other hapless creatures he may lay his hands on in the hyperdiverse rainforests of New Granada. Besides its lapse in the moral dimension though, a retreat to animal power also seems to reinvent the wheel a bit: draught animals have been used by humanity for thousands of years, and although as Claeys observes one of the most recommendable features of the Etzlerist design philosophy was its capacity “to look back and suggest the retention of earlier forms of technology [...] while simultaneously inventing others vastly dissimilar from any [...]

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<sup>1034</sup> Ibid. [translation mine].

<sup>1035</sup> MOJAEb, 226.

existing”,<sup>1036</sup> this particular throwback technology definitely seems like rather a dud—to pit Etzler against himself here, it was he who affirmed in the first place that there exist imperishably within nature “[p]owers that are much stronger than all the men and beasts together you are able to muster, and as strong as you wish them”.<sup>1037</sup> Why does he suspect this to be any less true in 1853 than it was in 1833? Whither the solar steam engines of the *Paradise* in this Brave New World of animal-powered satellites?

It is interesting to compare Etzler’s research agenda on power generation at this later historical juncture with those of his former collaborators. In the mid-1850s, while Etzler is brainstorming the mechanisation of Colombian wildlife, Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, still in Trinidad in the aftermath of the TES expedition, is about to extract the first combustible petroleum in human history.<sup>1038</sup> In this period, then, both Etzler and Stollmeyer continued to study the question of mechanical power supply: Stollmeyer’s research trajectory would utterly transform the relationship between energy; Etzler’s, presumably, was a dead end at least in this department. Both, however, moved away from the radical potential of renewable energy after Venezuela—making the TES expedition a point in history representing a profound lost opportunity for the early development of sustainable energy technology. The petroleum economy of the twentieth century may never have developed at all if Stollmeyer had remained on a utopian Etzlerist site with functioning solar, water and wind power.

I take some comfort, however, in having the privilege to recover the *Maquina Para Sumar* (certainly a more wholesome and probably a more mechanically useful offering) to extant knowledge of Etzler’s inventions. We see here Etzler trying to invent the pocket calculator, a design brief that shows he possesses in the 1850s an increasing interest in the automation of cognitive as well as manual labour.

My relatively late discovery of the Neogranadian phase of Etzler’s career, and my lack of facility with the Spanish language, unfortunately conspire to preclude a more detailed investigation of this period for the time being. The discovery adds a full 7 years onto Etzler’s known career, so there will be plenty of work left for future researchers of Etzler to undertake in reconstructing this period further.

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<sup>1036</sup> Claeys, ‘Ecology and Technology’, 221.

<sup>1037</sup> NWOMS, 3.

<sup>1038</sup> See David McDermott Hughes, *Energy without Conscience: Oil, Climate Change, and Complicity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 52.

#### 8.4 “How Much May his Life Still Further be Prolonged?”: Hints for Etzler Hunters

Now that I have demonstrated beyond all possibility of doubt that Stoll’s lurid fantasy of Etzler’s death in 1846 has no basis in historical reality, I hope that other researchers may once again be tempted to take up the trail. To that end, I include some remaining clues that may lead to fruitful recoveries of additional evidence in the future.

One loose end that should be further explored is Regina Etzler’s safe return to Ulm. The 1847 publication of the German-language ANT there closely coincides with her return from Trinidad in August 1846 (don’t let Stoll send you scuba diving for her remains off the coast of Mexico; she almost certainly made it back to Ulm alive). It may have been she who arranged the publication of ANT, or perhaps Etzler travelled to meet her on his way to (or during his stay in) London. It would be interesting to discover if she travelled with him to Jamaica and New Granada as well, but I must leave it to others to decide whether that is indeed the case.

Etzler departed from Georgetown arriving safely in New York in mid-June of 1846,<sup>1039</sup> and from there, he returned to Philadelphia to liaise with his US agent S. S. Rex.<sup>1040</sup> It has recently come to my attention that a large portion of Rex’s papers remain extant, and are retained on microform in the Leon E. Lewis Collection at the Winterthur Library in Wilmington, DE. Again, lateness of discovery and distance from the archive have precluded obtaining access for the purposes of this thesis—and besides, I had more than enough new material already—but anybody else who wishes to share my laurels as an improver of posterity’s knowledge about Etzler will perhaps do well to look there.

After his New Granada expedition in the 1850s, it is possible that Etzler ultimately retired to the United States. An entry in the 1870 US Census record for Upper Mt. Bethel, PA, lists *Etzler, John* as an 80-year old male resident. Strictly speaking, John Adolphus Etzler would have been 79½ at the date of the census, though a rounding error of a mere six months (whether by a harried official or by a geriatric Etzler himself) hardly seems beyond the realms of possibility. Other biographical particulars line up reasonably well, though not conclusively: the subject is German-born (albeit the official has listed Baden, not Thuringia, as region of birth), the official has, unusually based on the rest of the sheet, recorded trade or occupation (“*Batchelor*”/+*all*) in emphatic inverted commas, perhaps to indicate the vehemence and/or excessively complicated reply of the elderly respondent:

21			<i>Philip Rubin</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Mr</i>	<i>Yann Labine</i>													
22	<i>604</i>	<i>609</i>	<i>Etzler John</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>Mr</i>	<i>Batchelor</i>	<i>11</i>												
23	<i>605</i>	<i>610</i>	<i>Adolphus Etzler</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>Mr</i>	<i>Blacksmith</i>	<i>200</i>												

Best of luck to all future Etzler-seekers!

<sup>1039</sup> ‘Passengers Arrived’, *New-York Herald* 12, no. 168 (18 June 1846): 4.

<sup>1040</sup> As was his clearly stated intention in FTSAG.



# Conclusions

# **Chapter Nine**

Future Etzlerism

(2021-?)



## 9.1 Back to the Future: Utopia Cool Again

As I have alluded to above, outside of a handful of texts, the fact of historical Etzlerism's mere existence not only remains a well-kept secret from scholarly audiences in proximate but unrelated fields of research—much more so from members of the general public—but is, I have found, often entirely unheard of even to subject specialists in socialist and labour history, in political sciences and, especially surprisingly, in the incipient contemporary subfield of 'post-work' political and economic theory, within which, given its own heterodox critique of the cruel dominion of work over human life, one might reasonably expect a forbear such as Etzler to assume the comparable subdisciplinary importance of a Marx, a Newton or a Freud to their respective fields of posthumous celebrity.

Once post-work theorists rediscover Etzler, then (and I hope they will), what should be their interpretative lens to the legacy of the Etzlerist movement(s)? Even if they disbelieve—as they surely must—Stoll's very inaccurate account of the historical facts of Etzlerism, might they still accept his dire warnings against utopianism generally, or at least feel a bit sheepish about their own utopian pretensions to seek the liberation of humanity from work by the use of technology?

Perhaps not. A pervasive signature of twenty-first-century post-work politics is a rhetorical posture that takes the pejorative sense of *utopia* and flips it to a positive cadence, so that the post-work advocate provocatively accepts the supposedly derogatory charge of utopianism, implicitly transforming the attacks of critics into an act of defiant self-identification.

In *The Problem with Work* (2011),<sup>1041</sup> Kathi Weeks introduces this positive affirmation of utopia against the reflexive association of utopianism with naïvety or unpracticality, especially for work-alleviating proposals like radically reduced hours and unconditional basic income. She asks:

What if the utopianism of these demands is not a liability but an asset? What if we were to respond to the charge of utopianism not with embarrassment or defensive denial but with recognition and affirmation? And what might such a utopianism without apology look like?<sup>1042</sup>

In *Inventing the Future* (2015),<sup>1043</sup> Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams accept Weeks' invitation to affirm utopia in their own four programmatic 'demands'—full automation, slashed hours with no loss of pay, universal basic income and the cultural diminishment of the work ethic—which bear, they

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<sup>1041</sup> Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics & Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>1042</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>1043</sup> Nick Srnicek & Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism & a World Without Work* (London: Verso, 2016 [2015]).

argue, “a utopian edge that strains at the limits of what capitalism can concede”.<sup>1044</sup> Recognising that their proposals, though bold, still operate at the level of conventional policy instrument—as reforms to the society of the present rather than a blueprint for its *de novo* reconstruction—they call these *non-reformist reforms*, part of a hybrid agenda that aims to “combine the futural orientation of utopias with the immediate intervention of the demand”.<sup>1045</sup> These are prime examples of what Weeks calls *utopian demands*, a special category of political demand that uses the paradoxical juxtaposition of realisability and utopianism to point to “a world in which the program or policy that the demand promotes would be considered as a matter of course both practical and reasonable”.<sup>1046</sup> Although he does not cite Weeks, Rutger Bregman prominently foregrounds the utopian inflection of similar demands, including staples like the 15-hour week and UBI, in his *Utopia for Realists* (2017).<sup>1047</sup> Bregman's English-language title exploits the same paradox identified by Weeks, and taken forward by Srnicek and Williams, between the rhetorical provocation of utopian self-identification on one hand, and the promotion of a set of policies that are nonetheless presented as eminently pragmatic and realisable (yet wrongfully dismissed as utopian) on the other.

In *The Refusal of Work* (2015),<sup>1048</sup> David Frayne likewise explores what utopian self-identification might mean in a postwork context. Noting that “it is in the derogative sense that the word *utopian* is usually heard”,<sup>1049</sup> he contrasts default anti-utopian prejudice with his desire to “defend the value of a more utopian mode of thinking and talking”.<sup>1050</sup>

Like Srnicek and Williams he also cites Weeks, particularly her sentiment that the value of utopian thinking lies in “neutralizing or negating the hold of the present”<sup>1051</sup>—a significant point of commonality with Etzler’s own orientation towards futurity and posterity. For his part, Frayne hopes this type of utopian disposition towards work in the twenty-first century will enable us “to assemble something new out of a crisis instead of seeking ever more absurd ways of accommodating social problems within the present system”.<sup>1052</sup> This is because, he says, “no matter how broken the work-centered society becomes [...] a positive social change cannot occur unless we begin actively to entertain and explore the possibility of alternatives”.<sup>1053</sup>

Srnicek and Williams expand on what these alternatives might be, calling for a *left modernity* that operates “with a universal horizon, mobilise[s] a substantial concept of freedom, and make[s] use of

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<sup>1044</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>1045</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1046</sup> Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, 176.

<sup>1047</sup> Rutger Bregman, *Utopia for Realists: And How we can Get There*, trans. Elizabeth Manton (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

<sup>1048</sup> David Frayne, *The Refusal of Work: The Theory & Practice of Resistance to Work* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

<sup>1049</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>1050</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1051</sup> Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, 205.

<sup>1052</sup> Frayne, *The Refusal of Work*, 235.

<sup>1053</sup> Ibid., 235–236.

the most advanced technologies in order to achieve its emancipatory goals”<sup>1054</sup>—an Etzlerist sentiment if ever there was one. Weeks even calls for “postwork utopianism to replace socialism as the horizon of revolutionary possibility”.<sup>1055</sup>

*Utopia* is clearly back on the table as far as these thinkers are concerned. It is being recovered not only as a rhetorical device—this ubiquitous *utopian pejorative flip*, which absorbs the criticism that an idea is utopian by enthusiastically agreeing that it is—but also as a distinctive methodological framework that seeks a political direction-of-travel by widening the conceptual horizon of political possibility, and then working backwards from optimal future imaginaries that are found there—such as the abolition of work—rather than trying to work forwards from the moribund, horizontally-throttled politics of the present day. I regard Etzler as a prime example, *avant la lettre* of this Levitasian utopian method: he imagines a workless utopian futurity and works backwards.

## 9.2 Can’t Somebody Else Build the Robot? Mediated and Unmediated Post-Work Utopianism

The importance of utopian self-identification and the concept of expanding the ‘horizon of possibility’ is not merely a rhetorical device for contemporary post-work theorists. It is supposed to culminate in the formulation of *utopian demands*: real political goals whose juxtapositional form nonetheless also further interrogates assumptions about the proper bounds of the ‘practical’ and ‘realistic’. Post-work advocates are therefore not being flippant when they call themselves utopians; they may also be earnestly disclosing a key component of their political methodology. Kathi Weeks gives a definitive summary of what it means to formulate a utopian demand when she describes “reformist projects with revolutionary aspirations [...] [which] can point in the direction of broader horizons of change”.<sup>1056</sup>

I believe that Etzler would, with some conditions, have applauded the contemporary post-work theorisation of *utopian demands*. We could even read his petitions to the US President and the British Houses of Parliament as instances of *utopian demand* in practice—even though they went unmet, they pointed his readers towards a world very different to our own, in which the magnificent post-work cities he hoped to build using the land and resources granted by these state actors would be regarded as normal and practical.

Whilst Etzlerism (or neo-Etzlerism, if such a thing should ever come to exist) does seem compatible with, and perhaps even recommends the logic of *utopian demand* in this restricted sense, I also believe that the (properly and faithfully recounted) history of Etzlerism can invite post-work thinkers to explore further the types of organisational activity that might be carried on if (or when) utopian

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<sup>1054</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>1055</sup> Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, 30.

<sup>1056</sup> Ibid., 229.

demands go unmet.

One notable feature of contemporary post-work strategy (in contrast to Etzlerist strategy) is what I would characterise as an overdependence on the delivery of post-work demands by third parties—unlike Etzler, who simply demanded accessions of land, money and resources with which the independent pro-post-work organisations he helped create could build their communities and the attendant labour-relieving mechanical automata themselves, through an organisational culture heavily directed towards the upskilling of members into utopian technicians and experimentalists, most of the major post-work theorists of the present day by contrast appear to conceive of the utopian demands as primarily demands *for government policy*—to ‘demand full automation’ from the government is to demand a series of mediating steps between the beneficiaries of the technology and the (hopefully) utopian technicians who develop and produce the technology. We, a public who desire a post-work society, are to submit utopian demands to the government (or a government-in-waiting), which is then itself to register further demands against people or organisations with the presumed competence or capacity to *create post-work technologies for us*, whether tech companies, university departments or some other party. If the logic of *utopian demand* is conceived as the primary tool of post-work advocacy, then it seems to lend itself to relying on this type of mediated delivery. It seems to axiomatize the assumption that there is a small subset of organisations and/or people with the competence to design and manufacture work-eliminating machinery.

That may very well be true in the here-and-now—and so the most obvious line of strategy for latter-day post-work advocates to pursue is to *leverage* these presumed-competent organisations and actors to design and produce suites of post-work technology, most probably at the orders of a national government, which has itself been leveraged by a sufficiently post-work-desiring subsection of the population. When the mechanism of leveraging fails (for example, if a party that has been importuned to meet utopian demands loses an election, or if tech companies frustrate efforts by a future post-work-supporting national government to bend their will), there is not an especially obvious course of action to be taken by a post-work delivery strategy that was mostly predicated on utopian demands to begin with. We formulated utopian demands; the demands were heard and went unmet. Now what?

Srnicek and Williams think that the pursuit of post-work agendas will be most effectively accomplished through the united effort of “an ecology of organisations with a diversity of interests”.<sup>1057</sup> Quite so—that is an eminently reasonable assumption. The transition to a post-work human society is an ambitious and complicated prospect, likely requiring many different types of intervention in many different spheres of public and private life. In sketching what such an organisational ecology might look like in practice, Srnicek and Williams identify the following types

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<sup>1057</sup> Srnicek and Williams, *Inventing the Future*, 67.

of organisation: protest movements, media organisations, intellectual organisations (such as think tanks), trade unions, and political parties.<sup>1058</sup> Doubtless the united collaboration of these organisational types would be very helpful to the realisation of outcomes such as statutory worktime reduction, universal basic provisioning of various types, and erosion of the culture of work.

Absent the list is any organisational type that in its current form is systematically capable of designing, developing and manufacturing the suites of utopian machinery which are the absolute the *sine qua non* of the full automation of human work. Srnicek and Williams say the following about full automation:

Our first demand is for a fully automated economy. Using the latest technological developments, such an economy would aim to liberate humanity from the drudgery of work while *simultaneously* producing increasing amounts of wealth.

They are absolutely right to make this their first demand; it is the *one thing needful* in the straightforwardly physical, material abolition of human work. Yet none of the organisational actors given as exemplary members of a post-work organisational ecology is ordinarily concerned with, nor innately possesses or actively develops the capacity for, the manufacture and delivery of the artefacts that form the material precondition of the full automation of human work. To whom then is the demand addressed? To Google and Amazon? To Elon Musk? The currently-existing organisational and individual actors most likely to possess the requisite capacities to accomplish technological full automation seem unlikely bedfellows for the socialist emancipatory projects to which the majority of post-work literature are committed. Implicitly, the best a pro-post-work political party, think tank, trade union, etc., might expectably do to produce full automation (once demanded to do so by its sufficiently pro-post-work participants, constituents or allies) is to leverage a further second-order demand against *another* set of organisational actors with the presumed requisite capabilities (and willingness) to actually manufacture utopian machinery.

It is at precisely this location within broader contemporary post-work discourse that I think the most significant ramification of the historical recovery and rehabilitation of Etzlerism (which has been the principal task of this thesis) for contemporary post-work operates. In the organisational culture and utopian mechanical capacity-building ethic of movement figures such as James Hadden Young, Thomas Atkins, Hugh Doherty and other Etzlerist activist-inventors, and in the hybrid organisational form of Etzlerist groups, contrived so as to combine the extensive research and development activities required to deliver post-work technology with the political activities required to campaign for its

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<sup>1058</sup> Ibid., 162–169.

acceptance and support, lies an embryonic answer to the conceptual gap I have suggested above.

There are many features of historical Etzlerism it would in fact be sensible for contemporary post-work advocates to leave in the past. It would likely not be useful to literally imitate their mechanical designs, which were conceived at the absolute dawn of industrial modernity. It would be foolhardy to embrace their obsessions with emigration and tropical colonisation as a panacea allowing them to better take advantage of their labour-saving creations. An attempt to resurrect some portion of Etzlerism in the present movement would benefit greatly from serious consideration of how figures such as Thomas Powell—contributing nothing useful to the organisation except presumptuous and ill-informed commands to others—can be prevented from the sort of organisational takeover and sabotage that I have recounted in my history of the movement Etzlerism of the 1840s.

In spite of all this, I am firmly of the opinion that it is in the hybrid character of the Etzlerist organisational concept—in which a programme of sophisticated mechanical and technological experimentation is *integrated* with the promotion of post-work politics; a shape that is as much utopian mechanical association as it is think tank—that the post-work utopians of our age are most likely to obtain meaningful capacity to design, develop and deliver their own “contrivances for superseding *all* human labour”.<sup>1059</sup>

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<sup>1059</sup> PWR2, 60.

### 9.3 Suggested Directions for Future Historical Research

My discovery of the Neogranadian phase of Etzler's career, beginning in around 1850 and lasting at least until 1853—which involved both the promotion of a new emigration scheme and the ongoing research and development of new agricultural machinery—opens an entirely new avenue of research into 'Late' Etzlerism. It is the most significant extension of Etzler's known career (i.e., 7 additional years of activity, including both an entirely new scheme and a new phase of mechanical experimentation) since the rediscovery of the *Morning Star* corpus in the 1960s.

For the first time, using this discovery, it will be possible for scholars of labour history, history of technology, the history of the Caribbean and Latin America, etc., to undertake comparative studies of the two Tropical Etzlerist emigration schemes in order to draw more sophisticated conclusions about the development of Tropical Etzlerism in different national contexts.

Together with my rediscovery of the *Mammuth-Cultivator* experiment and the Ohio Etzlerist Mutual Aid Group of 1834–1836, this significantly expands the number of data points for researchers to comparatively evaluate Etzlerist schemes.

Much more work, especially by Spanish-speaking researchers, could and should be undertaken in order to establish further whether Etzler's activities in Bogotá in the 1850s led to successful (or failed) emigration settlements or the development of new Etzlerist technologies, and to locate more of his Spanish-language writings, the existence of which was entirely unknown until now.

Regina Etzler's survival and return to Ulm in 1846 makes sense of the publication of Etzler's *Auswanderung Nach der Tropenwelt* [ANT] there in 1847.<sup>1060</sup> Much like he confuses JAEMS for a second edition of NWOMS, Brostowin wrongly identifies ANT as a translation of ETW,<sup>1061</sup> but this certainly not the case. To learn that it is a different text, it is sufficient to read a review of it, which describes its contents in the following manner:

[Etzler] forbert alle Auswanderungslustige auf, sich in einer grossen, planmasstig organisirten Gesellschaft zusammen zu thun, damit sie nicht, wie dies schon bei Vielen der Fall war, die Opfer habsüchtiger Agenten werden, und mittellos in dem Lande ihrens ziele ankommen.<sup>1062</sup>

Nothing of the sort appears in ETW, and the reference to colonists becomes “die Opfer habsüchtiger Agenten” [i.e., *the victims of avaricious agents*] can only be a direct reference to the failed TES expedition. A researcher with adequate German should endeavour to obtain an extant copy of ANT and analyse its description of the TES expedition, since thanks to Brostowin's mistakes it has been incorrectly regarded as a mere re-issue and therefore apparently unread by any Etzler scholar.

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<sup>1060</sup> Ulm: Müller.

<sup>1061</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', 376.

<sup>1062</sup> See *Wochenblatt der Stadt Nördlingen*, no. 23 (4 July 1847): 206.

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# **Appendix 1**

## **Annotated Bibliography of Etzler's Surviving Works**

## Appendix 1: Annotated Etzler Bibliography (Chronological)

1. *Allgemeine Ansicht der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika für Auswanderer, nebst Plan zu einer Gemeinschaftlichen Ansiedelung daselbst.*

**AAVSN1** 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Eschwege: Röbling, 1830. 83pp.

**AAVSN2** 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Eschwege: Röbling, 1831. 108pp.

Co-authored by the Prussian chemist Frederick Christopher Dachroeden, these two pamphlets (the second edition substantially augments the first) were a statement of purpose and recruiting vehicle for the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft*, a scheme of community emigration to North America co-ordinated by Dachroeden, Etzler, and their junior partners Heinrich Harseim and John Augustus Roebling from 1829–1831, and based on a proto-socialistic principle of *Gemeinsamkeit*.<sup>1063</sup> Considered lost by all previous commentators,<sup>1064</sup> I discovered that an extant copy of the second edition (AAVSN2) had in fact been preserved in the George Washington Flowers Memorial Collection at North Carolina’s Duke University. Because of the recent mass-digitisation of Duke University Libraries’ materials in collaboration with the non-profit Internet Archive organization, I was able to obtain a digital reproduction of the recovered pamphlet and to translate its text from the German, with the result that this thesis is the first piece of Etzler scholarship to incorporate evidence directly from this earliest-known text into its analysis of Etzler’s early career.<sup>1065</sup> Since it had not been rediscovered until now, AAVSN is absent from Nydahl’s 1977 *Collected Works*.

2. *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men, Without Labo[u]r, by Powers of Nature and Machinery.* [4<sup>th</sup> ed. German-language title *Das Paradies für Jedermann Erreichbar, Lediglich durch Kräfte der Natur und der Einfachsten Maschinen*].

**PWR1a** 1<sup>st</sup> edition, part 1. Pittsburgh, PA: Etzler & Reinhold, 1833. 119pp.

**PWR1b** 1<sup>st</sup> edition, part 2. Pittsburgh, PA: Etzler & Reinhold, 1833. 98pp.

**PWR2** 2<sup>nd</sup> (‘first British’) edition. London: John Brooks, 1836. 216pp.

**PWR3a** 3<sup>rd</sup> (‘second English [sic]’) edition, part 1. London: John Cleave, 1842. 56pp.

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<sup>1063</sup> Roughly translatable as ‘solidarity’ or ‘commonality’, the substance of this guiding principle of the *Mühlhauser Gesellschaft* is captured by Dachroeden and Etzler’s declaration that “[i]solated man is a helpless, wretched being, but in connection with many others, infinitely more mighty” (AAVSN2, 98 [translation mine]).

<sup>1064</sup> See e.g. Patrick R. Brostowin, ‘John Adolphus Etzler: Scientific-Utopian during the 1830’s and 1840’s’ (PhD thesis, New York University, 1969), 7, n. 13; Karl J. Arndt & Patrick R. Brostowin, ‘Pragmatists and Prophets: George Rapp and J. A. Roebling versus J. A. Etzler and Count Leon’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 52, no. 1 (January 1969), 8, n. 7; Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 46; etc.

<sup>1065</sup> The custodial history of the shorter first edition (AAVSN1, now also recovered) is similar: it was retained without record of authorship in UC Berkeley’s archives until their corresponding digitisation of collections in partnership with Google Books.



**PWR3b** 3<sup>rd</sup> (‘second English [sic]’) edition, part 2. London: John Cleave, 1842. 40pp.

**PWR4** 4<sup>th</sup> (first German) edition. Ulm: Heerbrandt & Thämel, 1844. 166pp.

Etzler’s magnum opus and most widely received work, the self-published first edition of the *Paradise* (PWR1a/b) was pirated in its second edition (PWR2) without Etzler’s knowledge at the instigation of Robert Owen.<sup>1066</sup> The *Paradise* then became the first monograph in human history to be typed up using a keyboard—a distinction unrecognised before now—when the Etzlerist inventor James Hadden Young prepared PWR3a/b using a pianolike type-compositing machine of his own design in the spring of 1842.<sup>1067</sup> Rapid, labourless reproduction of human speech was a longstanding preoccupation of Etzlerist technicians.<sup>1068</sup> PWR3a/b notably contains occasional inline parenthetical commentary by Young himself, presumably inserted *ad hoc* as he typed the document, although no prior scholar appears to have picked up on this unique aspect of the edition’s text. This document, which I suggest is of considerable historical import (it is after all, as my thesis will establish, the first keyboard-typed monograph in human history) is not included in Nydahl’s attempt at a *Collected Works*, which only supplies facsimiles of PWR1a/b as a definitive edition. The first (and only known) German-language edition of the *Paradise*, PWR4, appeared on the eve of the Tropical Emigration Society’s expedition to Venezuela. Significant extracts from various Anglophone editions were also frequently reproduced in periodical formats throughout Etzler’s career.<sup>1069</sup>

3. *The New World or Mechanical System, to Perform the Labours of Man and Beast by Inanimate Powers, That Cost Nothing, for Producing and Preparing the Substances of Life.*

**NWOMS** Philadelphia, PA: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1841. 75pp.

Published after his return from the Republic of Haiti in 1840,<sup>1070</sup> *New World or Mechanical System* marks the foremost wingtip of collaboration between Etzler and Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer, a Fourierist bookseller who converted to Etzlerism and became Etzler’s principal publicist and a leading member of the TES. NWOMS shows the maturation of Etzler’s thought in the preceding decade, and is the first text in which Etzler alludes to the suitability of tropical republics as sites for the creation of mechanised communes (likely as a result of his admiration of Haiti). The unnamed automatic farming machine he referred to in PWR1a/b is named explicitly for the first time as a

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<sup>1066</sup> See subsection 5.1 of this thesis.

<sup>1067</sup> See subsection 6.3.

<sup>1068</sup> Etzler’s plan to engineer “a tachigraphy [...] with peculiarly-adapted characters [...] and printing-establishments, by which the composing of words may be effected as quick as one speaks, and the copies multiplied without labo[u]r” (PWR1a, 43) was outlined as early as 1833, and he continued to obsess over further improvements to the recording and transmission of written and spoken information even after Young’s machine was realised (see my notes on MOJAEa/b below).

<sup>1069</sup> E.g., ‘The Power of the Tide’, *National Library, and Advocate of Civil and Religious Liberty* [Philadelphia, PA] 1, no. 9 (25 September 1833): 139–42. ‘The Paradise’, *New Moral World, or Millennium* 2, no. 69 (20 February 1836): 134; ‘Paradise [&c.]’, *London Phalanx* 2, no. 60 (August 1842): 80–82.

<sup>1070</sup> For my novel analysis of the contextual significance of Etzler’s fondness for Haiti, see subsection 5.3 of the thesis.

satellite (an earlier experimental model built and tested in Ohio was known as the *Mammuth-Cultivator*).<sup>1071</sup> NWOMS is one of the six works Nydahl includes in his collection.

4. Etzler's US Patents.

- USP1** 'Mode of Propelling Locomotives by Stationary Power',  
(i.e., satellite patent). US Patent 2396, 23 December 1841.
- USP2** 'Navigating and Propelling Vessels by the Action of the Wind and Waves'.  
(i.e., naval automaton patent). US Patent 2533, 1 April, 1842.

Both contain diagrams of the machinery to which they refer. Obtained by Etzler between his return from Haiti (1840) and his departure for Britain (1843). Corresponding patents in other countries were sought simultaneously by Conrad Frederick Stollmeyer.

5. *Description of the Naval Automaton Invented by J. A. Etzler, and Lately Patented in England, France, Holland, Belgium, and the United States of North America.*

**DOTNA** London: Wilson & Ogilvy, 1842. 12pp.

This pamphlet was released while Etzler was still in the USA, and aimed to popularise the Naval automaton, a device which Stollmeyer and Doherty constructed and tested throughout the early 1840s. DOTNA is one of the six Etzler writings which Nydahl includes in his 1977 *Collected Works*.

6. 'Description of a Mechanism for Applying the Motion of Vessels, Caused by the Power of the Waves as a Motive Power for Propelling Vessels, Thereby Superseding Steam or Any Other Artificial and Costly Power. Invented by Y. [sic] A. Etzler, Esq. Communicated by the Inventor'.

**DOMAV** *Mechanic's Magazine* 39, no. 1042 (29 July 1843): 88–92.

Though similar in theme to DOTNA, this submission to the *Mechanic's Magazine* is more detailed since it is aimed at technical audiences. It includes diagrams and designs not found in Etzler's other main writings.

7. *Dialogue on Etzler's Paradise: Between Messrs. Clear, Flat, Duncie, and Grudge.*

**DEP** London: James B. O'Brien, 1843. 23pp.

The only one of Etzler's works to assume a dialogic form, DEP pits three different genres of caricatured anti-utopian critic (in the fictional person of Messrs. Grudge, Duncie, and Flat) against an Etzlerist interlocuter (Mr Clear) who believes in the possibility of mechanically abolishing all human

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<sup>1071</sup> See subsection 4.3 of the thesis.

work and tackles each of the various objections of the three counterposed critics. In 1844 an opening extract from DEP was republished in the 18<sup>th</sup> number of Albert Brisbane's *Phalanx* with the presumable intention to serialise it,<sup>1072</sup> although the remaining sections in fact appear never to have been included in later issues.

As a result of promotional activities associated with the release of Robert Antoni's 2013 novel *As Flies to Whatless Boys*,<sup>1073</sup> a forgery of DEP which in fact contains a bawdy and outrageously racist stage-play written by Antoni himself now circulates on the internet under the title *A Dialogue on Etzler's Paradise: Between the West-Indian Plantation Owner 'Lord Louse' and his Former African Slave 'Savvy', or, 'English vs. Nigrish'*. The confected pamphlet is much easier for a casual reader to obtain than is a faithful copy of the authentic manuscript, and Antoni has also mocked up the frontispiece of his version with fake archival marginalia to very closely resemble the original, presumably in order to falsely impugn the historical Etzler as a racist. The imitation document attains a level of detail that is likely to fool any observer not already exhaustively familiar with Etzler's authentic works, and since such people are few and far between, it is quite likely to succeed in its purpose. The situation is exacerbated further by the unfortunate coincidence that Antoni's insinuation against Etzler is superficially supported by the baseless canards Stoll includes in his own putatively non-fiction treatment of the same individual. See my discussion of the ramifications of this unusual problem in subsection 5.3 of the thesis. The authentic 1843 manuscript of DEP is one of the six writings included in Nydahl's *Collected Works*.

8. *Address to All People who Desire to Free Themselves from Want, Fear of Want, and Slavery, for Ever.*

**AAP**                      *Northern Star* 6, no. 304 (9 September 1843): 7.

This communique served simultaneously explanatory and propagandistic purposes, and was especially tailored to attract members of the British chartist movement, which had recently suffered significant setbacks as a result of state repression in the aftermath of the 1842 Plug Plot riots and general strike. Stollmeyer, then acting as Etzler's principal agent in Britain, arranged for its publication as part of a larger sustained recruitment drive aimed at chartists, as evidenced by his own 'Paradise' letters, the longest and most thorough defence of Etzlerism that Stollmeyer is known to have published. These appear in seven parts in the *Northern Star* between July and October 1843.<sup>1074</sup>

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<sup>1072</sup> *Phalanx: Organ of the Doctrine of Association* 1, no. 18 (7 September 1844): 271–73.

<sup>1073</sup> Brooklyn, NY: Akashic Books, 2013.

<sup>1074</sup> Stollmeyer presents his 'Paradise' Letters in a numbered sequence from I–VII. They appear in the following issues of the *Northern Star*: I: *NS* 6, no. 297 (22 July 1843): 3; II: *NS* 6, no. 298 (29 July 1843): 7; III: *NS* 6, no. 300 (12 August 1843): 3; IV: *NS* 6, no. 303 (2 September 1843): 4; V: *NS* 6, no. 304 (9 September 1843): 7; VI: *NS* 6, no. 305 (16 September 1843): 7; VII: *NS* 6, no. 310 (21 October 1843): 2.

Stollmeyer appended AAP to Letter V in his own sequence; but it was also reproduced as a standalone address in Owen's *New Moral World*<sup>1075</sup> and possibly other willing publications. AAP is absent from Nydahl's 1977 collection.

9. *Memorial of J. A. Etzler to both Houses of the British Parliament.*

**MHBP**      *Northern Star* 6, no. 305 (16 September 1843): 7.

In this document, sent to Parliament in 1843 and appended to Stollmeyer's 'Paradise' Letter VI for the benefit of his chartist audience, Etzler petitions Parliament on behalf of "the suffering class [and] those who desire to help them" to strike a committee that will investigate the feasibility of financial and logistical support to "the system for their permanent liberation of [sic] want, fear of want, and compulsive labour". Seeking to actuate the anxieties of the British legislature about civil unrest in the wake of the 1842 general strike, he warns them not to "leave this new great matter to chance [lest] the consequences [...] prove disastrous to public peace and happiness"—a marked departure from his 1833 approach to the US government, wherein the worst threat he could muster against the Jackson administration was to "seize upon the first opportunity for application offered to me [by any other national government]"<sup>1076</sup> in the event that the US declined to help. Etzler generally dealt far more congenially with the governments of republics (Haiti, Venezuela, the US) than he did with those of monarchies (Britain, Prussia). Given the desperation and revolutionary feeling of the chartists in 1843, it was especially astute of him to give strong emphasis to the possibility of outright revolt against the government whilst courting the *Northern Star*'s readership.

9. New York Departure Letter.

**NYDL**      *Phalanx* [New York, NY], no. 3 (5 December 1843): 42.

This open letter, carried by Albert Brisbane's New York *Phalanx* on the eve of Etzler's departure to join Stollmeyer, Doherty and Young in London, aims to drum up excitement for his pursuance of mechanical and political experimentation in Britain. A typographical error in the original renders Etzler's middle initial as "H" rather than "A" in the title and valediction. NYDL is absent from Nydahl's 1977 collection.

10. *Two Visions of J. A. Etzler: A Revelation of Futurity.*

**TVJAE**      Surrey: Ham Common Concordium, 1844. 15pp.

Arguably the most introspective and poetic of Etzler's works, TVJAE takes the format of a mock-biblical autobiographical history comprising 224 'verses' which chart his disillusionment at having

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<sup>1075</sup> *New Moral World* 12 (2 November 1843): 79–80.

<sup>1076</sup> PWR1b, 95.

failed to attract significant support in the US, his emigration to (and delight in) the Republic of Haiti, his disgust at European and North American prejudices, and finally his decision to return to the US (and then Britain) in order to pursue a final attempt at bringing his emancipatory scheme to fruition. Throughout the narrative, a providential spirit<sup>1077</sup> interrogates him about his self-doubts, abuses him for his lack of resolve, and prophesies the eventual success of his intention to abolish all human work, albeit only to the benefit of a remote cosmopolitan posterity he will never live to see.

11. *Emigration to the Tropical World, for the Melioration of All Classes of People of All Nations*

**ETW** Surrey: Ham Common Concordium, 1844. 24pp.

Released on the eve of the foundation of the Tropical Emigration Society, this monograph concretised Etzler's conviction that the tropics were the preferred site for the construction of utopian machinery.

12. Chartist Letters.

**NS1** 1 July 1844, *Northern Star* 7, no. 347 (6 July 1844): 3.

**NS2** 17 July 1844, *Northern Star* 7, no. 350 (27 July 1844): 7.

**NS3** 31 July 1844, *Northern Star* 7, no. 352 (10 August 1844): 3.

These three substantial explanatory letters to the chartist *Northern Star* coincide with Etzler's departure from Ham Common and his establishment in London.

13. *J. A. Etzler's Mechanical System, in its Greatest Simplicity, for Agricultural Works, Formation of Ditches, Canals, Dams, and Any Excavation, Applantation and Elevation of Ground, Eradicating, Sawing, and Removing Trees, Crushing and Removing Rocks, Forming Terraces on Slopes of Mountains and Other Works*

**JAEMS** London: John Cleave, 1844. 16pp.

Containing very detailed drawings of a satellite chassis and a condensed explanation of the mechanical working principles of the satellite, this work was incorrectly dismissed by Brostowin as a reprint of NWOMS—a mistake he advertises on the second page of his preface<sup>1078</sup>—and has consequently received little attention among later scholars of Etzler.

14. 'Poetry of Reality'.

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<sup>1077</sup> The balance of evidence suggests Etzler was an atheist, so this device of TVJAE's spirit should be read as allegorical.

<sup>1078</sup> Brostowin, 'John Adolphus Etzler', viii. He repeats the error at 150 n.19 and 182. Given that Brostowin dedicates an entire chapter of his thesis (ibid., 158–182) to a near-verbatim close reading of the contents of NWOMS, it is surprising he never opened a copy of JAEMS to see whether it was in fact the same book or not.

**PR** *Morning Star*, 1, no. 1 (December 1844): 3–4.

A forthright proclamation of Etzler’s materialist philosophy, this short essay posits an enriched and vibrant “poetry of reality” in contradistinction to the dogmatic study of ancient poetry as a sublime form of literature.

15. Trinidad Letters (1845).

**TL1** *Morning Star* 1, no. 17 (3 May 1845): 134.\*

**TL2** *Morning Star*, 1, no. 19 (19 May 1845): 151.

**TL3** *Morning Star*, 1, no. (31 May 1845): 166–67.

*\*(Original text not known to be extant—however the contents of the letter are comprehensively summarised by then-MS editor James Elmslie Duncan at this location)*

Written by Etzler during the first phase of the TES expedition, when he and his family were alone with Carr and Taylor in the tropics. See especially thesis subsection 7.3.

16. Caracas Letter.

**CL** *Morning Star* 1, no. 28 (19 July 1845): 218.

Sent by Etzler shortly after his arrival in the capital, it details his negotiations with government officials and local notables, and relays some of his discoveries about the legal and geographical niceties that have the potential to effect site-selection.

17. *Mr. Etzler’s Journal* [Surviving 1845 fragments].

**EJa** *Morning Star*, 1, no. 31 (9 August 1845): 244–45.

**EJb** *Morning Star* 1, no. 33 (23 August 1845): 258–59.

**EJc** *Morning Star* 1, no. 35 (6 September 1845): 277–78.

These entries recount Etzler’s vexed interactions with Carr and Taylor in the early months of the expedition.

18. Valencia Letter.\*

**VL** *Morning Star* 1, no. 47 (29 November 1845): 369–72.

*\*(note that this is somewhat misleadingly headed ‘News from our Agents in Trinidad [sic]: From Mr. Etzler’ where it is reproduced in the Star).*

In this letter, written by Etzler in Valencia, Venezuela on 11 October 1845, a number of sites including Guataparo are described in substantial detail. It is here that Etzler directly recommends the immediate uptake by the TES of the Guataparo site, unaware that Powell has already unilaterally ordered the purchase of Guinimita by his co-agents.

19. Transit Company Letter.

**TCL** *Morning Star* 2, no. 10 (14 March 1846), 77–78.

An innocuous letter containing suggestions to the VTC about the construction of floating islands. TCL was submitted for publication simultaneously with MOJAEa/b, but the latter was suppressed by Powell until he was already in the Tropics.

20. *Manifesto of J. A. Etzler* [Including extensive prefatory message]

**MOJAEa** 19 February 1846. Part 1. *Morning Star* 2, no. 28 (18 July 1846): 217–18.

**MOJAEb** 19 February 1846. Part 2. *Morning Star* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 225–27.

**MOJAEc** 19 February 1846. Letter. *Morning Star* 2, no. 27 (11 July 1846): 209–13

This document was written by Etzler from Trinidad in February 1846, at the height of the TES leadership crisis. The *Manifesto* was intended for immediate release and was sent to the Etzler-loyalist Bradford TES Branch for that purpose, but its publication was suppressed by Powell (who still controlled the editorship of the *Star* in London until his 13 March 1846 departure for Trinidad on the *Condor*).<sup>1079</sup> Only once Powell was in Trinidad, with his coup against Etzler in its advanced phase, was MOJAE eventually published in the *Star*, by which time (July 1846) it was far too late. Etzler had already left the Tropics after the sabotage of his negotiations with the Venezuelan government and subsequent marginalisation by Powell.

21. ‘For the Society at Guinimita’

**FTSAG** *Morning Star* 2, no. 29 (25 July 1846): 228–30.

Written by Etzler in Port of Spain, Trinidad on 18 April 1846, it explains his purpose in going to Georgetown, Demerara to obtain suitable land after the death of so many colonists at Guinimita, and urges the *Condor* passengers to immediately join him there rather than remain under Powell and Carr’s direction at Trinidad.

22. Demerara Letters.

**DL1** *Morning Star* 2, no. 33 (22 August 1846): 263.

**DL2** *Morning Star* 2, no. 28 (18 July 1846): 221–22.

**DL3** *Morning Star* 2, no. 28 (18 July 1846): 221.

This sequence of letters was written by Etzler from Georgetown, Demerara on 14 May (DLa) and 30 May 1846 (DLb/c), where he was making a last desperate attempt to secure favourable land for

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<sup>1079</sup> See ‘To Our Readers and Correspondents’, *Morning Star*, and *People’s Economist* 2, no. 10 (14 March 1846): 76, in which Powell announces his handover of the *Star* on departure to Trinidad.

the colonists after the sabotage of the Venezuela purchase, the catastrophe at Guinimita and the corresponding *Condor* mass-defection against Powell's party. However, these Demerara letters were only published several months later—in reverse order, to boot—in the *Star*, by which point Etzler had already made a final attempt to induce the remaining colonists to abandon Guinimita and relocate to suitable territory. When this effort was rebuffed by Powell, who had by this point assumed total control of the rump-TES in Trinidad, Etzler—cut off from TES funds by Powell and unable to sustain himself independently any longer in the Tropics—had little choice but to return to the USA the following month.

23. *Auswanderung Nach der Tropenwelt*.

**ANT**            Ulm: Müller, 1847. 51pp.

Consistently misreported as a second edition of ETW, this is in fact a novel document published in Ulm after the TES expedition. It communicates details of the TES expedition, and provides warnings to would-be colonists from Germany that are intended to help them avoid becoming “the victims of avaricious agents”. I was not able to obtain an extant copy, and have inferred its contents indirectly from German-language reviews of the text.

24. ‘Sub-Editor’ & ‘To Gentlemen Wanting Profitable Occupation’ (pseudonymous advertisements as ‘Adelphos’).

**ADS1**            *Athenaeum*, no. 1039 (25 September 1847): 993.

**ADS2**            *Athenaeum*, no. 1044 (30 October 1847): 1113.

These documents were sent pseudonymously by Etzler from the former offices of the TES after his return to Britain. They are suggestive of an attempt to create a new organisation and to obtain funds by advertising his editorial freelancing services.

25. ‘Reresentacion’ [Jamaica Letter].

**JL**                *Gaceta Oficial* [Bogotá] 21, no. 1337 (8 April 1852): 250.

Written by Etzler from Kingston, Jamaica in Spanish, this memorial petitions the government of New Granada (modern-day Colombia) to support his programmes.

26. *Maquina Para Sumar / Maquina Para Asserar*

**MPA**            *Gaceta Oficial* [Bogotá] 22, no. 1609 (12 October 1853): 805.

**MPS**            *Gaceta Oficial* [Bogotá] 22, no. 1609 (12 October 1853): 806.

Patent applications republished in *Gaceta Oficial* the Neogranadian government in 1853, for an adding machine and a sawing machine.





# **Appendix 2**

## *Analysis of the Morning Star* Microfilm Corpus

### January 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1: v1, n2	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15: v1, n3	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### February 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1: v1, n4	2
3	4	5	6	7	8: v1, n5	9
10	11	12	13	14	15: v1, n6	16
17	18	19	20	21	22: v1, n7	23
24	25	26	27	28		

### March 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1: v1, n8	2
3	4	5	6	7	8: v1, n9	9
10	11	12	13	14	15: v1, n10	16
17	18	19	20	21	22: v1, n11	23
24	25	26	27	28	29: v1, n12	30
31						

### April 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5: v1, n13	6
7	8	9	10	11	12: v1, n14	13
14	15	16	17	18	19: v1, n15	20
21	22	23	24	25	26: v1, n16	27
28	29	30				

### May 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3: v1, n17	4
5	6	7	8	9	10: v1, n18	11
12	13	14	15	16	17: v1, n19	18
19	20	21	22	23	24: v1, n20	25
26	27	28	29	30	31: v1, n21	

### June 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7: v1, n22	8
9	10	11	12	13	14: v1, n23	15
16	17	18	19	20	21: v1, n24	22
23	24	25	26	27	28: v1, n25	29
30						

### July 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5: v1, n26	6
7	8	9	10	11	12: v1, n27	13
14	15	16	17	18	19: v1, n28	20
21	22	23	24	25	26: v1, n29	27
28	29	30	31			

### August 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2: v1, n30	3
4	5	6	7	8	9: v1, n31	10
11	12	13	14	15	16: v1, n32	17
18	19	20	21	22	23: v1, n33	24
25	26	27	28	29	30: v1, n34	31

### September 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6: v1, n35	7
8	9	10	11	12	13: v1, n36	14
15	16	17	18	19	20: v1, n37	21
22	23	24	25	26	27: v1, n38	28
29	30					

### October 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4: v1, n39	5
6	7	8	9	10	11: v1, n40	12
13	14	15	16	17	18: v1, n41	19
20	21	22	23	24	25: v1, n42	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### November 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1: v1, n43	2
3	4	5	6	7	8: v1, n44	9
10	11	12	13	14	15: v1, n45	16
17	18	19	20	21	22: v1, n46	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 v1, n47	30
31						

### December 1845

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6: v1, n48	7
8	9	10	11	12	13: v1, n49	14
15	16	17	18	19	20: v1, n50	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 v1, n51	28
29	30	31				

### January 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3: v1, n52	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 v2, n1	11
12	13	14	15	16	17: v2, n2	18
19	20	21	22	23	24: v2, n3	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 v2, n4	

### February 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7: v2, n5	8
9	10	11	12	13	14: v2, n6	15
16	17	18	19	20	2: v2, n7	22
23	24	25	26	27	28: v2, n8	

### March 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7: v2, n9	8
9	10	11	12	13	14: v2, n10	15
16	17	18	19	20	21: v2, n11	22
23	24	25	26	27	28: v2, n12	29
30	31					

### April 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4: v2, n13	5
6	7	8	9	10	11: v2, n14	12
13	14	15	16	17	18: v2, n15	19
20	21	22	23	24	25: v2, n16	26
27	28	29	30			

### May 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2: v2, n17	3
4	5	6	7	8	9: v2, n18	10
11	12	13	14	15	16: v2, n19	17
18	19	20	21	22	23: v2, n20	24
25	26	27	28	29	30: v2, n21	31

### June 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6: v2, n22	7
8	9	10	11	12	13: v2, n23	14
15	16	17	18	19	20: v2, n24	21
22	23	24	25	26	27: v2, n25	28
29	30					

### July 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4: v2, n26	5
6	7	8	9	10	11: v2, n27	12
13	14	15	16	17	18: v2, n28	19
20	21	22	23	24	25: v2, n29	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### August 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1: v2, n30	2
3	4	5	6	7	8: v2, n31	9
10	11	12	13	14	15: v2, n32	16
17	18	19	20	21	22: v2, n33	23
24	25	26	27	28	29: v2, n34	30
31						

### September 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12: v2, n35	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26: v2, n36	27
28	29	30				

### October 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10: v2, n37	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24: v2, n38	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

### November 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21: v2, n39	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

### December 1846

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19: v2 n40?	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Notes on the TES *Morning Star* as Preserved in the *Rare Radical and Labour of Great Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century* Microfilm Collection held at the British Library

The first (1, no. 1) and final (2, no. 42) issues of the periodical are both extant, and are preserved on the microfilm.

Of volume 1 (Dec 1844–3 January 1845), nos. 2, 3, 5, 7, 10–12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 24–26, 29, 30, 36–39, 42, 43, 45 & 49–51 are not on microfilm (i.e., 26 out of 52 or 50%, of the material is missing).

Of volume 2 (10 January 1845–27 January 1847), nos. 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 31, 37, 40 & 41 are not on the microfilm (i.e., 14 out of 42 or 33% of the material is missing).

In total, this means that 40 out of the 94 numbers, or 42% of the corpus has been unavailable both to myself and to the scholars whose work I seek to correct.

For the purpose of the calendar above, I infer the dates of the non-extant vol. 2, nos. 40 & 41 as Saturday 19 December 1846 and Saturday 16 January 1847 respectively, based on pattern of publication. Note however that the closing number, vol. 2, no. 42, was published on Wednesday 27 January 1847 (in contrast to the ordinary Saturday publication dates).