

Albert Béguin

*Abstract*

On October 13th 1952, Albert Béguin held this conference at the «Centre de Formation des Journalistes» of Paris. Béguin explains his own experience as an engaged critic, and expresses his opinion about the true function of free literary criticism and its principal goals. He also investigates the limits imposed by state censorship and the constraints of the market system in which he lived. Cultural commodification is just one of the consequences of this kind of logic based on money and political interests, as well as an impoverishment of literary criticism quality itself.

Albert Béguin (Neuchâtel 1901 – Rome 1957) was a literary critic, writer and translator. Once he graduated in 1923 in Classical Studies at the University of Geneva, he became lector in French language and literature in Halle University. In 1937, moved back to Geneva, Béguin discussed his doctoral thesis with a work on the relations between German romanticism and French poetry, later published with the title *L'âme romantique et le rêve*. Thanks to this work, he gained the title of professor in French literature at Basel's University. In 1942 he founded the journal

*Cahiers du Rhône*

, an antifascist cultural review; then he settled in Paris where he contributed to various journals and reviews. After Emmanuel Mounier died, he was nominated director of the review

*Esprit*

, which he led from 1950 to his own death.