


Society as an accumulation of commodities



Nonetheless, there seems to be no reference to Riquetti in the entire Marxian corpus – or, at least, none that I am aware of.

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s “an immense accumulation of commodities” [“eine ungeheure Waarensammlung”]: this is how the wealth of “bourgeois society”¹ or, according to a later rewording, of “those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails”, presented itself to Marx.²

Marx may have borrowed this metaphor from Mirabeau père, who had already made a similar observation: “*Je vois que la société n’est qu’un amas d’achats & de ventes, d’échanges & de rapports des droits & des devoirs*”.³

1 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in *Karl Marx-Frederick Engels Collected Works* [henceforth: *MECW*], vol. 29, International Publishers, New York, 1975-2004, p. 269 = Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, in *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* [henceforth: *MEGA*], vol. II/2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1975-, p. 107.

2 Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, in *MECW*, vol. 35, International Publishers, New York, 1975-2004, p. 45 = Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Erster Band*, in *MEGA*, vol. II/5, p. 17 (the phrase is repeated in the subsequent editions, see *MEGA*: vol. II/6, p. 69 [1872]; vol. II/8, p. 63 [1883]; vol. II/10, p. 37 [1890]).

3 L.D.H. [presumably *L’Ami des Hommes*, pseudonym of Victor Riquetti de Mirabeau], *La Science, ou Les Droits et les Devoirs de l’Homme*, François Grasset & C°, Lausanne, 1774, p. 76.