Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx

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PHILOSOPHY AND MYTH IN KARL MARX

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The discovery of Marx's first system has reinforced a trend of thought about Marxism that had been growing independently for a long while, especially in the West. It seems fair to say that a change in the generally accepted view of Marx has been taking place in the twentieth century. In the new image he appears not as the scientist of society that he claimed to be but rather as a moralist or a religious kind of thinker. The old assumption that 'scientific socialism' is a scientific system of thought has tended more and more to give way to the notion that it is in essence a moralistic or religious system. It appears now, at any rate to very many of us, as the single most influential expression of a modern socialist movement that was inspired by fundamentally religious impulses and represented, in Martin Buber's phrase, a 'socialist secularization of eschatology'.

The change of perspective is radical, as a brief glance at some representative earlier opinions on Marx and Marxism will show. The basic question in the mind of an older generation of students and critics of Marx's system was simply: is it true? The underlying assumption was that 'scientific socialism', as its name suggests and Marx and Engels always maintained, was essentially a scientific system of thought. It followed that the chief problem with regard to it was the problem of verification. The crucial issue was its validity or non-validity as a scientific theory of the historical process, and particularly as an economic theory of the inevitable revolutionary breakdown of the capitalist system. The moral content of Marxism—not to mention the religious content—was thought to be nil. Thus Werner Sombart spoke of the 'purely theoretical character of Marxism' in an article of 1892, and contrasted it in this respect with what he called 'ethical socialism'. 'Marxism is distinguished from all other socialist systems', he declared, 'by its anti-ethical tendency. In all of Marxism from beginning to end, there is not a grain of ethics, and consequently no more of an ethical judgment than an ethical postulate'.

Sombart's statement was quoted with emphatic approval by young Lenin in one of his early writings. The philosopher Croce, writing at that time as a sympathetic critic of Marx, casually dismissed the ethical issue. What was the 'philosophical opinion' of Marx and Engels in regard to
as a moral philosopher than as a religious thinker. It appears, perhaps, less radical, less in contradiction with what Marx thought of himself, and more likely to yield definite positive results. And an apparent justification for it lies close at hand.

An attentive reader of Marx quickly becomes aware of the intensely moralistic tone of his thought. Although he disclaims the intention to moralize, his portrait of the world in the Communist Manifesto, Capital, and other writings is manifestly the portrait of a world felt to be wrong and evil in its basic constitution. It is a world that stands morally condemned in the eyes of the portrait-painter, a world awaiting merited destruction at the hands of its 'grave-digger', the proletarian. On occasion Marx found imagery of compelling power to express this moral condemnation. For example, in a speech given in London in 1856, he said that there existed in Germany in the Middle Ages a secret tribunal called the Vehmggericht, and went on: 'If a red cross was seen marked on a house, people knew that its owner was doomed by the Vehm. All the houses of Europe are now marked with the mysterious red cross. History is the judge—its executioner the proletarian.' Here he presents the proletarian revolution as history's mighty act of retributive justice against a society so criminal in character that it deserves capital punishment.

The deep-dyed moralistic texture of his thought is obvious. If by moralist we mean simply a person whose thought moves in the orbit of prime concern with values of good and evil, a person whose thought-process is decisively governed by a basic value judgment, then Marx is unquestionably a moralist. But this still leaves open the question whether he is a moral philosopher. As conceived and practised in the Socratic tradition in the West, moral philosophy is a form of inquiry. It is inquiry into the nature of the supreme good for man or the criterion of right conduct. Now a distinguishing mark of inquiry, whether in moral philosophy or other branches of philosophy or in science, is that thought proceeds from a methodological doubt, a suspension of commitment. We may feel that we know the correct answer, but we recognize the rational possibility of different answers from our own. Thus moral philosophy, as inquiry, presupposes recognition that the nature of the supreme good for man is problematic. It begins, as Aristotle began his Ethics,
From his German philosophical predecessors, Kant and Hegel, Marx imbibed a scorn for hedonism and related philosophies that always remained with him. His longest discussion of this question occurs in *The German Ideology*, where he writes that the philosophy of pleasure has never been anything but the 'clever phraseology' of certain social circles that have enjoyed the privilege of pleasure. And departing from the economic interpretation for a moment, he goes on to say that the Greeks in antiquity and the French in modern times have been the leading proponents of this philosophy, in both instances because of a temperamentally predisposition to the pursuit of pleasure. More recently, he continues, the philosophy of pleasure has been elaborated in a new form by the bourgeoisie—Utilitarian ethics. Here the philosophy of pleasure is generalized and becomes 'a flat and hypocritical moral doctrine', hypocritical because it groundlessly presumes to generalize for all individuals regardless of differences in what they view as pleasureable. And he concludes: 'The pleasures of all hitherto existing classes and estates have inevitably been either juvenile and tedious or else coarse because they have always been divorced from the over-all life-activity of the individuals.'

Elsewhere Marx interprets the Utilitarian ethics of Bentham as a monetary moral philosophy, a philosophical generalization of the pecuniary relations prevailing in bourgeois society. In *Capital*, he graciously introduces Jeremy Bentham to the reader as 'the insipid, pedantic, leather-tongued oracle of the commonplace bourgeois intelligence of the nineteenth century'.

The principles of humanity and decency were for him matters that needed no discussion, matters to be taken for granted ('*The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. ii, pp. 187–8). Here the explanation is sought in Marx's personal character. Neither of the two views cited reckons with the possibility that Marx's antipathy for moral philosophy was rooted in the very structure of his thought.

† Rebecca Cooper explicitly imputes a Utilitarian ethic to Marx: 'Armed revolution and the proletarian dictatorship are ethically justified as necessary means toward the greatest amount of human happiness' (*The Logical Influence of Hegel on Marx*, p. 180). Herbert Marcuse, suggesting a similar interpretation, writes that in the transition from Hegelianism to Marxism 'The idea of reason has been superseded by the idea of happiness', which 'denoted an affirmative materialism, that is to say, an affirmation of the material satisfaction of man' (*Reason and Revolution*, pp. 294, 295). Among the writers who ascribe the principle of justice to Marx are A. G. Lindsay and E. H. Carr. According to Lindsay, 'His fundamental passion is a passion for justice' (*Karl Marx's Capital*, p. 114). According to Carr, 'In *Capital*, published twenty years after the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx demonstrated for the first time that the victory of the proletariat would be the victory not only of brute force, but of abstract justice' (*Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism*, p. 83)
goal. Marx points out sarcastically that socialists cannot agree on any criterion of distributive justice: ‘And have not the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about “fair” distribution?’ He speaks of ‘ideological nonsense about “right” and other trash so common among the democrats and French socialists’. He dismisses the notions of ‘undiminished proceeds of labour’, ‘equal right’ and ‘fair distribution’ as ‘obsolete verbal rubbish’ which it would be a ‘crime’ to adopt as a party programme. It is here that Marx quotes, for the only time, the old French socialist slogan, ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.’ But in the very next breath he declares that ‘it was in general incorrect to make a fuss about so-called distribution and to put the principal stress upon it’. To present socialism as turning principally on distribution was characteristic of ‘vulgar socialism’, Marx says, and he concludes by asking: ‘Why go back again?’ It should be clear in the light of all this that a fair distribution of the proceeds of labour is not the moral goal for Marx. The ideal of distributive justice is a complete stranger in the mental universe of Marxism. The underlying reason will be shown later in this study.

The difficulty of analysing Marx’s thought by reference to one or another of the conventional positions in modern Western moral philosophy has impelled some to impute unconventional ethical positions to him. A notable example is provided by K. R. Popper, whose book The Open Society and Its Enemies (volume 1) contains perhaps the most vigorous critical assault on the problem of Marxist ethics to be found in the recent scholarly literature. As already mentioned, Popper believes that Marx deliberately avoided an ‘explicit moral theory’ because he hated preaching. He argues, however, that Marx’s writings contain an ethical theory by implication, and this he calls an ‘historicist moral theory’ or, alternatively, ‘moral futurism’.

This term is used to distinguish Marx’s position from Hegel’s, which is ‘moral positivism’. Hegelian moral positivism, according to Popper, holds that whatever historically is is right, whereas Marxist moral futurism holds that whatever inevitably will be in history is, for that very reason, right. In other words, Marxism as moral philosophy is said to be based upon the principle of historical inevitability. Imagining what Marx himself might have said if he had been asked why he desired the future proletarian revolution, Popper formulates for him the following moral futurist reply: ‘I am able to see that the bourgeoisie, and with it its system of morals, is bound to disappear, and that the proletariat, and with it a new system of morals, is bound to win. I see that this development is inevitable. It would be madness to attempt to resist it, just as it would be madness to attempt to resist the law of gravity. . . . In this way, I adopt the facts of the coming period as the standards of my morality.’

Overlooking some of the complexities of Popper’s analysis, let us simply ask whether the principle of historical inevitability plays the part of a basic ethical norm in Marx’s scheme of thought. There is no evidence that it does. There is nothing to indicate that Marx morally affirmed the future world revolution on the ground of its presumed inevitability. Far from deciding that a communist revolution would be desirable after discovering that it was inevitable, he became convinced as a young man of its desirability and then embarked on a life-long effort, materialized in Capital, to prove that it must come. And how could the hypothesis before us explain the burning intensity of Marx’s moral rejection of the existing world, his readiness to pronounce death sentence upon it in the name of the Vehmgericht of history? How, indeed, could anyone become imbued with a fierce antagonism to the existing social order merely on the basis of an intellectual perception or proof that it is doomed to give way to a different order in the future? One might just as logically, depending on one’s values, start to appreciate the doomed society all the more and reserve one’s condemnation for the inevitable future. In short, inevitability per se is scarcely a plausible candidate for anyone’s moral value. The hypothesis that the principle of historical inevitability served Marx as an implicit ethical norm is not seriously tenable.

If, as the preceding discussion suggests, efforts to interpret Marxism as a special expression of moral philosophy lead into an analytic impasse, a different approach is needed. If Marx was a moralist opposed to moral philosophy, may he not have been a moralist of the religious kind? In general, men who create myths or religious conceptions of reality are moralists in the sense in which this term has been used here. They may in fact be obsessed with a moral vision of reality, a vision of the world as
Like the Christian religious system again, Marxism views all existence under the aspect of history; it fundamentally tells a story that has a beginning, middle, and end. ‘Theology in the thirteenth century presented the story of man and the world according to the divine plan of salvation’, writes Carl Becker. ‘It provided the men of that age with an authentic philosophy of history.’ And further: ‘Paradise lost and paradise regained—such was the theme of the drama of existence as understood in that age.... Theology related and expounded the history of the world.’ Marx too aims to provide the men of his age with an authentic philosophy of history. His all-inclusive world-view is historical in essence.

The Materialist Conception of History is the matrix of his thought. It is notable that each of his four general formulations of Marxism—in the Paris manuscripts of 1844, in The German Ideology, in the Communist Manifesto, and in the preface to the Critique of Political Economy—takes the shape of an exposition of world history. The notion of a division of the Marxist theoretical structure between a ‘dialectical materialism’ treating of nature and an ‘historical materialism’ that applies the laws of dialectical materialism to man’s history is utterly foreign to Marx’s thought. For him, nature and its transformations belong to the historical process; the comprehensive category is history. The concept of a ‘dialectical materialism’ dealing with nature apart from human history takes its rise from some of the later writings of Engels. The phrase itself was introduced by the Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov.

For Marx, the drama of mankind’s historical existence is framed by a temporalized pre-history at one end (primitive communism) and a temporalized post-history at the other (future communism). Communism lost and communism regained—such is the plot of world history as he expounds it. Between the one and the other intervenes a series of world-periods stamped with a fundamental antagonism, as are the six successive world-periods of strife between the City of God and the City of Man in Augustine’s scheme. And just as Augustine portrays the present as the last of the historical world-periods before the Judgment, so Marx finds that the present bourgeois epoch is the ‘closing chapter of the pre-historic stage of human society’, the time of the deepest suffering, and the prelude to the final revolution.
Thirdly, there is far more than a formal analogy here. For deeply embedded in Marxism is a theme that corresponds to the master-theme of salvation of the soul in the Christian theology of history. Marx, of course, does not use the word 'salvation'. Yet, he has the concept of a total regeneration of man. In his system, it is the mission of the final revolution to bring about a radical transformation of human nature or 'change of self', whereby man will become a wholly new man. In his later and better known writings he has very little to say in concrete detail about the expected change of self, other than describing it as a change from a condition of 'enslavement' to a new condition of 'freedom'. Nevertheless, the meaning of Marxism turns in a crucial way upon this idea. It is the thread that holds the entire system together.

Man, according to the Christian scheme, exists all through history in the state of sin and is redeemed from it only at the end. According to Marx, man exists all through history in the state of enslavement, and the great change of self—deliverance from enslavement and entry into freedom—occurs only through the revolution with which the present final world-period is scheduled to close. Thus, for Marx the communist revolution is the means of attaining not material abundance (though that, in his view, will come too) and not justice in the distribution of goods, but the spiritual regeneration of man. This he expresses in his 'Theses on Feuerbach'—a set of notes written in 1845 in which he sketched the Materialist Conception of History—by saying that the change of circumstances effected by revolutionary activity will coincide with 'self-change' (Selbstveränderung). And in the text of The German Ideology he repeats: 'In revolutionary activity, change of self coincides with change of circumstances.'14 There is no possibility of comprehending the system of Marx at all deeply unless this redemptive idea is seen to lie at the core of it.

A fourth basic characteristic that Marxism has in common with religious systems in general and the medieval Christian system in particular is the 'unity of theory and practice', or the integral relation between the world-view as such and a set of prescriptions for action in accordance with it. Sombart was profoundly mistaken in speaking of the 'purely theoretical character of Marxism'. Marx himself took great pains to point out the contrary. He sharply distinguished Marxism from all merely philosophical systems of thought on the basis of its combined theoretical-practical character. 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways', he declared in the last of the 'Theses on Feuerbach'. 'The point is, to change it.'17

Although the fact has not been generally recognized, this way of thinking belongs to the religious pattern. It is not as a 'pragmatist' or man of scientific temper that Marx takes issue with the 'contemplative' posture of the philosopher and issues the call for action to change the world. Albeit unwittingly, he does so in the Western religious tradition. Philosophy and science, being, activities of inquiry, have no necessary nexus with action, but religion in Western experience generally does. The crux of this connection is the idea of participation in the drama of history that the religious system represents as objectively taking place in the world. Thus medieval Christianity did not simply portray existence as a drama of the original fall and ultimate redemption of man. It bid the believer to participate, to contribute his bit by faith and good works to an outcome that was predestined. It was constructed around the idea of the unity of theory and practice in this sense.

This too is the sense in which Marx proclaims the unity of theory and practice. Here the historical process is a revolutionary drama; the way of salvation is the way of revolution. Marxism on the theoretical side is primarily the theory of this revolution. It offers the proof; it presents the world communist revolution as the far-off event towards which the whole history of the world has been moving inexorably ever since the original division of labour, which corresponds to original sin in the Christian scheme. And Marx, although he holds the outcome to be irrevocably predetermined, calls upon the proletarians, Marxism's believers, to participate actively in the process, to shorten the birth-pangs of the new world that is to be inhabited by the new man with the changed self. As in the traditional Christian religious system, a practical injunction is integrally associated with the theoretical credo. It is an injunction to participate in the drama supposed to be in process of enactment in history. Here, of course, the 'good works' are revolutionary works—'revolutionary praxis' in Marx's own phrase. The way to salvation is revolutionary action to overthrow existing society.

The central task of a critical elucidation of Marxism as a religion of revolution is to clarify the largely hidden master-theme of the system, the idea of a radical 'change of self' that is
or successful self-coercion. Kant argues that man is unfree when subjected to coercion from without, or when he follows his spontaneous inclinations. He is free, on the other hand, when he acts under compulsion of the moral will to be perfect. Freedom means ‘autonomy of the will’, a condition in which man is subject to no outside commands but issues the moral law to himself. This is what Kant calls self-determination to action, which is his formula for freedom. The essential point is that self-determination means for Kant determination by the noumenal self. And this, as we have seen, is compulsive; it is a question of self-coercion to be perfect. Kant therefore not only admits, but continually insists upon, the identity of freedom and internal compulsion. He writes, for example: ‘The less a man can be physically forced, and the more he can be morally forced (by the mere idea of duty), so much the freer he is.’ He speaks too of ‘free self-constraint’. 10

According to this view, a man is never so free as when he acts under the greatest sense of inner bondage, self-constraint, compulsion. It is only when he feels morally driven to do something, when he experiences it as compulsory and himself as a slave to the self-imposed command to do it, that he is free at all. The soul of moral man becomes, therefore, a kind of dictatorship of the moral ‘ought’. Kant himself calls it an ‘autocracy’. 11 Man is free, he contends, in so far as he identifies himself with the internal autocratic authority (i.e. the noumenal self) and compels himself to obey all its perfectionist dictates. He is free in so far as he submits willingly to the internal autocratic order, unfree in so far as he acts in accordance with mere impulses or desires. There is an interesting analogy between this position and that of the political dictator who claims that his authoritarianism is the ‘highest form of freedom’ and that there is no real freedom in a democracy, where everyone does as he pleases.

[3]

A critique of Kant’s position might well start at this point. Something is radically wrong with a doctrine which tells us that the more compulsive a person’s conduct is, the freer he is, that life in a subjective autocracy of the moral ‘ought’ is the true life of freedom. Such a doctrine does violence to our understanding of freedom by divorcing it from the experience of freedom.
spirit in the act of becoming conscious of itself as spirit. As a builder of civilizations, a creator of culture-worlds, he is spirit in the historical continuation of its creative, self-externalizing phase. But in his capacity of knower, he is spirit on the path of self-discovery. His mind, and particularly his religious and philosophical mind, is the organ of the world’s emergent consciousness of itself as a subjective being. But inasmuch as this long remains an incomplete, limited consciousness, Hegel defines man as ‘finite self-conscious spirit’.

In the process of becoming in terms of knowledge, finite self-conscious spirit overcomes its finitude and rises to the plane of absolute self-conscious spirit, or fully actualized God. The urge to self-knowledge, which was the unconscious motivation of the original act of world-creation when spirit externalized itself as nature, becomes in history a conscious desire in the mind of man. As Hegel describes it, moreover, this desire to know is no mere idle curiosity or Platonic wonder but a monstrous and insatiable lust of knowledge. It is a craving in man to pierce the seeming objectivity of the world that confronts him, and grasp it as subjective in nature: ‘The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and, as the phrase is, to find ourselves at home in it: which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the notion—to our innermost self.’

If the creative activity of spirit is an activity of self-externalization, by which it takes on objective form, the cognitive activity that goes on in the mind of man is spirit’s repossession of itself in consciousness. Knowing is spirit’s means of reintegration or ‘return to itself’ out of the state of self-division that obtains when spirit as conscious subject (man) is confronted with spirit as external object (the world). Hegel calls this state ‘self-alienation’ or ‘self-estrangement’ (Selbstentfremdung). The subject-object relation per se is one of spirit’s self-alienation. In the subject-object relation spirit apprehends itself as ‘otherness’ (Anderssein). According to Hegel, this means that the object is experienced as an alien and hostile being, as something that stands opposed to the conscious subject. Knowing activity, by which the objective world is divested of its strangeness, is the overcoming of alienation.
experiences its self- alienation, the conflict is no longer a conflict of man with himself in the understanding of ‘himself’ that Kant’s view exemplifies.

In Hegel’s system, the alien phenomenal self has become an alien world. On occasion he calls it a ‘perverted world’ (verkehrte Welt). The image of man against himself has now turned into an image of man against the world. The world-self as conscious subject holds, in nature and the successive worlds of culture, the world-self as alien object. And spirit’s war against itself is expressed in man’s ceaseless endeavour to conquer cognitively a world experienced as alien and hostile in its objectivity. Its struggle toward self-realization is a mighty battle of the human mind to re-internalize the world in thought. As Hegel puts it: ‘The tendency of all man’s endeavours is to understand the world, to appropriate and subdue it to himself; and to this end the positive reality of the world must be as it were crushed and pounded, in other words, idealized.’

Thus, Hegelian knowing means self-discovery, whereby spirit in a given conscious subject comes to recognize itself in what had appeared to be a world apart from it. Knowing is the de- alienation of the external world, which (by Hegel’s definition) is a product of spirit’s own activity of self-externalization. To spirit become conscious in man, it at first presents the appearance of being simply ‘substance’, object or non-self. But its substantiality, its apparent otherness or objectivity, is illusory. The consciousness of the given objective world as something other than self is an ‘untrue consciousness’. The act of knowing is the piercing of the illusion of otherness. It strips the object of its alien objectivity, and the false consciousness of the object as ‘other’ gives way to a true consciousness of it as ‘self-ish’ (selbstisch).

Hegel’s technical term for this metamorphosis that the object undergoes through the act of knowing is Aufhebung, which may be translated as ‘transcendence’. He emphasizes that transcendence has the twofold connotation of destruction and preservation. The transcended or aufgehoben object has been destroyed qua object or ‘other’ but preserved as mental content. The transcended objective world is, in other words, a de- alienated one. Moreover, the act of knowing is a transcendence of the subject-object relation as one of spirit’s self- alienation. It transforms the subject-object relation into a subject-subject
relation wherein spirit has only self before it in consciousness, having recognized the objective world as externalized spirit.

Spirit is now 'at home with itself in its otherness'. The object has been 'mediated' by the understanding, and spirit has returned to itself out of the state of self-alienation. It has become spirit for as well as in itself, since the world before it in consciousness is recognized as an externalized self. Spirit has shown itself—or at any rate that part of itself comprised in the given phenomenal world—to be spirit. It now knows that 'What seems to take place outside it, to be an activity directed against it, is its own doing, its own activity; and substance shows that it is in reality subject.' Spirit, however, enters into a new state of self-division and alienation when a new culture-world arises through the next historic act of spirit's self-externalization, and this calls forth a fresh effort of reintegration through knowing. The new historical formation requires to be grasped, recognized as spirit, and thus transcended in thought. History comprises the entire aggregate of such cycles of spirit's externalization, alienation, and transcendence of the alienation by the act of knowing.

The psychology of Hegelian spirit still remains unclarified in one critically important aspect. Hegel makes out the subject-object relation as such to be a relation of estrangement. But it is not immediately evident why it should be so experienced. It is not clear why man as self-conscious spirit should apprehend the objective world as alien and hostile in its very objectivity. Why does spirit experience 'what seems to take place outside it' as 'an activity directed against it'? The question directs attention to spirit's image of itself, which Hegel calls its 'concept' (Begriff). Like Kantian man, the Hegelian knowing subject is an absolute self in his image or idea of himself. The definition of absoluteness has, however, undergone a change. Kantian man's absolute self is a moral absolute; it is the image of the self as a morally perfect being. The absolute self of the Hegelian knower, on the other hand, is an ontological absolute. It is an image of the self as God, and God, as we have seen, is defined by Hegel as absolute and infinite being, the whole of reality.

This is the central point for an understanding of Hegel's view of the experience of alienation. It explains why the conscious subject apprehends the objective world confronting it in consciousness as an alien and hostile world. Hegel points out that 'an object means a something else, a negative confronting me'. Given the conscious subject's idea of itself as absolute being or das Ganze, a 'something else' cannot but be experienced as a 'negative' or hostile being, an enemy to be assailed and destroyed. For it negates the absoluteness of the knower. Otherness as such is an intolerable affront to Hegelian spirit, a mortal challenge to its idea of itself. The apprehension of a 'something else' is by implication an apprehension of the self as non-absolute, and this can only be, in Hegel's famous phrase in the Phenomenology, an 'unhappy consciousness' of self-estrangement. In so far as a 'something else' independently subsists, the world contains something other than the knowing subject, and the subject is not the whole, not infinite being—or at any rate is not conscious of itself as such. This is what makes the object qua object a 'negative', and gives it an alien and hostile appearance to Hegelian spirit.

For Hegel alienation is finitude, and finitude in turn is bondage. The experience of self-estrangement in the presence of an apparent objective world is an experience of enslavement. The logic of this proposition follows from what has already been said. Spirit, when confronted with an object or 'other', is ipso facto aware of itself as merely finite being, as embracing only so much and no more of reality, as extending only so far and no farther. The object is, therefore, a 'limit' (Grenze). And a limit, since it contradicts spirit's notion of itself as absolute being, i.e. being-without-limit, is necessarily apprehended as a 'barrier' or 'fetter' (Schanke). It is a barrier to spirit's awareness of itself as that which it conceives itself truly to be—the whole of reality. In its confrontation with an apparent object, spirit feels imprisoned in limitation. It experiences what Hegel calls the 'sorrow of finitude'.

The transcendence of the object through knowing is spirit's way of rebelling against finitude and making the break for freedom. In Hegel's quite unique conception of it, freedom means the consciousness of self as unbounded; it is the absence of a limiting object or non-self. As he states in his Logic, 'freedom means that the object with which you deal is a second self...

For freedom it is necessary that we should feel no presence of something which is not ourselves.' The presence of 'something
which is not ourselves’ is imprisonment in finitude. The transformation of it into a ‘second self’ through the act of knowing, which divests the object of its illusory objectivity and shows it to be selbstisch in nature, is release from finitude. It yields a consciousness of self as unbounded by any object, hence as infinite in extent. The knowing self now stands alone with itself in the universe, unopposed by any alien seeming non-self. This consciousness of ‘being alone with self’ (Bei-sich-selbst-sein) is precisely what Hegel means by the consciousness of freedom. And on this basis he speaks of the cognitive enterprise in a wonderfully vivid metaphor as ‘that voyage into the open, where nothing is below us or above us, and we stand in solitude with ourselves alone’.

Accordingly, the growth of spirit’s self-knowledge in history is alternatively describable as a progress of the consciousness of freedom. This is the formula that Hegel uses in his lectures on the philosophy of history. But it must be understood that ‘being alone with self’ is his definition of the consciousness of freedom. Whereas Western philosophers have generally regarded solipsism, or the state of being the only existent thing, as a predicament to be avoided if possible, a condition from which it is desirable to extricate oneself at the outset of philosophizing, it is for Hegel the philosophical goal and ideal. Ultimate freedom is the awareness of the self as infinite being. This conception of freedom excludes the possibility that more than one being could become fully free.

The student of Hegel who fails to grasp this peculiar Hegelian notion of freedom may wrongly infer from his frequent use of the term that he is a ‘philosopher of freedom’ in some one of the generally accepted meanings of the word. Those who make this error have often supported it by referring to Hegel’s well known dictum: ‘The East knew and to the present day knows that One is free; the Greek and Roman world that some are free; the German world knows that All are free.’ But Hegel proceeds at this point to explain that monarchy (in the Prussian form) is the system under which ‘All are free’. The individual subjects are accorded a merely vicarious experience of freedom in so far as they consciously merge their being into that of the authoritarian state, which is the divine substance. They are free only as self-conscious particles of this substance.

Hegel’s conception of freedom is totalitarian in a literal sense
from the lower to the higher degree of moral perfection'. Fichte, although he went beyond Kant in Hegel's direction, retained the Kantian notion of endless approximation. Thus he saw history as 'a constant progress towards higher perfection in a line that runs out into the Infinite'.

Hegel objects that the Kant-Fichte point of view is 'timid and incomplete' in that it fails to provide for a consummation of the self-infinitizing process. What makes the 'wrong infinite' wrong is that one never gets to it. In effect, a 'dualism' of two realms is set up, with 'the infinite abiding on yonder side and the finite steadfast on this'. 'With such empty and other-worldly stuff', says Hegel, 'philosophy has nothing to do.' The wrong infinite is an expression of the misconception that sets God apart from the world of flux. In contrast, the genuine infinite of Hegelian dialectic is a kind of dynamic monism. It is a process not of endless approximation to a never-to-be-reached state of infinity, but rather of oscillation from finitude to infinity in an ever widening arc, a progress through a series of proximate states of infinity to an ultimate one ('absolute knowledge'). The state of infinity, or being-without-limit, is continually being reached through the cognitive act by which the conscious subject destroys the objectivity of the object.

The state of infinity figures in this conception as simply the 'not-finite' or negation of finitude through knowing. Accordingly, the formula for the genuine infinite is 'negation of negation', which Hegel calls the fundamental notion of philosophy. The explanation of it follows from the analysis already given. The limit (object) is a 'negative' of the inherently limitless self, and the self in the state of finitude is a negation of itself. The Aufhebung of the object may therefore be described as a negation of negation. Alternatively, it may be said that the knowing subject has by this means suppressed or abolished itself as a limited being, hence has negated itself as a negation of itself. Thus negation of negation is the schema of the historical process of spirit's self-aggrandizement to infinity.

Hegel emphasizes that negation of negation is not a 'neutralization' but rather an 'affirmation'. This means that the dialectical process, though immediately destructive in character, is constructive in outcome. Spirit gains positive affirmation of itself as infinite through its successive acts of self-abolition as
and the theory of politics have something basically in common. Hans Kelsen observes: ‘The main problem of political theory is the relationship between the subject and the object of domination; the main problem of epistemology is the relationship between the subject and the object of cognition. The process of domination is not so different from that of cognition by which the subject tries to be master of his object . . .’

Hegel’s theory of history as a knowing process contains a clear illustration of this parallel. It exhibits what might be called an ‘epistemological totalitarianism’. The dialectic is a process of spirit’s self-aggrandizement to infinity through the cognitive conquest of the world stage by stage. It is a boundless expansionism on the plane of thought. And the analogy with the corresponding process on the political plane finds further reflection in the character of Hegel’s world-conquering Geist. He endows it with a monstrous acquisitive urge that expresses, in turn, a will to power over all external things.

Knowing for Hegel is aggrandizement of the self through aggression against the object. The process of transcending limits involves a series of aggressive moves against the limiting not-self. In the act of destroying the object qua object or otherness, spirit appropriates it as a self-content, as a subjective possession or, in Hegel’s characteristic phrase, as ‘property of the ego’ (Eigentum des Ichs). Hence the process is essentially expansionist, for spirit, having negated the object as object, emerges enlarged, richer in subjective content or ‘spiritual substance’ (die geistige Substanz) than before. This is the point that Hegel has in mind when he emphasizes that aufheben has the dual connotation of destroying and preserving. The negated or transcended object has ceased to exist as object or otherness, but is preserved and stored away as spiritual substance.

To illustrate by the parallel political process, an act of armed aggression against another state may mean at once its destruction qua sovereign state and the appropriation of the given country by the aggressor. It is an act of aggrandizement via destruction of the other’s independence, and in this sense a destructive process has a ‘constructive’ result. So, for Hegel, knowing means spirit’s infinite self-aggrandizement at the expense of the sovereign independence of the objective world. Spirit, by making war upon otherness, aggrandizes itself. It grows richer and richer in spiritual substance as the objective
owning the whole of reality as its property, as unified in the
sense that nothing subsists as not-self, and as free in the sense
that all fetters of finitude are broken. And this, according to
Hegel, is the stage now reached.

His philosophical religion of self involved a radical act of
resignation from the world. Later in life, he emphasized this in
a comment on the nature of philosophy. He remarked that
there are times 'which impel the soul of nobler natures to seek
refuge from the present in ideal regions—in order to find in
them that harmony with itself which it can no longer enjoy in
this discordant real world. . . .'12 His own youthful inner drama
is reflected in this observation. Hegel's soul was the seat of a
deep conflict that grew out of its search for 'harmony with
itself' as divinely omniscient. He attempted to resolve the con-

cflict by withdrawal into a world of imagination. He abandoned
the ground of 'this discordant real world', and soared aloft in
imagination to 'ideal regions'. He gave full rein to a grandiose
fantasy in which the urge of the self-glorifying human self to
be godlike, and its efforts toward this end, are visualized as the
means by which God realizes himself as God. He then took the
still more radical step of drawing the real world up behind him
into the ideal regions. He took the fantasy as the discovery of the
truth, embodied it in a philosophy of history.

In a fragment written shortly after his 'breakthrough' of 1800,
Hegel said that philosophy has to establish 'a new religion in
which the infinite grief and the whole gravity of its discord is
acknowledged, but is at the same time serenely and purely dis-
solved. . . . To embrace the whole energy of the suffering and
discord that has enrolled the world and all its forms of culture
for some thousand years, and also to rise above it—this can be
done by philosophy alone.'13 He proceeded to create this 'new
religion' in his own philosophy of history. It was a philosophical
religion of self involving the vicarious experience of world history
as the process of the self's realization. The philosophizing mind
is, as it were, a participant-spectator at the show of existence
conceived as God's own inner drama. It takes part in the drama
through the act of comprehending it. The thinker qua thinker is
the principal actor, for the action itself is supremely a process
of thought. Salvation lies in the philosopher's vision of what
is happening, and in his understanding of how it came to pass:
'The consummation of the infinite End consists merely in
removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished.'14
As Hegel otherwise expressed it in a statement quoted earlier
here, the goal is to participate in the 'redemption' objectively
occurring in the history of the world by 'learning to know God
as our true and essential self'.

Although the philosopher is the principal actor, his mind
being the organ of God's growing self-consciousness, the men
who compose the non-philosophizing mass of humanity also
have their large or humble parts to play in the historical drama.
Hegel ingeniously explains their role in a doctrine of the
'cunning of reason'. It holds that the doers of history, the world-
historical individuals and nations, are unwitting 'agents' of the
realization of the Absolute Idea or God. The heroes of history
and the nations they lead achieve results that transcend their
immediate conscious ends-in-view. They are not aware, or not
fully aware, of the significance of their own empire-building
exploits and other great deeds in the total plan of history. Their
conscious goals are private and self-seeking, having in view only
the glory of the individual or the nation. Driven compulsively
by the 'passions' for fame or power, they expend and finally
destroy themselves. Thus Hegel says of the world-historical
individuals: 'They attained no calm enjoyment; their whole
life was labour and trouble; their whole nature was wrought
else but their master-passion. When their object is attained they
fall off like empty hulls from the kernel. They die early, like
Alexander; they are murdered, like Caesar; transported to
St Helena, like Napoleon.'15

But the self-sacrifice of men and nations in the search for glory
yields spirit the knowledge of itself that it seeks. Individual and
collective labours of culture-creation are performed in the service
of the self-regarding passions. These labours objectify the mani-
fold potentialities of spirit, and furnish spirit as personified in
the contemplative knower with the requisite materials for its
self-knowledge. 'The special interest of passion is thus insepar-
able from the actualization of the universal', writes Hegel. 'It
is not the general Idea that involves itself in opposition and com-
batt and exposes itself to danger; it remains in the background,
untouched and uninjured. This may be called the cunning of
reason—that it sets the passions to work for itself, while that
through which it develops itself pays the penalty and suffers the
loss.\textsuperscript{18} The Idea does not have to do any work to gain actualization;
self-glorifying man does all the work, and destroys himself in
the process. The Idea—meaning concretely the idea that the
self is God—merely ignites the passion for self-aggrandizement
in individuals and nations, and they themselves do the work,
put forth great bursts of historical energy, use themselves up
destructively, and finally perish in exhaustion. It is very clever
of the Idea—runs Hegel's argument—to be able to exploit men's
capacities and energies in this way, to evoke so much labour
and sacrifice and suffering without, so to speak, lifting a finger
on its own part. There emerges the picture of a diabolically
cunning deity who gains realization at the expense of man's
self-destruction as man. This has stimulated one of Hegel's
commentators to remark that the Hegelian philosophy of
history may be seen not as the Theodicy that Hegel claimed
it to be, but as a demonody or justification of the ways of the
devil.\textsuperscript{19}\textsuperscript{*}

However, the most accurate formula for it would seem to
be: an apologia for pride, Hegel gives us a picture of a self-
glorifying humanity striving compulsively, and at the end suc-
cessfully, to rise to divinity. If man as knower is inspired by
the Faustian urge towards omniscience, man as historical doer
pursues the absolute in more mundane ways. The generic
tendency of man is megalomania. Hegel clearly sees and stresses
that he becomes its victim. The demonic force in man that leads
him to reach out for the absolute and unlimited in his own per-
son or nation is one that also divides him against himself,
deprives him of happiness, and ultimately encompasses his ruin.
Hence Hegel's self-deifying humanity is likewise a suffering
humanity. The path it traverses through time is a 'highway of
despair'. History is the 'slaughter-bench' at which the happiness
of peoples is sacrificed. Again, 'The history of the world is not

\textsuperscript{*} Hegel was at one time an interested reader of Adam Smith, and the influence
of Smith is probably to be seen in the doctrine of the cunning of reason. Smith wrote
that economic man 'is led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part
of his intention' (\textit{The Wealth of Nations}, p. 423). The idea was that the pursuit
of egoistic self-interest in the economic realm promotes a benevolent ulterior con-
sequence (the wealth of nations) that is not the end-in-view of the individual agents
concerned. Hegel's cunning of reason may be viewed as an adaptation of Smith's
invisible hand. In his version, the egoistic 'passions' for fame or power impel men
to fulfill a supra-individual purpose (the realization of the Absolute Idea) that does
not figure in their separate individual intentions.
sacred interests inconsiderately—a conduct which indeed subjects them to moral reprehension. But so mighty a figure must trample down many an innocent flower, crush to pieces many an object in its path.'\textsuperscript{20} He explains that the egoistic passions, such as the ‘morbid craving’ for fame and conquest, are the ‘most effective springs of action’. Their historicity is bound up with their immorality. Their very power to make history lies in the fact that ‘they respect none of the limitations which justice and morality would impose upon them; and that these natural impulses have a more direct influence over man than the artificial and tedious discipline that tends to order and self-restraint, law and morality’.\textsuperscript{21}

Thus the apologia for pride embraces a doctrine of the historical beneficence of moral evil. Moreover, Hegel verges on the complete and explicit ‘transvaluation of values’ that Nietzsche later carried through. He argues that those who would morally condemn the great man’s ‘master-passion’ as a vice are mean-minded souls consumed, like Homer’s Thersites, with envy and resentment. They are ‘psychological valets’, exponents of ‘Thersitism’.\textsuperscript{22} This suggests a morality of pride, which does not simply justify it by its historical fruits but glorifies in it for its intrinsic beauty and goodness. Nietzsche drew this radical conclusion when he propounded his ‘morality of self-glorification’ based on ‘pride in oneself, a radical enmity and irony toward “selflessness”’.\textsuperscript{23} Out of it emerges the well known Nietzschean antithesis between ‘master-morality’ and ‘slave-morality’. The former is the morality of pride. The latter, which is said to have its source in envy and resentment, is Hegel’s servile Thersitism broadened to include the whole of the Hebraic-Christian moral tradition. If Nietzsche’s condemnation of that tradition was thus implicit already in Hegel, this only reinforces the view that Hegel never really abandoned the ground of his early attack upon Christianity. Instead, he built a theology upon it.
Hegel's picture of the advancement of knowledge as a progressive puncturing of illusions. Bauer interpreted this to mean the evolution of critical consciousness via the progressive exposure of dogmas, and saw it as the present task of the critical consciousness to expose the God-illusion and show man to be the real Deity.

The extremists among the Young Hegelians, including Marx, proclaimed 'atheism' as the motto of the movement. This term, however, had a very special connotation for them. It meant the recognition of man as the sole divinity. 'Atheism' was a bellicose way of saying 'God is man'. Marx formulated this position in the preface of his doctoral dissertation: 'Philosophy makes no secret of it. The confession of Prometheus: “In one word, I hate all the gods”, is its very own confession, its own sentence against all heavenly and earthly gods who refuse to recognize human self-consciousness as the supreme divinity — by the side of which none other shall be held.' Man, in other words, shall have no other gods beside himself. He shall worship himself as the Supreme Being.

Marx entered the University of Berlin in 1836 at the age of eighteen. He soon steeped himself in Hegelianism and became a leading figure in the circle of Young Hegelians at the University. Keen of mind and mordant of temper, he quickly mastered the intricacies of the dialectic. But it was by no means purely an intellectual impulse that drew him to Hegel's teaching. What made Hegelianism irresistibly compelling to young Marx was the theme of man's soaring into the unlimited. His own darkly proud and boundlessly ambitious nature, in which his worried father Heinrich discerned what he called a 'Faust-like spirit', was the key to this response. Otto Rühle, a Marxist biographer of Marx, writes of Karl's student period: 'The urge to be godlike forms his plans in life and guides all his activities.' It is small wonder, then, that he succumbed to the spell of a philosophical system in which the 'urge to be godlike' receives the highest metaphysical sanction and is pictured as the motive force of the history of the world.

Marx found Hegel superior to Kant and Fichte because of his seeming success in disposing of the dichotomy of 'is' and 'ought' that remained unresolved in the systems of his two predecessors. In a letter to his father in 1837, when he was beginning to steep himself in philosophy, he described the opposition between that which is and that which ought to be as the distinguishing feature of idealism, which in turn he equated with the philosophies of Kant and Fichte. What especially attracted him to Hegel was this philosopher's surmounting of the characteristic difficulty of idealism. Among some verses written by young Marx that year, there is an epigram in which Hegel says: 'Kant and Fichte were fond of flying off into the upper air, seeking there a distant land; I only try valiantly to understand what I find on the roadway.'

Marx became a passionate disciple of Hegelianism, and distinguished himself among the Young Hegelians at Berlin by the fierceness of his loyalty and attachment to the master. In one of the notes to his doctoral dissertation, for example, he reproached those among the radicals who presumed to stand in judgment over Hegel for the philosopher's 'accommodation' to the authorities. It is unscrupulous, wrote Marx, to make such criticisms of a teacher 'for whom science was not something received ready-made but was just being created, so that the spiritual blood of his very heart pulsed to its farthest periphery.'

The electrifying message that he found in Hegel was the idea that man is God. Hegelianism was the 'philosophy' whose very own confession was that of Prometheus. Its epochal significance lay in the revelation of 'human self-consciousness' as the supreme divinity by the side of which none other should be held. Marx was so carried away with this idea that he propounded among his Young Hegelian friends in Berlin the argument that Hegel himself should be regarded as an 'atheist' in their sense. One of these friends, Bruno Bauer, embodied this argument in a pamphlet that was published anonymously in 1841 under the title, The Trumpet of the Last Judgment Over Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist. Whether Marx directly collaborated with Bauer in the writing of this pamphlet is not certain, but it undoubtedly reflected his views and his inspiration. Affecting the standpoint of a devout Lutheran dismayed by the official approbation of Hegelianism, it presented a series of quotations from Hegel designed to show that he was not at all a pious conservative but a dangerous radical and atheist. In other words, Hegel himself was portrayed as a Young Hegelian.

It must be acknowledged that the Young Hegelians had a strong claim to the Hegelian inheritance. Their 'criticism of
religion' was a logical outgrowth of Hegel's philosophical religion of self. For the idea of the dialectical unity of the divine and human natures was indeed, as we have seen, the axis of Hegelianism. Hegel rejected in no uncertain terms the traditional dualism of God and man. He presented history as the story of man's self-elevation from finite to infinite life, as God's own self-realization in the person of man. It may be argued that Marx's 'atheist' interpretation of Hegel simply drew the radical conclusion implicit in this idea.

On the other hand, it is rather obvious that Hegel himself would have disowned his ardent young champion. He was not a Young Hegelian. In order to explain this paradox, we must recall the peculiar personal experience in which the Hegelian philosophical religion of self centred for its founder. He had started from a position similar to that of the Young Hegelians, i.e. by denying the transmundane God of Christianity. Then, however, he identified himself with this God, and recast the concept of God accordingly. The quietism and conservativism of his later outlook, and his claim to have assimilated the truth of Christianity into his own system of philosophy, rested on this act of self-identification. Naturally, one who conceives himself as the man in whom God has come to clear and full self-knowledge does not proclaim himself an atheist.

The relation between Hegel and the Young Hegelian movement must be understood against this background. After breaking through the too confining walls of traditional religion in order to lift his head to infinity, Hegel constructed, in his philosophical system, a tower of pride that purported to envelop the broken temple walls. He practised therein a private religion whose ritual consisted essentially in Hegelian philosophizing, the apprehension and demonstration that the self is God. The Young Hegelians, on the other hand, were not practitioners of the religion, but only devotees of the idea. They experienced in themselves, as in the case of Marx, at most an 'urge to be godlike'—something different from the experience of oneself as God come to full self-consciousness. They worked with Hegelianism in detachment from the special personal experience that enabled Hegel to argue that all was right with the world since God was realized. For him, the private religion was a solution, a way of life, redemption, and his outlook, accordingly, was quietistic. For them, Hegelianism was not a solution but a programme.

What they derived from Hegel was the idea of the unity of the human and the divine. Their outlook, therefore, was radical. The great system was a map on which one could trace the road to man's destination—divinity. But man had yet to arrive at the destination. His divinity was something yet to be existentially realized. Hence the Young Hegelian slogan, which was at once the outcome of Hegelianism and quite un-Hegelian: 'Realization of philosophy!'

The detachment of the Hegelian idea from the setting of the private religion as practised by Hegel was explosive in its consequences. As Engels put it, German philosophy's discovery that 'God is man' called for a rearrangement of the world that would make it possible for man to experience himself in it as a godlike being. This world-revolutionary inference from Hegelianism was Marx's first premise too, and started him off on the path to the creation of Marxism as a doctrine of world revolution.

Marx elaborated the concept of the realization of philosophy before coming into serious contact with contemporary doctrines of socialism and communism. He did so in a series of notes for his doctoral dissertation, which was written between 1839 and 1841. In the notes Marx sketches what he calls the *curriculum vitae* of philosophy. He says that there are certain 'key points' in its development at which spiritual existence becomes free and enriched to universality, and an integral new thought-world is born in the mind of the philosopher. Such key points are the great world philosophies, the Aristotelian in antiquity and the Hegelian in modern times. In the historical aftermaths, philosophy assumes a practical attitude toward the world, appears on the scene as an 'actor'. In antiquity, it 'takes on canine appearance as the Cynic, dons the cloak of a seer as the Alexandrian, or fresh spring apparel as the Epicurean'. But the essence of the situation at such a time is that philosophy, as 'subjective consciousness', comes into collision with the existing world, revolts against reality.

*The substance of the work, entitled *On the Difference between the Democritian and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature*, is of little interest. The choice of topic reflected Marx's idea that the present post-Hegelian period was historically analogous to the post-Aristotelian period in antiquity. Hegel was the Aristotle of modern thought. Hence a study of the post-Aristotelian period might contribute to a clarification of the present situation.
The inner self-satisfaction is broken, says Marx, and 'That which was an inner light becomes a consuming flame, turned outward.' The 'spiritual monad', ideally formed in all respects, cannot accept existing reality: 'It is a psychological law that the theoretical spirit, having become free within itself, is transformed into practical energy and, appearing as will from Amenhés' shadowy realm, turns against the earthly reality existing apart from it.' Thus, the Hegelian philosophical idea is transformed in Hegel's disciples into a will to revolt against a world not yet shaped in the image of that idea: 'Just as Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven, begins to build houses and establish himself on earth, so philosophy, having embraced the whole world, revolts against the world of phenomena. So now with the Hegelian philosophy."

The workings of the 'psychological law' behind philosophy's revolt against the world are explained by Marx as follows. The relation of a philosophical system to the existing world is one of 'reflection'. That is, the system's 'spiritual bearers' aspire to 'make the world philosophical' to bring reality into harmony with the idealized image of a world which philosophy has brought forth in thought. They want to liberate the 'earthly reality' from its present 'unphilosophical condition'. In fact, they are driven to do so, for only in this way can they liberate themselves: 'By liberating the world from the unphilosophical condition, they at the same time liberate themselves from philosophy, which, in the form of a definite system, has held them in fetters.' Thus, the realization of philosophy is, at the same time, its loss. That is to say, the translation of philosophy into earthly reality, the transformation of the 'world of phenomena' in the image of philosophy, will spell the end of philosophy's existence qua philosophy or thought-world. 'Thus it transpires that in the degree to which the world becomes philosophical, philosophy becomes worldly, that its realization is simultaneously its loss.'

Finally, Marx permits himself some reflections on the character of the impending period of history. One should not be dismayed, he says, by the storm which follows upon a great world philosophy. The lines are drawn now for battle. The world is a 'split world'. It is rent by a mighty 'inner discord'. On one side stands the integral thought-world of Hegelian philosophy; on the other, the unphilosophical earthly reality or world of phenomena. Humanity is now on the verge of an 'iron epoch' comparable to the Roman era of the ancient world. The iron epoch will be a happy one if it is marked by a 'titanic struggle'. What this situation calls for is not 'half-way minds' but rather 'integral commanders' who will never accept a 'peace treaty with real needs'.

This declaration of unlimited war against the existing world on behalf of the 'realization of philosophy' was the initial major step that Marx took along the road leading to the creation of Marxism. Although he was still very far from the Materialist Conception of History, he had already arrived at a general idea of world revolution. And he had done so as a disciple of Hegel. The image of spirit in hostile confrontation with an alien world, and of the revolutionary transformation of this world by spirit, was an integral part of the Hegelian philosophy. This has undergone a metamorphosis and become, in Marx's mind, the image of 'philosophy' in hostile confrontation with an alien world. In its original form, the Marxian revolutionary imperative was a demand to 'make the world philosophical'. It expressed a sweeping indictment and rejection of earthly reality on the ground of its 'unphilosophical condition'.

It is often said that Marx began his intellectual career as an Hegelian idealist and that he abandoned the Hegelian starting point in the course of the later evolution of his thought to Marxism. The materials just reviewed show that this point of view is not quite accurate. Marx indeed began as a disciple of Hegelianism, but his relation to the Hegelian system was from the start a very peculiar one. If being an Hegelian means accepting Hegelianism as true, then Marx was never at any time an Hegelian. The original impulse of his thought was expressed in the watchword of 'realization of philosophy', which in turn implied that Hegelianism was not true but ought to be. Marx from the beginning 'believed' in Hegelianism not as a true account of reality but only as a programme. He was an Hegelian in this sense alone; and in this sense he always remained one.

As he saw it at the time he wrote the notes to the dissertation, Hegelianism was a grand fantasy, a fantasy of man's historical self-realization as God. Hegel was a philosophical Moses who had led mankind to the promised land in thought. He had constructed a universe in imagination, a thought-world in which man, in the course of history, comes to know himself as God. However, the existing world was not 'philosophical'. It was not a
world in which man had come to experience himself as a godlike being. The idea of making the world philosophical arose in Marx's mind as the idea of acting out Hegelianism in real history, of making it come true, of translating Hegel's beautiful philosophical dream into reality.

The motto of the Young Hegelian movement was 'criticism', and Marx in his first period looked to criticism as the means by which the world might be made philosophical. He and others enlarged upon the notion of criticism of religion. Typically, he went farther than anyone else. In a letter to his friend Arnold Ruge in 1843, he called for 'a merciless criticism of everything existing, merciless in two senses: this criticism must not take fright at its own conclusions and must not shrink from a collision with the powers that be.' And in an essay published the following year under the title of 'Introduction to the Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right', he explained further that criticism 'is not an anatomic knife but a weapon. Its object is its enemy, which it wants not to refute but to destroy. . . . Criticism concerned with this object is hand-to-hand criticism. . . . The real oppression must be made still more oppressive by joining it to the consciousness of oppression; the shame more shameful by publicizing it. . . . The people must be made to take fright at itself as a means of breathing valour into it.' At this time, however, he added that the weapon of criticism would have to be supplemented with 'criticism by weapons', and announced that philosophy had found its 'material weapon' in the proletariat.

Marx completed his dissertation in March 1841. Some months later Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity was published. This was the most important philosophical event in Germany since the death of Hegel. It marked both a culminination of the Young Hegelian trend and at the same time a reaction against Hegel from within the movement. In the following year Feuerbach published his Preliminary Theses on the Reform of Philosophy, and in 1843 another important work, Fundamental Tenets of the Philosophy of the Future. These writings caused a tremendous stir within the world of the Hegelian philosophical self-consciousness.

Marx was ecstatic, as can be seen from his following reaction to the first of them: 'I advise you speculative theologians and
inversion, which Feuerbach calls ‘transformational criticism’, extracts the esoteric psychology from Hegelian metaphysics. It clarifies the latent truth-content of Hegelianism: ‘It suffices to put the predicate in place of the subject everywhere, i.e. to turn speculative philosophy upside down, and we arrive at the truth in its unconcealed, pure, manifest form.’¹ Hegelian theology turned upside down equals the truth about man in his religious condition of self-alienation. This is the constitutive formula of Feuerbach’s philosophy of religion as elaborated in his Essence of Christianity. Thus it was not Marx but Feuerbach who originally turned Hegel ‘upside down’. Marx was Feuerbach’s follower in this pivotal operation.

The reasoning process involved in it is revealed most clearly in the chapter of the book dealing with Hegel’s doctrine of God. First Feuerbach formulates the ‘manifest’ position of Hegel: ‘Man is the revealed God; in man the divine essence first realizes itself and unfolds itself. In the creation of nature, God goes outside of himself, he has relation to what is other than himself, but in man he returns into himself:—man knows God, because in him God finds and knows himself, feels himself as God.’² This, Feuerbach continues, is the truth in reverse. It has to be turned upside down if we are to see things in the simple daylight of reality.

The actual fact reflected upside down in Hegel’s proposition that man is the ‘revealed God’ is that God is the revealed man:

But if it is only in human feelings and wants that the divine ‘nothing’ becomes something, obtains qualities, then the being of man is alone the real being of God—man is the real God. And if in the consciousness which man has of God first arises the self-consciousness of God, then the human consciousness is, per se, the divine consciousness. Why then dost thou alienate man’s consciousness from him, and make it the self-consciousness of a being distinct from him? Why dost thou vindicate being to God, to man only the consciousness of that being? . . . The true statement is this: man’s knowledge of God is man’s knowledge of himself, of his own nature. . . . Where the consciousness of God is, there is the being of God—in man, therefore; in the being of God it is only thy own being which is an object to thee, and what presents itself before thy consciousness is simply what lies behind it.³

Thus, by the method of ‘transformational criticism’ Hegel’s proposition that man is the revealed God is transformed into
Feuerbach typically employs the word 'man' in a generic or collective sense. His human subject is the human race, the species (Späte). The species is the real being, and individual man is simply a particular instance of the life of the species. God, or the absolute self, is an idealized image of the positive attributes of the species: 'God as the epitome of all realities or perfections is nothing other than a compendious summary devised for the benefit of the limited individual, an epitome of the generic human qualities distributed among men, in the self-realization of the species in the course of world history.' This idealized generic man, or absolute self representing the sum of perfections of the species, is projected as God and entertained by individual man as his object of worship. Hence religion is human self-worship.

The result, according to Feuerbach, is man's estrangement from himself. He dualizes himself through his self-externalization as God. He becomes a divided being, a dual personality, two selves: the idealized generic self that he worships as God, and the limited and imperfect empirical human self that he sees when he turns back upon himself from the standpoint of God. What he sees when he thus looks down upon himself from the divine heights of his own imagination is a poor, inferior, contemptible being. Having invested all the riches of human nature in the image of himself as God, he feels worthless and abased in his merely human capacity: 'To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must become nothing.'

All that is highest and best in man has been incorporated in the divine alter ego:

Religion is the disuniting of man from himself; he sets God before him as the antithesis of himself. God is not what man is—man is not what God is. God is the infinite, man the finite being; God is perfect, man imperfect; God eternal, man temporal; God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. God and man are extremes: God is the absolutely positive, the sum of all realities; man the absolutely negative, comprehending all negations.

Bereft of all the ideal attributes that are conceived to belong not to him but to God, man has nothing of value left in himself. This is the suffering consciousness of human self-alienation as portrayed by Feuerbach. His alienated religious man is a suffering man.

If God is the standard by which religious man measures himself and finds himself worthless, the inference can only be that he apprehends in God the self that he himself ought to be. While projecting God as a being outside himself, man must, at the same time, somehow identify this being as his own true self. This alone would explain why the awareness of a vast discrepancy between God and himself should be a suffering consciousness of self-alienation. Feuerbach quite clearly makes this inference. 'If God is really a different being from myself', he inquires, 'why should his perfection trouble me?' Elsewhere he is still more explicit: 'God is nothing other than the prototype and ideal of man: as God is, so man should be and desires to be, or at least hopes to become sometime.' Again, in discussing the conception of God as the morally perfect being, he remarks that this is 'no merely theoretical, inert conception, but a practical one, calling me to action, to imitation, throwing me into strife, into disunion with myself; for while it proclaims to me what I ought to be, it also tells me to my face, without any flattery, what I am not.'

Although he here presents the God-ideal as a call to action that man issues to himself, Feuerbach elsewhere pictures the self-worshipping religious man as a passive being given over to the 'life of theory'. Instead of realizing his human potentialities, he consoles himself with a purely imaginary and therefore pseudo-realization of himself in the dream about God. Living a life of fantasy, absorbed in the beautiful vision of himself as God, man lets real life pass him by unlived. The imaginary realization of himself in the contemplation of God as fully actualized being is a 'compensation for the poverty of life' and 'substitute for the lost world'. And the poorer his life outside the religious dream, the richer the dream life and its object must themselves become: 'The more empty life is, the fuller, the more concrete is God. The impoverishing of the real world and the enriching of God is one act.'

One of Feuerbach's illustrations of this general thesis merits special mention here because of its important role in the rise of Marxism. He argues that man is inherently a creative being who derives joy from productive activity willingly performed:

* Significantly, he refers here to the authority of Kant, citing the statement in Kant's Critique of Practical Reason: 'That which, in our own judgment, derogates from our self-conceit, humiliates us. Thus the moral law inevitably humiliates every man when he compares it with the sensual tendency of his own nature' (Essence of Christianity, p. 47).
VI

MARX AND FEUERBACH

Feuerbach is the only one who has a serious, critical attitude to the Hegelian dialectic, and who has made genuine discoveries in this field. He is in fact the true conqueror of the old philosophy.

MARX (1844)

The enthusiastic reception that Marx accorded Feuerbach’s Essence of Christianity and subsequent writings of 1842–3 has been noted. Feuerbach was the ‘brook of fire’ through which all speculative philosophers and theologians must go if they wanted to reach things as they are in reality. Many similar comments by Marx during the years between 1842 and 1845 attest to the enormous impact that Feuerbach’s thought had upon him. In his Paris manuscripts of 1844, for example, he stated that Feuerbach’s chief writings were the only ones since Hegel’s Phenomenology and Logic that contained ‘a real theoretical revolution’. The question is what, precisely, he meant by this. What was Feuerbach’s message to him?

Judging by Marx’s own statements of the period, some typical examples of which have been cited, he saw in Feuerbach the anti-Hegel who had accomplished single-handedly the revolutionary overthrow of ‘the system’. In the doctoral dissertation Marx had referred to Hegel’s disciples as captives of the system, minds held fast in its fetters. Feuerbach is pictured in various subsequent statements as a liberator. He has delivered the disciples from bondage, shown them the way out of the wilderness of Hegelian idealism to real man in the material world. Significantly, the new Marx no longer speaks of the teacher in the worshipful tones he had previously sounded. His references to Hegel and Hegelianism are no longer those of a grateful disciple, but rather of a thinker who looks back upon Hegel’s philosophy as a traversed stage in the evolution of thought. In The German Ideology, for example, he casually dismisses the Weltgeist as a ‘metaphysical spectre’, and describes the post-Hegelian period in German intellectual life as the time of the ‘putrescence of the absolute spirit’. Clearly, the spell of
Hegelianism upon Marx’s mind had in some sense been broken, and Feuerbach was instrumental in breaking it. All this, however, is only a part, and not yet the decisive part, of the story of Feuerbach’s role in the rise of Marxism. To say that it lay in the overthrow of Hegelianism is, in one sense, deceptive. For the ‘conqueror of the old philosophy’, as Marx describes Feuerbach, had been seduced by the very system that he conquered. If in one sense he overthrew Hegelianism, in another he enthroned it. He grounded it in the human psyche. This was the implication of his contention that ‘Metaphysics is esoteric psychology’. What Hegel represents as taking place in the imaginary world of Geist, it said in effect, is actually taking place in the real world of Mensch. Hegel’s self-alienated God is a mystified portrait of religious man—real man suffering estrangement from himself on the foundation of nature.

This was Feuerbach’s ‘real theoretical revolution’. His immensely exciting message to Marx was that Hegelianism has truth-value. If one has only to turn speculative philosophy ‘upside down’ in order to reach the truth in its ‘unconcealed, pure, manifest form’, it follows that Hegelianism is the truth, albeit in concealed, inverted or mystified form. Here, indeed, was a revolutionary idea for Marx, quite dazzling in its implications. We have outlined earlier his starting point. Two worlds stand in hostile opposition, he had reasoned. On the one hand, there is the grand fantasy, the subjective thought-world of the Hegelian philosophical consciousness, in which the self comes to know itself as God. On the other hand, there is the decidedly unphilosophical ‘earthly reality’ or ‘world of phenomena’, which needs to be transformed in the image of philosophy. Now Feuerbach was arguing that the ‘earthly reality’ is philosophical in the sense that processes imputed by Hegel to spirit are actually operative in man. He was saying in effect that the Hegelian philosophical fantasy is not simply a fantasy, but a fantastic reflection of reality, the reality of man’s self-alienation in religion.

Feuerbach persuaded Marx that there are not two worlds, after all, but only one: the real material world, where man stands on firm and well rounded earth, inhaling and exhaling all the natural forces. The world of the Hegelian philosophical consciousness, in which spirit is alienated from itself and striving to transcend its alienation, is nothing but a fantasy-reflection, a mystical representation, of the condition of man in the real world. The fantasy corresponds to something quite real. The hard, empirical, objective fact of life in earthly reality is the fact of man’s estrangement from himself. Hegelianism, if you only invert it and substitute ‘man’ for ‘God’ or ‘spirit’, gives you the truth. It is a revelation of truth by way of a code that the method of transformational criticism enables us to decipher.

Considering the immensity of this message, it is no wonder that Marx called Feuerbach ‘the purgatory of our time’. There can be no doubt that Feuerbach played a momentous part in Marx’s mental evolution. His ‘naturalization’ of Hegelianism, through which all humanity was projected as self-alienated in the sense of Hegelian philosophy, was a sine qua non of the rise of Marxism; for the main subject of Marx’s first system is just this self-alienation of man. Hence Feuerbach was truly the fulcrum of the movement of thought from Hegelianism to Marxism. Paradoxically, he ‘cured’ Marx of his Hegelianism by giving him a life-long case of the disease. He freed Marx’s mind from its bondage to the system qua system, but he did so by persuading him of the system’s factuality, by suggesting that it was an inverted representation of human reality, a reflection in the philosopher’s mind of the existential condition of man in the natural world. Consequently, the new ‘anti-Hegelian’ Marx, who dismisses the Weltgeist as a metaphysical spectre, is, in a decisive sense, more Hegelian than ever; it is a Marx whose processes of thought about the natural world are infected through and through with Hegelianism.

Significantly, Marx no sooner assimilated Feuerbach’s message than he turned back to Hegel, devoting himself in 1843 to a textual commentary on the Philosophy of Right in which he applied the method of transformational criticism. In other words, the immediate result of his baptism in the ‘brook of fire’ was to convince him of the topicality of Hegel. Far from carrying him away from Hegelianism, it carried him back into it. Hegelianism, as he now saw it, was a true reading of human existence, but expressed in a confused manner; and Feuerbach had made the point clear. This, I believe, is the underlying sense of a statement that Marx made long afterward, in a letter written in 1865: ‘Compared with Hegel, Feuerbach is very poor. All the same he was epoch-making after Hegel, because he laid stress on certain points which were disagreeable to the Christian
consciousness but important for the progress of criticism, and which Hegel had left in mystic semi-obscenity. The 'certain points' refer to Feuerbach’s presentation of religion as the self-alienation of man. Marx is saying, in effect, that Hegel was the giant of thought who had penetrated to the truth, and that Feuerbach, a small thinker by comparison, contributed a clarification of Hegel’s latent meaning and thus rendered his doctrine usable.

In the commentary on Hegel to which he turned in 1843, we see Marx caught up in the heady rhythm of transformational criticism as practised by Feuerbach. He says that the fundamental defect of the Hegelian way of thought is the ‘mystification’. It is expressed in this: ‘In Hegel a mystical substance becomes the real subject, and the real subject is pictured as something else, as an attribute of the mystical substance.’ The activity of the real subject—man—becomes in Hegel the ‘imaginary inner activity of the Idea’, and thus ‘in speculative thinking everything is turned onto its head’. ‘For in reality the development takes place on the exoteric side.’ In his Holy Family, written in 1845, Marx returns to this theme: ‘Instead of making self-consciousness the self-consciousness of man—real man, i.e. man living in the real, objective world and conditioned by it, Hegel makes man the man of self-consciousness. He turns the world on its head, and for this reason can transcend all the barriers in his own head, which, of course, in no way keeps them from continuing to exist for real man in wretched experience.’

Man is not the ‘man of self-consciousness’, i.e. expression of God; rather the Hegelian self-consciousness is the self-consciousness of ‘real man’. Here is Marx engaged in the mental process of turning Hegel upside down in accordance with Feuerbach’s prescription. And, as he himself makes plain in the same text, the humanization of Hegel involves the Hegelianization of man: ‘Hegel very often presents, within the speculative description, a real description, one that grasps the matter itself’ (die Sache selbst). Or as Marx puts it in his Paris manuscripts, the thinker who would get to reality must abstract from the Hegelian abstraction and substitute for self-consciousness the self-consciousness of man, since ‘Hegel posits man as self-consciousness’.

Feuerbach’s criticism of religion persuaded Marx of the existential relevance of the Hegelian philosophy. Feuerbach had shown—or so it seemed to Marx—that the ‘world of phenomena’ was actually ‘philosophical’ in the sense of Hegelianism. Not, however, fully so. It was not yet a world in which philosophy had been wholly realized. It was ‘philosophical’ in the sense that the fundamental category of Hegelianism—self-alienation—applied to it; it was a world of human alienation. Therefore, the ‘realization of philosophy’ would mean, in concrete terms, the transcending of human alienation. To make the world philosophical would mean making it a world in which man is no longer estranged from himself, a world of human self-realization.

Thus Marx followed Feuerbach’s lead and redefined the goal of history in terms of ‘humanism’. Man’s ultimate end is simply to become fully human, which he cannot be so long as he remains alienated from himself in religious fantasies of self-realization. This is a principal theme of the article that Marx wrote at the end of 1843 as an introduction to his critical commentary on Hegel’s Philosophy of Right. The criticism of religion, he declared in it, is the beginning of all criticism. It culminates in the precept that man is the supreme being for man. By exposing the God-illusion, it frees man to revolve around himself as his real sun: ‘Religion is only the illusory sun that revolves around man so long as he has not yet begun to revolve around himself.’

What would it mean for man to revolve around himself? It would mean, says Marx, that he insists upon actualizing himself qua man, becoming what he essentially is, instead of losing himself in the religious dream of self-actualization. The fantasy-life of religion is a pseudo-self-realization. Man does not become himself; he merely dreams about it. ‘It is the fantastic realization of the human being, since the human being possesses no true reality.’ So the life of man in religion is an acceptance of the shadow of self-realization in lieu of the substance, the seeming in lieu of the being. Moreover, the seeming becomes for man a compensation for the non-being. And this Feuerbachian thought is the one that underlies Marx’s statement here that ‘Religion is the opium of the people’. He is simply restating the argument that Feuerbach, as we have seen, developed in his Essence of

* The article’s title is ‘Introduction to the Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right’. It was published in early 1844 in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, a journal published in Paris under the joint editorship of Marx and Arnold Ruge. The first issue of the journal proved also to be the last. For the sake of brevity Marx’s article will be referred to here simply as the ‘Introduction’. 
Christianity. He does not mean simply that religion is a consolation for man's poverty, but that it is a consolation for his non-humanity, a surrogate for being man.

Further, the criticism of religion, which informs man that the imaginary being that he has projected as God is only an idealized image of himself, opens his eyes finally to what he could be and should be, and fires him with the desire to become it: 'Man, who sought a superman (Übermensch) in the fantastic reality of heaven but found there only a reflection of himself, will no longer wish to find merely an appearance of himself, only a non-man (Unmensch), in the realm where he seeks and must seek his true reality.'

The 'realm where he seeks and must seek his true reality' is, of course, the existing world. The argument is that man, as he now exists in the world, lacks reality as man. The complaint is not that he has failed to become God, but that he has failed to become human, that he exists as Unmensch, save in the religious imagination wherein he is an Übermensch. The goal for man is to realize his humanity, his human nature. And this, says Marx, carries the 'categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, helpless, contemptible creature—relations that can best be characterized by a Frenchman's exclamation concerning a projected dog tax: "Poor dogs! They want to treat you like people!"'

This was the tendency of Marx's thought under the impact of Feuerbach's. He immediately and exultantly accepted Feuerbach's reading of the human situation as the true one, but proceeded to interpret it in his own way and to draw his own conclusions. The direction in which he proceeded was the direction in which he had started. He had begun with the programme of changing the world into a world of realized 'philosophy'. Never for a moment did he abandon his first premise concerning the need for world-change. However, this revolutionary imperative underwent a metamorphosis after he assimilated Feuerbach's 'de-mystification' of Hegelianism. The world of phenomena having been shown to be a world of human alienation, the Marxian revolutionary imperative took shape as a call to end human alienation by changing the world. It now said that a world in which man is everywhere estranged from himself and exists only as 'non-man' ought to be transformed into a new world of humanism in which alienation would be overcome and man would realize his nature as man. This was the core of the reasoning process underlying Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is, to change it.'

Against this background it is understandable why Marx, after assimilating Feuerbach's criticism of religion, very soon embarked upon the criticism of Feuerbach. His world-revolutionary prescription for the cure of alienation was strikingly at variance with the practical conclusion that Feuerbach himself had drawn from the criticism of religion. What Feuerbach called for, as has been noted, was first and foremost a reorientation of thinking. The liberation of man from alienation required essentially no more than a critical cognitive act on the scale of all humanity. Men's attitude to themselves and one another would change of itself once they had freed themselves from the religious illusion. To this Marx rejoined that Feuerbach 'knows no other "human relationships" "of man to man" than love and friendship, and idealized at that'. Thus, man is not to awaken from the religious dream merely to engage in dialogues between the I and the Thou. But Marx's main reproach is that Feuerbach 'accepts' reality, that he only wants to 'establish a correct consciousness'.

This is to turn inward in search of a solution for self-alienation, whereas the need is to turn outward against the world. 'The demand to renounce illusions about one's situation', Marx declares, 'is a demand to renounce a situation that required illusions.' The responsibility for man's self-alienation rests with his life-situation in the existing state and society, with the 'world of man' (Menschentum). Accordingly, the life-situation will have to be radically altered in order for human nature to be realized, for Unmensch to become Mensch. This is the burden of the fourth of Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach':

Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, the duplication of the world into a religious and a worldly one. His work consists in dissolving the religious world into the worldly foundation. But the fact that the worldly foundation raises itself above itself and establishes itself as an independent realm in the clouds can only be explained by the self-discord and self-contradictions within it. It must itself, therefore, be understood in its contradiction and revolutionized in practice. For example, after the earthly family is seen to be the secret of the holy family, one must proceed to destroy the former both in theory and practice.
And so Marx is led to his position, enunciated in the eighth thesis,* that the solution of all problems, 'theoretical' ones included, lies in 'praxis'. Since all problems are at bottom problems of alienation, and since alienation is rooted in the life-situation of man in the world, practical action to change this situation is the key to a total solution. There is no way of ending alienation short of revolutionizing the world in which man finds himself existing in an inhuman condition.

Thus, Marx came to envisage the entire 'world of man' as a field of alienation. In this he was true to Hegel, who had described the objective world confronting spirit in consciousness as an alien, 'perverted world'. Marx employs this very term in arguing that Feuerbach's position is incomplete. He writes in the 'Introduction' that religion is merely the 'theoretical' form of alienation, behind or beneath which there are diverse 'practical' forms. If it is a 'perverted world-consciousness', they are constitutive aspects of the 'perverted world' itself. Hence the task at present is to proceed to the criticism of the practical forms: 'Now that the holy form of human self-alienation has been exposed, the next task for a philosophy in the service of history is to expose self-alienation in its unholy forms. The criticism of heaven thus turns into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics'.

As this statement implies, Marx was extending and enlarging the concept of man's self-alienation. Feuerbach had concentrated upon the religious life as the sphere of human self-externalization and estrangement. Marx, together with others in the Young Hegelian circle, saw alienation as a phenomenon not confined to the religious life. Typically, he carried the idea to its farthest extreme. He came to see alienation everywhere. It was a phenomenon pervading every single sphere of human life in the existing world—religion, the state, law, the family, morality and, last but not least, the economic life.

Summering in Kreuznach in 1843, after his short and stormy career as editor of the Rheinische Zeitung had ended, Marx began the criticism of earth. His decision to write a critical commentary

* 'All social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which urge theory into mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice' (The German Ideology, p. 199).

on Hegel's Philosophy of Right was motivated not only by the urge to apply the epochal new method of transformational criticism that Feuerbach had discovered. He was also interested in exposing the state, the political sphere of life, as one of the 'unholy forms' of human self-alienation.

As a student of Feuerbach, he took it for granted that the way to accomplish this was not to gather empirical data on politics but to subject the Hegelian philosophy of politics to transformational criticism. Since man's estrangement in the religious life was expressed theoretically in theology, to which Hegel's speculative theology had provided Feuerbach an interpretative key, it seemed to Marx that man's estrangement in the political life must be reflected, albeit in a mystified form, in Hegel's philosophy of the state. Accordingly, he examined the Philosophy of Right in search of an understanding of the state as a sphere of alienated human living. He did not complete the commentary, but summarized and extended his conclusions in two published articles written later in 1843, the 'Introduction' and an article entitled 'On the Jewish Question'.

According to Hegel's political philosophy, the state is the supreme form of human association and partakes of divinity. It is God on earth, the divine substance, the highest form of objectification of Geist. The state is the supreme social being, of which the family on the one hand and 'civil society' (die bürgerliche Gesellschaft) on the other are only incomplete expressions. In terms of the triadic formula, the family is the thesis, civil society is the antithesis, and the state is the higher synthesis in which both lower forms of association are transcended and perfected. In his concept of civil society, it should be added, Hegel drew upon the work of Adam Smith and other eighteenth-century thinkers who had formed a picture of society as a universe of 'economic men' each pursuing his own material self-interest.

In the Philosophy of Right, for example, he describes civil society as a 'battlefield where everybody's individual private interest meets everyone else's'. 'In civil society each member is his own end, everything else is nothing to him. But except in contact with others he cannot attain the whole compass of his ends and therefore these others are means to the end of the particular member.' Civil society, in Hegel's conception, is an economic sphere of universal egoism.

Applying Feuerbach's formula, Marx begins by turning
Hegel's political philosophy 'upside down'. For Hegel society is a manifestation of the state. This, says Marx, is a mystification. The true statement is precisely the reverse: the state is a manifestation, an outgrowth, of civil society. Calling the inverted position 'democracy', Marx writes in the commentary: 'Hegel proceeds from the state and turns man into a subjectified state. Democracy proceeds from man and turns the state into an objectified man. Just as religion does not create man but rather the people create the political system.'

Thus, collective man ('the people') is not to be regarded as an attribute of the divine substance externalized in the state. Rather the state, the system of political institutions, is to be seen as an externalization of collective man in the form of political power, an embodiment in a separate sphere of the power of the human species. The real being that evolves in history is collective man or society. Instead of society being an expression of the state-in-the-making (Hegel's view), the state is an expression of society-in-the-making. It is externalized man in practical political form, just as God is externalized man in an imaginary or theoretical form. It is an earthly sphere of man's alienation corresponding to the heavenly sphere or religion: 'The political system has so far been the religious sphere, the religion of popular life.... Monarchy is the finished expression of this alienation. The republic is its negation within its own sphere.'

This conception of political alienation follows the Feuerbachian model in further respects. According to Feuerbach, alienated man is a divided being leading two lives—one in the glorious fantasy world of the religious consciousness where he is God, and the other in the real world where he is a miserable and contemptible creature. The same, says Marx, applies to the practical side. As a citizen of the state, on the one hand, man is a 'communal being' (Gemeinwesen) or 'species being' (Gattungswesen); he participates in the communal life of the species. But civil society is prior to the state. The primary sphere of human existence is the 'sphere of egoism' or economic 'war of all against all', where man, especially in the modern world, feels and acts as an 'egoistic man' and not at all as a communal being. Man, therefore, is dualized. His self-realization as a member of the political community is a spurious, empty, purely formal self-realization, just as in the religious fantasy he obtains at most a pseudo-realization of himself: 'Where the political state achieves fully developed form, man not only in thoughts, in consciousness, but in reality, in life, leads a double life, heavenly and earthly, a life in the political community in which he recognizes himself as a communal being, and a life in civil society, in which he acts as a private person, treats others as means, reduces himself to the role of a means, and becomes the plaything of alien forces.'

This one-sentence summary of the concept of political alienation is taken from Marx's essay 'On the Jewish Question'. In the same essay he indicates his solution for political alienation. It too follows the Hegel-Feuerbach schema. The cure for political alienation is the transcendence of the state, which means the repossession by man of the social power that has been externalized in political institutions: 'Only when real individual man takes back into himself the abstract citizen of the state and, as individual man, in his empirical life, in his individual labour, in his individual relations, becomes a species being; only when man recognizes and organizes his "forces propres" as social forces and so ceases to separate social power from himself in the form of political power—only then will human emancipation take place.' But Marx concludes that the liberation of man from alienation in the state, unlike his liberation from religion, will require a real social revolution.
The quest for elucidation of the 'unholy forms' of alienation brought Marx to the economic studies that were to occupy him the rest of his days. His analysis of the state as an unholy form of the phenomenon was merely a transitional episode on the way to his rendezvous with another unholy form that he soon began to call 'material' or 'political-economic alienation'. Already in the essay 'On the Jewish Question' he touched upon this theme. He called the economic life in civil society 'the extreme practical expression of human self-alienation'. It should be noted that he had barely begun at this time the study of political economy. And when, in early 1844, he did begin this study in earnest, he did so in search of proof of the proposition just cited. He sought in the science of economics a theoretical idiom of expression of man's estrangement from himself in the life of production.

Marx made no mention of this, however, in the brief account of the history of his opinions that he offered many years later in the preface to his Critique of Political Economy (1859). Referring to his unpublished commentary of 1843 on the Hegelian political philosophy, he wrote here: 'My investigation led to the result that legal relations as well as forms of the state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life, the sum total of which Hegel, following the example of the Englishmen and Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, combines under the name of "civil society", that, however, the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.' This statement invited the inference that Marx had proceeded directly from his discovery of civil society in Hegel to the construction of Marxism in the form made public in the later 1840's. And very many students of Marxism have drawn this inference.

But it is an erroneous one. Marx's account of the history of his opinions was extremely misleading because of what it omitted. He correctly indicated that his critique of Hegel's political philosophy had been a milestone on the road to Marxism. For it brought him to the premise that economic life in civil society is the basis of human existence, and this, of course, is a central notion of the Materialist Conception of History as formulated in mature Marxism. However, Marx was not ready at the end of 1843 to come forward with mature Marxism. He had to go through a critically important preparatory stage not mentioned in his famous preface of 1859. This was the stage of his creation of the unpublished early philosophical version of Marxism, which revolves around the idea of human self-alienation in the economic life.

He was preceded in this direction, and deeply influenced as well, by an older Young Hegelian, Moses Hess, who became known in the circle as the 'communist rabbi'. Hess was the originator of the German philosophical communism that Engels described in an article of 1843* as the inevitable outcome of the modern movement of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel and beyond. Engels' article expressly acknowledged that Hess was the first of their group to reach communism by the 'philosophical path'. Having done so, moreover, Hess was instrumental in the conversion of both Marx and Engels, who were not yet associates at the time, to the gospel of philosophical communism. They both became acquainted with him in 1842 through the Rheinische Zeitung, of which Marx was editor and Hess a correspondent. In long conversations in the offices of the paper at Cologne, Hess proselytized the two younger men. A single long session was sufficient to convert Engels.† Marx was slower to respond. His conversion took place only after he became convinced in 1843 that the economic life in civil society is the prime locus of human self-alienation.

Hess was an enthusiastic disciple of Feuerbach, and constructed the doctrine of philosophical communism as an ex-

* See above, pp. 26-7.
† As Hess later described it, 'We talked of questions of the day. Engels, who was a revolutionary to the core when he met me, left as a passionate communist' (Gustav Mayer, Friedrich Engels, p. 30).
tension of Feuerbach's 'humanism'. As noted earlier, Feuerbach wrote in his *Essence of Christianity* that 'productive activity' is an attribute of the human species projected by theology as divine creativity. Hess enlarged upon this theme. He postulated that productive activity is the essential attribute of the species. The life of the human species, he argued, is ideally a life of cooperative producing activity through which men objectify their productive power (*Produktivkraft*) in a variety of useful material objects. But man in the modern world lives in a state of egoism. Instead of producing cooperatively and for the welfare of the species as a whole, egoistic men appropriate the productive power of the species in the form of money or private property. The modern 'commercial state' is, therefore, a 'perverted world' in which the productive power of mankind becomes the wealth of money-worshiping egoistic individuals. Hess presented this argument in an essay with the Feuerbachian title 'On the Essence of Money' ('Über das Geldwesen'), which he submitted to Marx and Ruge, probably at the close of 1843, for publication in their *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher.*

Earlier Hess had steeped himself in the contemporary literature on socialism and communism, of which France in those days was the fountainhead. A French book that particularly impressed him was Proudhon's *What Is Property?* Published in 1840, this work eventually became famous in Europe because the author answered the title question with the sensational statement that 'Property is theft'. The statement, it must be added, was somewhat less radical than it appeared. For Proudhon defined 'property' or 'private property' in a very special way. He distinguished it from the individual right of possession and use of goods, including capital goods; of such 'possession' he heartily approved. 'Property' was specifically the right of the owner of capital goods to employ the labour of others to augment his own wealth. It was 'theft' in the sense that their labour contributed to his enrichment. Proudhon anticipated Marx in calling this capital-labour relation an exploitation of man by man: 'From the right of the strongest springs the exploitation of man by man, or bondage.'

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Proudhon once remarked that the three main influences in his life were Hegel, Adam Smith and the Bible. He sketched in his book an economically oriented philosophy of history with an Hegelian structure of thesis, antithesis and higher synthesis. History he pictured as a three-phase affair proceeding from primitive communism through the intermediate long stage of private property to a final and future stage called 'liberty'. He condemned communism, or community ownership of goods and persons, as a system that denies individuality, places mediocrity on a par with excellence, and means exploitation of the strong (i.e., the gifted few) by the multitude of the weak. 'Communism is oppression and slavery', he wrote. 'The greatest danger to which society is exposed today is that of another shipwreck on this rock.'

Proudhon's prescription for solving the social problem was: 'Suppress property while maintaining possession...'. The result of such action would be the third form of society, or 'liberty'. It would be a synthesis of the historical thesis (communism) and the historical antithesis (property), excluding the negative features of both—communal ownership on the one hand and the exploitation of man by man on the other. The existing order of private property would thus be replaced with a system of cooperative production by individual small proprietors secure in their right of individual possession of the means and fruits of their labour. This would be the 'true form of human association'.

To Hess, and subsequently to both Engels and Marx, Proudhon's book appeared the 'most philosophical' of all the French communist writings. One reason for their enthusiasm was that Proudhon had adumbrated the idea of incorporating socialism or communism into an Hegelian philosophy of history. Hess, for his part, was prepared to accept Proudhon's 'true form of human association' as a fair description of the economic arrangements under socialism or communism itself (these two being used more or less interchangeably at that time). More important, he assimilated Proudhon's concept of private property into his own Feuerbachian theory of alienation in the

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* Inasmuch as the journal was suppressed after its first issue came out in early 1844, Hess' article was first published more than a year later in the *Rheinische Jahrbücher zur Gesellschaftlichen Reform.* It has been reprinted in *Sozialistische Aufsätze 1841–1847,* a collection of Hess' essays edited by R. Zlocisti.

* In his *Holy Family,* written in 1845, Marx hailed it as 'a scientific manifesto of the French proletariat', comparable in historical significance to Sieyès' revolutionary pamphlet *What Is the Third Estate?* (MEGA, III, pp. 201, 211). He continued to profess high admiration for the work even after his subsequent break with Proudhon.
cance of an alien being—money.\textsuperscript{10} On this basis Marx argues that the modern commercial world, where man is universally dominated by egoistic need, is practically speaking a world of Judaism: ‘The Christian was from the beginning the theorizing Jew; the Jew therefore the practical Christian, and the practical Christian has once more become Jew... Christianity is the sublime thought of Judaism; Judaism is the lowly application of Christianity, but this application could only become universal after Christianity, as fully developed religion, had theoretically completed the alienation of man from himself and from nature.’\textsuperscript{11} The reasoning turns wholly on Hess’ thesis, summarized above, that Christianity and commerce are respectively the theoretical and practical forms of egoistic man’s self-alienation. It brings Marx to the conclusion that the emancipation of Jew and non-Jew alike depends upon the ‘emancipation of humanity from Judaism’. This, he writes, would mean the organization of society in such a way as to eliminate the possibility of ‘huckstering’.\textsuperscript{12}\* An acceptance of the idea of socialism or communism was implicit in this formulation. It may be noted that Marx had been slow in his conversion to a communist position. A year or so earlier, as editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, he declared editorially that communist ideas in their present form did not appear to have even theoretical validity, adding, however, that he knew very little about them. Not until the closing months of 1842 did he embark upon a systematic perusal of the contemporary French literature on socialism and communism. With the notable exception of Proudhon, the writers on this subject occupied themselves with the designing of blueprints of a future communist organization of society. Marx reacted quite negatively to this. In a letter to Ruge in September 1843, he dismissed the communist ‘systems’ or utopias, along with the whole notion of ‘designing the future’, as a ‘dogmatic abstraction’, adding

\* An English translation of Marx’s article has recently been published under the highly misleading title A World Without Jews (Philosophical Library, New York, 1959). An introduction by the publisher and translator, Mr Dagobert D. Runes, makes out the article to be a doctrine of anti-semitism and a forerunner of the antisemitic policies of certain modern states, which ‘bring to reality the sanguinary dream of Karl Marx—a world without Jews’ (p. xi). This reflects, at best, a gross misconception of the article. Although Marx did at times express anti-Jewish feelings, his article was in no sense a plea to rid the world of Jews. It was a plea to rid the world of ‘Judaism’, by which he meant a practical religion of money-worship. What he here called ‘Judaism’ he later renamed ‘capitalism’.

that a new world could be discovered through a merciless criticism of everything existing.\textsuperscript{13} By this time, however, he was prepared to accept the idea of communism in the framework of the German philosophical communism evolved by Hess. But he was moving toward a different and characteristically Marxian version of philosophical communism. He was, in particular, incorporating into it an idea wholly absent from Hess’ version—the idea of the proletariat.

Marx’s image of the proletariat was not of empirical origin. He did not come by it, for example, by observation of contemporary factory conditions, by direct contact with industrial workers and work, or even by the study of political economy. His earliest meetings with working-class people appear to have taken place after he moved to Paris in the late autumn of 1843. By then, however, the idea of the proletariat was already formed in his mind. The path by which he reached it was the philosophical path traced in the preceding pages. He assimilated the concept of the proletariat into the doctrine of human self-alienation that he had developed under the primary influence of Hegel, Feuerbach, and Hess. Briefly, in Marx’s mind man became proletarian.

He came to see in the proletariat, defined by property-lessness, the prototype and visible manifestation of man in his state of self-alienation in the existing world. The image of self-alienated humanity turned into an image of the proletariat as the living, breathing, suffering expression of self-alienated humanity, and also its rebellious expression—alienated man in revolt against his condition. This momentous metamorphosis is reflected in Marx’s ‘Introduction to the Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right’, written also at the end of 1843. It is the first of his writings in which he speaks of the proletariat.

At the outset of the article he expounds his idea that human nature possesses no true reality, that man exists in this world as Unmensch. At the close of it he proclaims that ‘philosophy finds in the proletariat its material weapon’. He explains that revolution requires a ‘material foundation’, meaning an element of society tending toward ‘practical-critical activity’. ‘It is not enough for thought to strive toward realization; reality itself must drive toward thought.’\textsuperscript{14} The element of contemporary
‘reality’ that is driving, albeit unconsciously, toward ‘thought’ is the proletariat. It is a class with ‘radical aims’, a class that is no mere class but the dissolution of all classes, that is universal because of the universality of its sufferings, that claims no special right because it is the victim of no special wrong but of wrong in general, that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating at the same time all other spheres of society. In sum, the proletariat is a class that ‘represents the complete loss of man and can only regain itself, therefore, by the complete resurrection of man’. Complete loss of man’ means, of course, totally alienated man.

How did Marx arrive at this singular philosophical conception of the proletariat? First of all, from what source did he derive the term ‘proletariat’? According to Sidney Hook, the term came into currency among the German intellectuals after the dissemination of French socialist ideas among them in the 1830’s. ‘In their most advanced phase’, writes Hook, ‘they spoke in the name of the proletariat, but the only proletarians they knew were the ones talked about by the French socialist writers.’ Some even began to proclaim that ‘Das Proletariat ist die Menschheit’. Marx was one of these German intellectuals, and it must be said of him too that the only proletarians he knew were the ones he read about in books. Moreover, the book that particularly influenced his thinking in regard to the proletariat was a German book published in Leipzig in 1842, Der Socialismus und Communistismus des heutigen Frankreichs. Its author was Lorenz von Stein, a conservative Hegelian and staunch monarchist.

In 1840 Stein was commissioned by the Prussian Government to make an on-the-spot study of the disturbing new French doctrines of socialism and communism, and while in Paris to observe and report on any communist connections of migratory German workers. The resulting book was a history of fifty years of French radical thought, presented in a framework of Hegelian theorizing about society. It treated French communism and socialism, originating with Babeuf in the late eighteenth century, as ideologies expressing the interest of the proletariat, an entirely new class that had entered the stage of history during the great French Revolution when the workers of Paris took events into their own hands. This propertyless mass, so far most evident in France and England but showing signs of emergence elsewhere in Europe as well, was imbued with an imperious tendency to generalize its condition by creating a ‘community of goods’ (Gütergemeinschaft). Consequently, it bore within itself the seeds of the total overthrow and dissolution of historic European society founded on the principles of personality and property. It was the fate of this revolutionary new class that the anti-property doctrines of socialism and communism had in view. Wittingly or unwittingly the theorists of socialism and communism were elaborating a Weltanschauung for the proletariat in its ‘battle of labour-power with capital’. Here in Stein’s book we see perhaps the first significant formulation of the thesis that has since become familiar under the heading ‘revolt of the masses’.

In his Philosophy of Right Hegel said that modern civil society shows a dangerous tendency to the ‘concentration of disproportionate wealth in a few hands’, at one pole and the ‘creation of a rabble of paupers’ at the other. In a note he explained that poverty in itself does not make a rabble, for ‘a rabble is created only when there is joined to poverty a disposition of mind, an inner indignation against the rich, against society, against the government, etc.’ In his first chapter, entitled ‘The Proletariat and Society’, Stein pictured the modern proletariat as a pauperized rabble in Hegel’s sense. He insisted that one must sharply distinguish between the notions of ‘proletarian’ and ‘poor’. There had always been poor people in society, but proletarians were something new. They were not simply destitute people, but a mass of proud and defiant poor, rebellious against the society that had given birth to them as a class. They possessed neither property nor education, but were unreconciled to their lot. Accordingly, this was a class ‘which may very properly be called a dangerous element; dangerous in respect of its numbers and its often tested courage; dangerous in respect of its consciousness of unity; dangerous in respect of its feeling that only through revolution can its aims be reached, its plans accomplished’.

Marx’s writings of the middle forties show a minute textual familiarity with Stein’s book. Although he never explicitly acknowledged his debt to the conservative Hegelian and once-time Prussian police agent for the germ of his own concept of the proletariat, the fact of the debt is not seriously in doubt. If Marxist circles have never been willing to admit this, it is doubtless in part because of their desire to believe that Marx discovered the proletariat in much the same way as Newton
self-alienation rather than crass material want is the problem to which it offers the solution.* Marx fully accepted the latter two points, but did not take Stein’s thesis regarding the proletariat to be inconsistent with them. For he saw something more in the proletariat than either Stein or Hess did. In the proletariat, with its revolutionary tendency to abolish itself as a proletariat by the socialization of private property, Marx saw a mighty manifestation of human self-alienation and the urge to transcend it.

He had not for a moment abandoned the tenets of philosophical communism. He fused the ideas of alienated man and the proletariat into the new and original idea that the modern proletariat is the supreme expression of alienated man. As he saw it, the proletariat is a special class, to be sure, but a class into which all mankind is slowly sinking. This dissolution of society as a special class represents, as Marx put it in his Holy Family, ‘a dehumanization (Entmenschung) that is conscious of its dehumanization and therefore seeks to cancel itself’. Its state of dispossession (Nichthaben) is to be grasped as a spiritual as well as material condition: ‘Dispossession is the most desperate spiritualism, total unreality of man, total reality of non-man.’

The argument behind these statements will be examined at length in the following chapters and may be summarized briefly here: if man externalizes his being or human essence in the material things that he produces, then working man made propertyless by ‘theft’, i.e. proletarian man, is self-alienated man par excellence. And if, further, society is now generating in the proletariat a rebellious propertyless mass, this is proof that self-alienated man is striving to overcome his alienation and recover his human nature by overthrowing the world order that has made him an alienated being. Consequently, communism, although it is the class ideology of the proletariat, is destined to serve not alone the material interest of this one class but the universal spiritual need of man to end his self-estrangement.

The discovery of the proletariat did not, therefore, shake the

* Hess developed these points in a review of Stein’s book, published under the title ‘Socialismus und Communismus’ in the collection Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz in 1843. The essay is reprinted in the Zlocist collection. As an outcome of this controversy, Hess and his immediate adherents became known as the ‘true socialists’. Marx and Engels later devoted the third part of their German Ideology to a polemic against the ‘true socialists’ and their refusal to see the connection between socialism and the revolutionary proletariat. The disagreement was real and highly important, but should not obscure the important part that Hess played in the rise of Marxism.
hold of philosophical communism upon the mind of Marx. It had the opposite effect; it persuaded him of both the validity and the burning topicality of the whole conception. He was now all the more deeply convinced that alienation was no mere figment of Hegel's philosophical imagination, but a massive fact of real life throughout modern society. There were, in particular, masses of alienated men in every centre of industry where wretched proletarians slaved from dawn till dark, sacrificing themselves on the altar of the worldly god. The visible signs of their unrest, of the proletariat's incipient rebellion against its conditions, were merely the surface symptoms of dehumanized man's revolt against his dehumanization. So Marx concluded his 'Introduction' with the following proclamation: 'Philosophy cannot realize itself without the abolition of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot abolish itself without the realization of philosophy.'

This was the point he had reached in early 1844, when the suppression of the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher left him jobless in Paris. He was on the threshold of Marxism. He had all the essential ingredients of Marxism save one—the generative idea, the organizing insight that causes all the separate components to fall into place in a single systematic structure. Every original and powerful system of thought presupposes such a creative act; it is something decisively more than the sum of the component ideas that its author has taken from others or forged for himself. With Hegel, as we have seen, the generative idea was the formula for religion as man's self-elevation from finite to infinite life; with Feuerbach, it was the proposition that metaphysics is esoteric psychology. Marx had not yet conceived his generative idea. He had presented his major 'components' in two short articles in the Jahrbücher. On the strength of these alone his name would have rated scarcely more than a footnote in a history of the Young Hegelian movement. There was still no Marxist system.

He knew this, and set to work during 1844 to develop a system, i.e. to write a full-length book. As he had said in the 'Introduction', the next task for a philosophy in the service of history was to expose human self-alienation in its 'unholy forms'. He had already worked on the political form and had come to the conclusion that there was a still more fundamental form—economic alienation. Hess had suggested that political economy might furnish the materials for an exposure of alienation in the economic life comparable to Feuerbach's exposure of religious alienation via theology. A criticism of political economy was, then, the next business on the agenda of philosophy. The practicability of such an enterprise had been shown already by Hess' convert Engels, who in January 1844 sent Marx and Ruge, for publication in the Jahrbücher, an essay entitled 'Outlines of the Criticism of Political Economy'. Marx liked the essay immensely. This led to a meeting with Engels in August 1844 in Paris, which in turn was the beginning of their working partnership.

So Marx set out on his life-long path of 'criticism of political economy'. By way of preparation he began to read and make extracts from some of the standard writings on economics, such as Smith's Wealth of Nations and Say's Treatise on Political Economy. This was his first serious application to the literature of political economy, and it is worth noting that it occurred only some weeks or months before he created the economic interpretation of history. He embodied many of the extracts into his own manuscript. As he explained in the draft preface, the work at hand was to be a criticism of political economy as one part of a larger systematic enterprise—a criticism of every single sphere of present human existence under the aspect of estrangement. Criticisms of law, ethics, politics, etc., would be issued in a series of pamphlets to follow.

Marx worked for some time without making any progress toward the desired systematic organization of the material. In the background of his mind at this time was the concept of 'economic alienation'. The alienation of things is the praxis of human self-externalization, he had written in the article 'On the Jewish Question'. Man externalizes his being in material objects that assume the form of money. Now all this was quite Hegelian in a sense. It conceived of man the economic producer on the analogy of Hegelian spirit, which externalizes itself and then seeks, through knowing, to re-appropriate the alien objective world as its property. Marx was brooding along these lines when, one day in the late spring or early summer of 1844, he suddenly had what struck him as a colossal insight. It must have hit him with the force of a lightning bolt out of the blue. And no wonder, for it was the truly astonishing thought that
VIII

WORKING MAN AS WORLD CREATOR

The object of labour is, therefore, the objectification of man's species-life; for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he looks at himself in a world that he has created. Marx (1844)

Marx founded Marxism in an outburst of Hegelizing. He considered himself to be engaged in no more than a momentous act of translation of the already discovered truth about the world from the language of idealism into that of materialism. He was only restating in a clear scientific form what Hegel had said before him in a confused philosophical form. Hegelianism itself was latently or esoterically an economic interpretation of history. It treated history as a 'history of production' (Produktionsgeschichte), in which spirit externalizes itself in thought-objects. But this was simply a mystified representation of man externalizing himself in material objects. Consequently, what Hegel was really talking about in his philosophy, in so far as his philosophy itself was real, was the economic life, the human labour process. Such was Marx's generative idea.

If the analysis of Hegelianism presented earlier in this book is a valid one, we may infer that he was mistaken. Although it covers the economic aspect of life along with all others, the Hegelian philosophy of history as the self-realization of spirit was not a sublimated economic interpretation of history, and Marx created his own system on the basis of a misreading of Hegel. This judgment will stand, I believe, in the face of the recent effort by George Lukacs, the foremost Marx scholar in the Communist world, to substantiate Marx's position. In his Der Junge Hegel und die Probleme der Kapitalistischen Gesellschaft (1948), Lukacs attempts to find in the youthful Hegel's reading in Adam Smith the central source of inspiration for his later philosophical system. But this interpretation of Hegelianism appears untenable. Although Hegel, as has been indicated, was indeed influenced by Smith at certain points in his thinking, these were not the central points. Above all, the Hegelian dia-
ies about the nature of philosophy', and says that ‘positive criticism as a whole—and therefore also German positive criticism of political economy—owes its true foundation to the discoveries of Feuerbach...’ At the same time, he criticizes Feuerbach for confining himself to ‘theological criticism’. He believes, in other words that Feuerbach did not fulfill the promise of his own ‘discoveries’ about the nature of philosophy. He saw in Hegelianism only a representation of the alienation of man in the theoretical life of religion. He did not grasp it as esoteric economics. He failed to take Marx’s own further step of assuming that Hegelianism turned ‘upside down’ in the Feuerbachian manner gives you a valid picture of man’s alienation in the practical life of religion, the economic processes of labour under the ‘money-system’.

Consequently, Marx declares in his preface that German thought still faces ‘the necessary task of settling accounts between criticism and its point of origin—the Hegelian dialectic and German philosophy as a whole’. He promises to provide this final critical settling of accounts with Hegel in his concluding chapter. The draft of the concluding chapter, entitled by the editor ‘Criticism of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole’, has survived among Marx’s manuscripts.

This crucial document shows, in the first place, that when Marx speaks of Hegelianism he has in mind primarily the philosophy of history set forth by Hegel in his Phenomenology of Mind. The point needs stressing because it has often been assumed that the work of Hegel’s from which Marx took his departure in the creation of his own system was the Philosophy of Right. Such an inference is understandable in the light of Marx’s own mention of the latter work in the short account of the history of his opinions that he gave in the preface of the Critique of Political Economy.* It is a reasonable one, moreover, considering that this is the book in which Hegel deals most directly with social and political questions, and that mature Marxism purports to be above all a theory of society. However, Marx’s manuscripts, and particularly his ‘Criticism of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole’, make it unmistakeably plain that the inference is erroneous, and that

* See above, p. 106.
Hegel's *Phenomenology* is the work with which Marxism is immediately affiliated.

Having asserted that criticism must now settle accounts with 'its mother, the Hegelian dialectic', Marx writes further: 'Let us take a look at the Hegelian system. One must begin with Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, the true birthplace and secret of the Hegelian philosophy.' He then writes out the whole table of contents of this book, analyzes it, and extols it. He contrasts its 'critical' character with 'the uncritical positivism and equally uncritical idealism of the later Hegelian works'.

But most important of all, Marx takes the philosophy of history developed by Hegel here as his model in the construction of his own system, which becomes therefore a kind of phenomenology of man centering in the idea of man's self-alienation in the labour process. This he takes to be what Hegel, underneath it all, was really driving at. Hegel's phenomenology of *Geist* was, in unconscious intent, a phenomenology of *Mensch*: 'Briefly, within an abstract framework, he grasps labour as the self-productive act of man, the relation to himself as an alien being, and his manifestation *qua* alien being as the developing consciousness and life of the species.' The *Phenomenology*, maintains Marx, 'is criticism in a concealed, un-self-clarified and mystifying form. However, in so far as it firmly grasps the alienation of man (*Entfremdung des Menschen*), even if man appears only in the form of spirit, *all* the elements of criticism lie hidden in it and are often prefigured and worked out in a manner far transcending the Hegelian standpoint.

Thus Marx undertakes to invert the *Phenomenology*. He constructs it as a revelation of the truth about man in a 'concealed, un-self-clarified and mystifying form'. But unlike Feuerbach, who saw here only a mystified picture of the truth about religious man and hence only the foundation of a criticism of religion, Marx sees in Hegel's self-alienated God an upside-down portrait of man as an economic producer. He believes, therefore, that the criticism hidden and prefigured in the *Phenomenology* was a 'criticism of political economy'. Spirit producing itself as spirit and finding itself confronted with an alien world was man producing himself as man and finding himself so confronted. The secret of Hegelianism was the human labour process: 'The greatness of the Hegelian *Phenomenology* and of its end-result— the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generative principle—lies, firstly, in the fact that Hegel grasps the self-production of man as a process, objectification as de-objectification, as externalization and transcendence of this externalization; that he therefore grasps the essence of labour and conceives objective man, true man because real man, as the result of his own labour'.

Feuerbach considered Hegel's philosophy a vehicle of truth in so far as the criticism of religion was latently present in it, but rejected the manifest Hegelianism as a philosophical extension of theology. Marx reasons in precisely similar fashion in his critical settling of accounts with Hegel. On the one hand, he regards the *Phenomenology* as a gigantic vehicle of truth in that the criticism of political economy was implicit already in its theory of self-alienated spirit. When 'man' is substituted for 'spirit', this theory shows man's economic life to be a life of alienated labour (*entfremdete Arbeit*). And here is the key to a criticism of political economy, for 'political economy has merely formulated the laws of alienated labour', as, for example, in its iron law of wages. To this extent, then, Marx considered himself to be involved in a salvaging operation upon the Hegelian philosophy. He is salvaging from it, by the method of inversion, that which is of enduring scientific value.

On the other hand, he also assails Hegel. He rejects the manifest Hegelianism as a mystification, an idealistic misrepresentation of the human labour process. The latter is a 'material' process in that it comprises the production of material objects. For Hegel, however, the process of production as expounded in the *Phenomenology* is a process of thought-production only. It yields only objects of thought. 'The only labour that Hegel knew and acknowledged was the abstractly spiritual.' That is, he considered all productive activity, and activity of reappropriation, as an expression of the divine thought-process. As a consequence, 'he has only discovered the abstract, logical and speculative expression for the movement of history, but not yet the real history of man as a presupposed subject'. For as Marx later explains, 'thinking cannot be conceived as the mode of assertion of man's being as a human and natural subject with eyes, ears, etc., in society and the world and nature'.

This is Marx's negative criticism of Hegel. According to the manifest Hegelianism, 'only the spirit is the true essence of man, and the true form of spirit is the thinking spirit, the logical speculative spirit. The humanity of nature and of the nature produced
he epitomized his relation to Hegel in a single enigmatic proposition that has baffled the critics and commentators to this day. In 1873 he included in the preface to the second edition of *Capital* a passage saying: ‘For Hegel, the thought process (which he actually transforms into an independent subject, giving to it the name of ‘Ideal’) is the demiurge of the real; and for him the real is only the outward manifestation of the Idea. In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and translated inside the human head.’ Here Marx abruptly cut short the explanation, adding mysteriously: ‘Nearly thirty years ago, when Hegelianism was still fashionable, I criticized the mystifying aspect of the Hegelian dialectic.’ This was a reference to his then unpublished manuscript of 1844 on the Hegelian dialectic and philosophy as a whole, whose very existence still remained unknown to the world. It is only in the context of this manuscript that the meaning of his famous statement about his inversion of Hegel becomes clear. When he says that the ‘ideal’ is nothing other than the ‘material’ translated inside the human head, he means that the self-productive Hegelian thinking spirit, or alienated Idea, was the reflection in Hegel’s head of real human history as a process of material production and alienated labour.

Marx, then, sees the real history of man as the latent content of Hegel’s philosophy of history. In his manuscripts he elaborates the conception of the self-productive process of man. He sketches his own version of the phenomenology of man adumbrated, as he sees it, in Hegelianism. In so doing he develops a philosophy which, while it revolves within the Hegelian orbit of thought, is novel and un-Hegelian at points and generally bears the distinctive imprint of Marx.

Its subject is the history of the world viewed as a process by which man makes himself fully man. Marx says that man is a natural being and must, like any other natural being, undergo a developmental process or act of becoming. This self-developmental process of man is the ‘act of world history’. By ‘man’, moreover, Marx, following Feuerbach, means mankind or the human species. The act of world history is the self-realization of man in this collective or generic sense. Marx, of course, does not overlook (any more than Hegel did) the existence of indi-
individuals as parts of and participants in the collective life of the species. But the self-developing being of whom he speaks in his system is man writ large in the species. 'The individual life and species-life of man are not distinct', he says, for 'the determinate individual is only a determinate species being'\. The life of the individual is a microcosm of the life of man on the generic scale. Accordingly, the 'man' of whom Marx speaks in his manuscripts is understood as man in general.

Marx transfers to generic man the creativity that Hegel earlier had transferred from the Christian God to the world-self. He sees man as fundamentally a productive being, a creator. The life of the species is 'productive living' in various different forms. Material production is the basic form, but man is a producer too in all the non-material realms of life. Marx mentions religion, the family, the state, law, art and science as so many different 'modes of production' (Weisen der Produktion). Thus man is universally a being who produces things—material things in the economic life, children in the family, the image of himself as a divine being in religion, and so forth. He is endowed with a multitude of creative capacities, faculties and drives (Tribe) that seek outlet in productive activity. These are his 'powers' or 'forces' as a species. Marx variously calls them 'essential powers', 'vital powers' and 'species powers' (Wesenkräfte, Lebenskräfte, Gattungskräfte). Somewhat later he began to call them simply the 'productive powers' or 'productive forces' (Produktivkräfte).

Marx says in this connection that industry must be seen in relation to the essence of man and not, as has hitherto been the case, merely in terms of external relations of utility. In industry we must see a complex of already materialized productive powers of generic man. The history of industry is the 'open book of human essential powers, human psychology sensuously considered'. It is the exoteric unfolding of human essential powers, and when it is so understood 'the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man are also understood\'. Marx means that industry is an essentially subjective phenomenon in relation to man writ large in the species. Machines, factories, etc., are materialized faculties of generic man's self-expression in productive activity. They are physical extensions and enlargements of the hands, ears, eyes and brains of the species.

\* G. D. H. Cole points out that Marx in his later writings is ambiguous in his use of the key term 'productive powers'. He asks: '... are not the "powers of production" thought of sometimes as coal and iron, steam and water, and other things external to man, and at other times, without open or conscious transition of meaning, as man's power over coal and iron, steam and water, and the other things which he manipulates for his ends?' (Socialist Thought: The Forerunners, p. 279). That the ambiguity was intentional is shown by Marx's exposition in the manuscripts. The productive powers are, on the one hand, the creative faculties and energies in man (later known in Marxism as his labour power). Secondly, they comprise such material productive facilities as machines and factories. These are man's externalized productive powers, for industry is 'human psychology sensuously considered'.

Taking his cue from Hegel, Marx says that the history of production is an Entäußerungsgeschichte, a history of man's own self-externalization. For Hegel, as we have seen, spirit is a world-creating force. The world of nature and the successive worlds of culture are objectifications of its creative activity. All this reappears in Marx's image of man, save that now the world-creating productive activity is seen as material production primarily and the prime product is the world of 'anthropological nature'. According to Marx, the objects that man produces are concrete external embodiments of the species powers expended in the activity of producing them. 'The object of labour is the objectification (Vergegenständlichung) of the species-life of man.' These objects form, in their vast accumulative aggregate over the ages, a man-made environment or 'nature produced by history'. It is superimposed over the primeval nature or 'sensuous external world' (sinnliche Aussenwelt), which for Marx is simply the 'stuff' out of which man produces his own objective world in the course of history. Thus, Marx's equation of man's history with world history is intended with the utmost philosophical seriousness. Man is a world-creator, and his history is an activity of production of the world of created objects that now surrounds him. As Marx states it, 'the whole so-called world-history is nothing other than the production of man through human labour, nothing other than the becoming of nature for man'. 'The nature that develops in human history . . . is the real nature of man, so that nature as it develops in industry, even if in alienated form, is true anthropological nature.'

This conception of anthropological nature as the self-externalization of man lies at the core of Marx's thought. As will be shown later, it is by no means a youthful vagary that he abandoned when he went on from original Marxism to reformulate his system in its mature expression. The world is the
taken as a whole. For an ultimate revolution is required, according to Marx, in order to consummate it. Regarded at any prior point, the process presents itself under the aspect of estrangement. The history of externalization is an *Entfremdungsgeschichte*, a history of man’s self-alienation. Man in history reifies himself in an objective world of material things (*Sachenwelt*). He becomes object to himself in this way, and ‘looks at himself in a world that he has created’. When he does so, the objects into which he has externalized himself confront him as ‘alien beings’, and what he sees when he looks at himself in the vast aggregate of these objects is ‘an alien and hostile world standing over against him’. Just as in the Hegelian system, moreover, the experience of the objective world as alien and hostile is an experience of bondage or, as Marx prefers to phrase it, ‘object-bondage’ (*Knechtschaft des Gegenstandes*). What working man sees in the world that he has created is a gigantic fetter upon him.

In his manuscript on ‘Alienated Labour’, Marx addresses himself to the question as to why the produced objective world appears alien and hostile to man the producer. His explanation is not the same as Hegel’s although the two conceptions coincide in a formal sense. In the Hegelian system, as shown earlier, the alien character of the phenomenal world is a function of its objectivity, which constitutes it a limit and fetter for spirit as a knowing subject seeking to become conscious of itself as unlimited being. The subject-object relation *per se* is a relation of spirit’s self-alienation. Marx rejects this idea. He says that man, as a natural being, naturally lives in transaction with his external surroundings, with things outside him that answer to his needs and gratify his senses: ‘A being that does not have its nature outside itself is no natural being. ... A being that has no object outside itself is no objective being. ... An unobjective being is an un-being’ (*Unwesen*).

What makes the man-created world alien and hostile is not its objectivity, but rather the fact that man, in the act of producing it, objectifies himself ‘inhumanly, in opposition to himself’. Marx argues that alienation has its source ‘within the producing activity itself’, of which the objective world is, he says, only a ‘résümé’. ‘How could the worker experience the product of his activity as something alien standing opposed to him if he himself were not alienated from himself in the very act
of production? The product is only a résumé of the activity, the producing. . . . The alienation of the object of labour merely epitomizes the alienation, the externalization, in the activity of labour itself. The alien character of the product of labour, and of the Sachenwelt in general as the collective product, is, therefore, a reflection of the self-alienation of man in the labour process. The alien object is a mirror for man, a reminder as it were, of his own experience of alienation in the activity of producing it. The world becomes an alienated world (entfremdete Welt) because man's world-creating productive activity is alienated labour.

By 'labour' or 'alienated labour'—terms that he employs interchangeably—Marx means productive activity performed by man in the state of alienation from himself. He declares that all human activity up to now has been labour. Each of the realms of productive living, beginning with that of material production, has been a realm of alienated labour. All that mankind has produced in history in every mode of production has been produced by alienated men. Consequently, man has never been fully himself in his creative activity. This activity has never been 'self-activity' (Selbstbetätigung), by which Marx means free creativity in which a person feels thoroughly at home with himself, enjoys a sense of voluntary self-determination to action, and experiences his energies as his own.

This notion of man as a being whose natural and healthy condition is one of self-activity reflects the deep influence upon Marx of Feuerbach, who enunciated in his Essence of Christianity the view that free, unconstrained productive activity is an essential attribute of the human species mistakenly assigned by theology to God. "The whole character of a species, its species-character, lies in the character of its life-activity", writes Marx, "and free conscious activity is the species-character of man." The lower animals also produce, he observes, but only under the spur of immediate physical need, whereas man produces even when free from physical need and he only genuinely produces when he is free from it. Spontaneous, voluntary producing activity is his element, and in such activity he expresses himself as an artist. Man for Marx is essentially an artistic being who 'knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard of the object' and 'forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty'. That, at any rate, is what he would do if his productive activity were genuine self-activity instead of alienated labour.
IX

ALIENATION AND MONEY-WORSHIP

... all is under the sway of an inhuman force.

MARX (1844)

It is Marx's postulate that human productive activity in every sphere of life, and not alone in the economic sphere, has been alienated labour. He considers material production, however, to be the fundamental sphere of man's productive living. And alienated labour here is the production of material objects that become commodities or private property. This suggests the hypothesis that alienated labour has its ground and source in the institution of private property. Marx himself considers this hypothesis, but only to discard it. Speaking of the notion of private property, he writes: 'But on analysis of this concept it becomes clear that though private property appears to be the source, the cause, of alienated labour, it is really its consequence, just as the gods in the beginning are not the cause but the effect of man's mental aberration.' Private property is the function of alienated labour, not vice versa. Far from being the source and cause of alienated productive living, the institution of private property is its outgrowth and consequence. Alienated labour is itself the prior fact; it is a form of living that generates private property as its product. It too, like the gods, must be grounded in man's 'aberration'.

An alternative hypothesis half suggested by some of Marx's statements in the manuscripts and his later writings as well is that alienation is rooted in the despotism of physical need. He says that man differs from the lower animals in that he is a free conscious producer who would create things and arrange them according to the laws of beauty even if there were no pressure upon him to produce in order to survive. May it not be that the stern necessity to produce the means of subsistence deprives man of self-activity, accounts for the compulsiveness of labour, and makes him an alienated being? One might easily draw this inference from such statements of Marx as the following: 'Labour is not the satisfaction of a need but only the means of satisfying needs outside it.' 'Alienated labour, by degrading spontaneous activity, free activity, to a means, makes man's species-life a means to his physical existence.'

On closer analysis, however, it turns out that the compulsion to produce in order to live is not, for Marx, the source and cause of alienated labour but rather an expression of it. And given his own underlying premise about the inherently creative nature of man, it could hardly be otherwise. A being who spontaneously tends to be productive might well experience self-activity in work that he performs for a living. Thus, a carpenter might derive creative satisfaction and a personal sense of fulfillment from the carpentry by which he lives. Certainly the need to work in order to live could not in itself explain the alienated condition, the trance-like state of compulsiveness, in which Marx's working man produces. There is no necessary connection between self-alienation and the need to work for a living. Nor does Marx himself, as becomes plain when we probe more deeply into his thinking, really believe that there is. When he says that alienated labour is only the means to satisfy 'needs outside it', the reference is primarily to needs other than the simple need to survive.

His explanation of alienated labour is the one already briefly stated in the essay 'On the Jewish Question', where he wrote: 'Money is the alienated essence of man's work and his being. This alien being rules over him and he worships it. ... Just as man, so long as he is engrossed in religion, can only objectify his nature by turning it into an alien creature of the fantasy, so, under the domination of egoistic need, he can act in a practical way, create objects practically, only by subordinating these products as well as his activity to the power of an alien being and bestowing upon them the significance of an alien being—money.' Having undertaken the systematic criticism of political economy in his manuscripts, Marx still considers that his subject-matter is religious in essence, that political economy is the theology of a worldly religion. He is still speaking of money as the 'alien being' and of the worship of this 'worldly god' as the force that alienates man from himself in his productive activity.

Marx's alienated man is a man who produces 'under the domination of egoistic need'. This is the need 'outside' the labour process to which the process is subordinated. The compulsion that transforms free creative self-activity into alienated
labour is the compulsion to amass wealth. Marx portrays it in his manuscripts as a maniacal obsession with the accumulation of capital, a veritable fanaticism of appropriation of the world of created things, a lust for money. He entitles it 'greed' (Habsucht), and ascribes the concept of it to political economy: "The only wheels that set political economy in motion are greed and the war between the greedy—competition." But this is a motive force qualitatively different from the earthly calculating self-interest with which Smith and the other classical economists endowed their 'economic man'. Although he imputes the notion to Anglo-French political economy, Marx thinks and writes as a German philosopher of the Hegelian school for which passion is the moving force in human life.

Thus he describes greed as a kind of acquisitive mania that sees in money the means of exercising power over everything. Man worships money as the 'externalized potentiality of mankind' and 'almighty being' that confers unlimited power upon its possessor. Money is the 'divine power' (göttliche Kraft) that overturns all things and 'transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence and intelligence into idiocy'. Marx refers to Goethe and Shakespeare as his authorities on this point. He quotes, for example, some passages from Timon of Athens in which 'Yellow, glittering, precious gold' is apostrophized as 'Thou visible God!' and the poet says: 'Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair, wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.'

Marx says that the drive to amass wealth ad infinitum is the 'ethic' implicit in political economy, whose foremost representative has declared in The Wealth of Nations that capital is 'a certain command over all the labour, or over all the produce of labour, which is then in the market'. The key word for Marx is 'command'. Money is the means of exercising command over all that the hand and mind of man have ever produced or will produce. The moral message of political economy is, therefore, the following:

The less you eat, drink and read books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public-house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you save—the greater becomes your treasure which neither moths nor dust will devour—your capital. The less you are, the more you have; the less you express your own life, the greater is your externalized life—the greater is the store of your alienated being. Everything that the political economist takes from you in life and in humanity, he replaces for you in money and in wealth; and all the things that you cannot do, your money can do. It can eat and drink, go to the dance hall and the theatre; it can travel, it can appropriate art, learning, the treasures of the past, political power—all this it can appropriate for you—it can buy all this for you; it is the true endowment. Yet being all this, it is inclined to do nothing but create itself, buy itself; for everything else is after all its servant. And when I have the master I have the servant and do not need his servant. All passions and all activity must therefore be submerged in greed.

This all-embracing passion of greed is seen by Marx as an 'utterly alien power' or 'inhuman force' (unmenschliche Macht) that sways over the whole of human existence. It has been the motive force of the historical process up to now. Man has created his objective world under its iron compulsion. Marx calls it 'alien' and 'inhuman' because he sees in it the force that alienates man from himself, deprives him of freedom, and dehumanizes him. Under the despotism of the acquisitive passion he 'develops no free physical and spiritual energy but mortifies his body and ruins his spirit'. His producing activity grows 'nicht freisellig' and is experienced by him as 'an activity turned against himself, independent of him, not belonging to him'. He objectifies himself 'in an inhuman manner' and the objects into which the alienated activity is materialized confront him as alien beings, reminders of the torment endured in producing them.

In drawing this picture of man alienated from himself in servitude and sacrifice to the worldly god, Marx constantly keeps before his mind's eye the Feuerbachian analysis of religion. Feuerbach had argued that God is only the externalized mental activity of self-worshipping religious man, but apprehended as the activity of another being separate from man. It is just the same, says Marx, in the practical religious sphere: 'Just as in religion the self-activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and human heart, operates independently of the individual, i.e. as an alien, divine or diabolical activity, so the activity of the worker is not his self-activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of himself.' The worker, in other words, experiences his own productive activity as though it belonged not to himself but to his externalized being, his own creation—capital.
ment within himself, in one or another of its many expressions, could never have produced such powerful images of it as Marx did in his manuscripts and his later writings.* It is equally plain, however, that the conceptual source lies in the Hegelian philosophy, which presided over his mind at the birth-time of Marxism. From Adam Smith and the other political economists came the terms 'capital' and 'labour', together with the notion that capital is 'command over labour'. Postulating that Hegelianism provides the key with which one can unlock the secrets of political economy, Marx proceeded to infuse these terms with an Hegelian idea-content. 'Labour' became 'alienated labour', and 'capital' assumed the aspect of the infinite self-aggrandizing movement that Hegel, in his Phenomenology, had ascribed to spirit. As we have seen, Marx steeped himself anew in the Phenomenology during the period of his work on the manuscripts. His notion of the 'inhuman force' in man must be understood against this background.

In Hegel's system, it will be recalled, spirit performs its world-creating productive activity under compulsion of the drive to become conscious of itself as das Ganze. The dialectic of finitude is a dynamism of its self-aggrandizement to infinity. If spirit is, on the one hand, a force and principle of creativity, it is also, on the other hand, a force or will to limitless aggrandizement. Its only motive for producing itself as a world is to grasp and behold the world as itself. The cognitive process is a movement of appropriation of the created world as 'property of the ego' or 'spiritual substance'. Spirit is 'insatiably greedy' to incorporate the seemingly substantial objective world within the receptacle of self, and the self-infinitizing movement whereby it destroys...

* Rühle, who has been quoted above as saying that the urge to be godlike was a dominating force in Marx, fills in the character sketch as follows: 'Throughout life, Marx remains the young student, who is afraid of disappointing others through the inadequacy of his achievement, and therefore sets himself aim upon aim, piles task upon task. He cannot escape the voices calling after him: 'You must show what you can do! Must climb! Must have a brilliant career! Must do something extraordinary! Must be the first!' This will-to-conquest and this urge-to-superiority dominate all phases of his existence as worker and fighter. . . . Unquestionably Marx was a neurotic. For everyone familiar with neurotic symptoms, the neurotic traits in his clinical history are unmistakeable. . . . Yet he never, mentally speaking, surrendered wholly and permanently to neurosis—and this is the decisive matter. . . . He had to be whipped on by overweening ambition, blinded by intolerable selfishness, goaded day and night by a torturing sense of inferiority—that he might be equipped for his formidable achievements' (Karl Marx: His Life and Work, pp. 379, 388–9, 397).
the object \textit{qua} object is an appropriation of everything as its private property. Hegel presents it as an acquisitive movement, a process of enrichment, an accumulation of 'spiritual substance'. He conceives it, of course, as something 'inner', something taking place in thought.

But Marx is completely convinced that the referent is something 'outer', that Hegelianism is esoteric economics and requires to be translated into materialistic economic terms. Hegel's logic, as he puts it, is 'the money of the spirit'. Consequently, the dialectic of the finite reappears in his reconstructed Hegelianism as a dynamism of infinite self-aggrandizement \textit{in material terms}. The drive of Hegelian spirit to aggrandize itself to infinity in terms of knowledge becomes a drive of Marxian man to aggrandize himself to infinity in terms of money. The insatiable greed of Hegelian spirit turns into the 'egoistic need' that dominates Marxian man in his activity of material production. The accumulation of spiritual substance in history becomes the accumulation of capital. Only in \textit{Capital} itself does this decisive aspect of the Hegel-Marx relation receive full systematic expression.

However, Marx already had the basic idea squarely in mind in 1844. In the manuscripts, as we have seen, he views the act of world history as a process of human self-objectification motivated by a drive for absolute enrichment. Not only does historical man reify himself in an objective world as does spirit in Hegel's system. His self-productive act is similarly performed under compulsion of a self-infinitizing acquisitive drive. Like Hegelian spirit, he produces a world only in order to appropriate it as private property. Thus, what has been said here concerning the dual aspect of Hegelian spirit applies equally to Marxian man as man in history. If he is, on the one hand, an inherently creative being, whose productive powers crave outward expression in productive activity, he is also, on the other hand, an infinitely acquisitive being imbued with an urge to become \textit{das Ganze} in a material sense. Here the absolute self is no longer simply a splendid vision of the self as an absolute being. It has become an autonomous, dynamic force within man, an 'inhuman force' in Marx's phrase. As such, it exerts a tyrannical sway over him, usurping his life-energies and exploiting his productive powers.

Hegel construes the acquisitive movement as something taking place in the mind and terminating in 'absolute knowledge', whereas Marx treats it as a practical appropriation of the world in the drive toward absolute material enrichment. But this is not the crucial difference between the two systems. More important in many ways is the change that has occurred from Hegel to Marx in the conception and evaluation of the acquisitive drive. For Hegel the appropriation of the world cognitively as property of the ego is the way in which spirit's self-alienation is overcome and freedom is achieved. For Marx it is just the reverse. The acquisitive striving is the force that turns man's creative activity into compulsive alienated labour and depersonalizes him. It is the ground and source of his alienation from himself. Instead of freeing him, it enslaves him; instead of restoring him to himself, it causes him to lose himself; instead of humanizing him, it degrades him to the level of \textit{Unmensch}. Accordingly, that which Hegel affirms as good, Marx condemns as evil, as an utterly alien power. The acquisitive movement that Hegel sees as a process of spirit's growing consciousness of freedom, Marx sees as one of man's growing consciousness of bondage. The shift of moral perspective is profound, and must be clearly grasped by all who would comprehend Marxism and its influence in the world.

Behind it lies not only the inner tendency of Marx's own nature but also the influence of Feuerbach's thought upon him. As we have noted, Feuerbach turned against the Absolute as the alien self, and took the side of suffering finite man whom he saw as the victim of the historical movement of actualization of the 'Idea'. Marx proceeds in the same direction. He too recasts the Absolute, or rather the dynamism of aggrandizement, as the villain of the piece, and ranges himself on the side of suffering humanity. He pronounces 'inhuman' and 'alien' the force that compels man to absolutize himself in terms of money; he sees the real self of man as his enslaved powers of creativity. He desires the 'emancipation of labour' (to borrow a later Marxian phrase) from bondage to the passion of greed. The whole theory of alienated labour outlined above rests on this position.

Marx's repudiation of the 'alien power' finds reflection and embodiment in the image of proletarian man in which Marxism itself centres. Here man the producer is in revolt against the inhuman force that holds both him and his world in its greedy grasp. The working man is a 'dehumanization' conscious of
himself as man. Whereas spirit, in Hegel’s system, is constantly in the process of realizing itself, constantly reappropriating its alienated objective being, the human producer in Marx’s is not realizing himself but only his labour. He only externalizes himself in a world that is alien and hostile and grows increasingly so. Alienation is the hallmark of his history from beginning to end.

This history is a story of his creation of a world and loss of himself in the process. The acquisitive movement that proceeds pari passu in history with the productive one is a movement of the expropriation of the producer, the loss of his product to the alien power that dominates and oppresses him. His history is not a progress of the consciousness of freedom, but a progress of the consciousness of bondage, oppression, exploitation and suffering. It shows a pattern of ever increasing alienation or, as Marx was later to call it, a ‘law of increasing misery’. Man does not become man but only creates the material prerequisites for it. He merely brings into being the objective setting of his future life of self-fulfillment, while growing more and more dehumanized in the process. Slaving under the taskmaster of greed, he produces a world of alien wealth, wherein, ultimately, he is to find himself.

In its delineation of the closing phase of world history, however, Marx’s system comes back into line with its Hegelian model. The world communist revolution is for Marx a revolution of human self-change; it is the ultimate self-realizing act of humanity. And in so visualizing it, he was following the fundamental schema of the Hegelian philosophy, in which the knowing subject transcends its self-alienation by appropriating the object. Spirit, confronted by an alien and hostile objective world, changes itself by appropriating this world in thought. It is thus by acting upon something external, or something that falsely appears to be external, that spirit realizes its own nature.

The same idea reappears in Marx’s theory of the communist revolution. Although Marx has deviated from Hegel in that he sees the acquisitive movement of world-appropriation in history as the de-realization of man, he returns to Hegel at the end. Man, who has lost the created world to his own greed, must perform an act of ‘reappropriation’ (Wiederanzeigung) in order to change himself. This is Marx’s definition of the communist or proletarian revolution. He holds that the only possible way for the producing man to abolish the acquisitive movement, emancipate himself from the incubus of greed, and so end his
inversion of Hegel to the formulation of the idea of the communist revolution itself.

In Hegelianism, the cognitive act of appropriation of the objective world is defined in dialectical terms as the ‘negation of the negation’. The knowing subject thereby abolishes itself qua finite being, i.e. negates itself as a negation of itself. Marx employs this same dialectical formula, mutatis mutandis, in his definition of the world revolution. In his alienated labour of world-creation, working man has existed only as a proletarian 'non-man' or negation of his true self. Consequently, the act by which he appropriates the alienated world of private property will be his act of self-abolition as a proletarian, or the negation of himself as a negation of himself. On the basis of this reasoning, Marx defines the communist world revolution as the ‘negation of the negation’.

Unlike Hegel, however, he holds that the negation of the negation does not immediately spell affirmation. For Hegel the cognitive act by which spirit negates itself as a finite being yields it the affirmative consciousness of itself as infinite being. For Marx, on the other hand, the communist action of world-appropriation does not in itself bring man the affirmative consciousness of himself as man. He credits Feuerbach with showing that the destructive process of negation of the negation is not, per se, an affirmation. And he says that the affirmative stage of human self-realization lies beyond the immediate revolutionary action against private property. Far from being fully human already on the morrow of the great world revolution, man, according to Marx, will exist in a temporary state of terrible degradation. The human negation of the negation produces only 'unthinking' or 'raw communism' (der rohe Kommunismus), in which man remains, for the moment, more than ever a negation of himself. This is the immediate post-revolutionary transitional stage that Marx later designated as the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Proudhon had viewed communism, or the communal ownership of everything, as 'oppression and slavery'. Marx's 'raw communism' closely parallels this idea, and his reference to Proudhon at this point in the manuscript suggests that he was quite aware of it. His main source of inspiration, however, was evidently the book by Lorenz von Stein to which we have referred in an earlier chapter. Stein coined the phrase 'raw communism' and defined the idea of it. He spoke of the 'French raw communism whose aspirations are not to improve the conditions of society but only to incite the different classes against one another; that kind of communism which knows very well that it leads only to an upheaval but does not know what will follow'. Although he traced the ancestry of French raw communism to the Babeuf conspiracy and Buonarroti's famous treatise about it, Stein conceived it as essentially a sub-intellectual phenomenon. The theorists of raw communism, beginning with Babeuf and his cohorts, were merely the mouthpieces of an untutored tendency present in the dispossessed and brutalized proletarian masses. This was the tendency to put egalitarianism into practice in a wild mêlée of expropriation and destruction of property, communication of wealth and wives, etc.

Here is Marx's 'unthinking' communism, which is to prevail on the morrow of the world revolution. Raw communism will mean the promiscuous socialization of all private property, including women: 'In the same way as woman is to abandon marriage and prostitution, the whole world of wealth, that is, the objective being of man, is to abandon the relation of exclusive marriage with the private property owner for the relation of general prostitution with the community.' Significantly, Marx even outdoes the anti-communist Stein in his negative evaluation of this state of affairs. He says that raw communism is not the real transcendence of private property but only the universalizing of it, not the overcoming of greed but only the generalizing of it, and not the abolition of labour but only its extension to all men. It is merely a new form in which the vileness of private property comes to the surface. Expressing envy and a desire to reduce all to a common level, it spells the total negation of the human personality: 'In completely negating the personality of man, this type of communism is really nothing but the logical expression of private property. General envy, constituting itself as power, is the disguise in which greed re-establishes itself and satisfies itself, only in another way... In the approach to woman as the spoil and handmaid of communal lust is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself.' These vivid indications from the Paris manuscripts of the way in which Marx envisaged and evaluated the immediate post-revolutionary period very probably explain the
extreme reticence that he always later showed on this topic in his published writings.

The communist world revolution is for Marx a revolution of self-change, an act by which man is to end his alienation, restore his lost harmony with himself, and actualize himself as man. As we see, however, he does not conceive it directly in these terms. Self-change is not the immediate outcome, nor could it be on Marx's premise that the revolution is itself a colossal acquisitive act of violence performed in a spirit of greed, envy, hate and resentment. So he falls back upon the idea that the world revolution sets the scene for a subsequent self-change. But how an acquisitive action could end all acquisitive action, how the inhuman force of greed could be destroyed by a counter-force of the same character—this he never explains.

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The infinite degradation under raw communism is pictured by Marx as a short stage of purgatory on the ascent of alienated man to his post-historical destiny in ultimate communism. This he discusses under the heading of 'positive humanism' or the humanization of mankind. Communism as negation of the negation is to give way in the higher stage to communism 'as positive transcendence of private property, of human self-alienation, and therefore as the actual appropriation of human nature through and for man', and of this Marx writes, in a burst of Hegelian lyricism, that 'It is the riddle of history resolved, and knows itself as the riddle'.

The underlying assumption, as just pointed out, is that men will now be liberated from the compulsive acquisitive drive that has dominated their historical lives and turned them into alienated men. The positive transcendence of human self-alienation means to Marx, first of all, the recovery of freedom in a new non-acquisitive life of enjoyable self-activity. Having repossessed his previously enslaved inner productive powers, together with the lost world of external productive powers materialized in industry, man will be released from the suffering condition of alienated labour. Labour itself, in this sense, will be a thing of the historical past, a relic of the bygone stage of man's becoming as man. Freed at last from the lust for wealth in whose service he has laboured, he will not, however, subside into universal indolence. Instead, he will become for the first time the free conscious producing animal that it is his essence and species-character to be.

Productive activity will become joyous creation. Man will produce things spontaneously for the sheer pleasure it gives him to do so, will develop his manifold potentialities of action and response, and will cultivate his sensibilities in every sphere. He will cease to be divided against himself in his life-activity of material production, and will no longer experience this activity as activity of and for another alien, hostile, powerful man independent of him. Consequently, the products of his activity, the objectifications of himself, will no longer confront him as alien and hostile beings. They will mirror for him the joys of free self-activity instead of the agonies of alienated labour. And when he looks at himself in a world that he has created, he will no longer see before him an alienated world. As Marx puts it, the positive transcendence of private property means the 'annihilation of the alienated character of the objective world'.

But human self-realization means much more to Marx than the return of man to himself out of his alienated labour in the life of material production. It means also the transcendence of the various subsidiary modes of production in which man has historically led a life of alienation: 'Religion, the family, the state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only particular modes of production, and fall under its general law. The positive transcendence of private property, as the appropriation of human living, is, therefore, the positive transcendence of all alienation and thus the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc., to his human, i.e. social existence. Religious alienation as such takes place only in the realm of consciousness, of man's inner life, but economic alienation is that of real life.' The 'general law' of all modes of production hitherto has been the law of alienation; alienated labour has been the universal mode of production in all the realms of human life, among which the economic realm is primary. The ending of economic alienation will mean the end of the state, the family, law, morality, etc., as subordinate spheres of alienation. 'Social' man is man returned to himself out of what has historically been known as society, all of whose major institutions have been modes of alienated productive living.

What will remain is the life of art and science in a special and vastly enlarged sense of these two terms. Marx's conception of
ultimate communism is fundamentally aesthetic in character. His utopia is an aesthetic ideal of the future man-nature relationship, which he sees in terms of artistic creation and the appreciation of the beauty of the man-made environment by its creator. The acquisitive and therefore alienated man of history is to be succeeded by the post-historical aesthetic man who will be 'rich' in a new way. Marx describes him as 'the rich man profoundly endowed with all the senses', adding: 'The rich human being is simultaneously the human being in need of a totality of human life-activities'. In Marx's view, the relationship of this new man to nature—that is, to his own anthropological nature—will be that of an artist. Man will realize his natural tendency to arrange things 'according to the laws of beauty'. Economic activity will turn into artistic activity, with industry as the supreme avenue of creation, and the planet itself will become the new man's work of art. The alienated world will give way to the aesthetic world.

Accordingly, Marx's discussion in the manuscript on communism is largely taken up with aesthetic questions. He declares that 'The cultivation of the five senses is the work of the whole history of the world to date.' The positive transcendence of private property will complete the work of history. It will mean the liberation of the human senses to appreciate man-made objects for what they inherently are rather than perceiving in them only objects of utility and potential possession. By way of illustration Marx says that the dealer in minerals sees only their market value but not the beauty and unique character of minerals; he does not and cannot know and appreciate the things in themselves so long as his perceptive faculties remain prisoners of the acquisitive attitude or, as Marx now calls it, the 'sense of having' (der Sinn des Habens).

Here is his master-theme again: the enemy of human self-realization is egoistic need, the drive to own and possess things. Man liberated from alienation in communism is for Marx not only a man whose productive activity has ceased to be subjugated to the acquisitive urge. His knowing activity or perception of the world has likewise been freed from it. The human senses are said to be so many different modes of 'appropriation' of external reality. In the man of the future, however, this sensory appropriation will be purified of the greed that has always in the past inhered in it and defiled it:

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is ours only when we have it, when it exists for us as capital, or when we possess it directly, eat it, drink it, wear it on our body, live in it, in short, use it. . . . For all the physical and spiritual senses, therefore, the sense of having, which is the simple alienation of all these senses, has been substituted. . . . The transcendence of private property is, therefore, the complete emancipation of all the human senses and attributes. . . . They relate themselves to the thing for the sake of the thing, but the thing itself is an objective human relation to itself and to man, and vice versa. Need or enjoyment have consequently lost their egotistic character, and nature has lost its mere utility in that using has become human using. This is Marx's picture of 'socialist' man, or man returned to himself 'as social, i.e. human man, complete, conscious and matured within the entire wealth of development to date'. Man is to become 'social' or 'socialist' in the sense that he will dwell in aesthetic communion with the humanly produced world around him after he has arranged it according to the laws of beauty and trained his senses to relate to each thing for the sake of the thing. Mirroring the self-activity of the new freely creative and perceptive man, the external objects will affirm his essential nature instead of confronting him as alien and ugly denials of himself. As Marx expresses it, 'all objects become for him the objectification of himself; become objects that confirm and realize his individuality, become his objects, that is, he himself becomes the object... Thus man is affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking, but with all his senses.

All this presupposes Marx's notion that anthropological nature is the objectified self of the species. He sees the man-world relation as a social relation 'of man to man'. And communism, as the 'regaining of self', means the regaining of the alienated world-self as well as the alienated inner human self or productive powers. We may say, in fact, that for Marx communism ultimately signifies the establishment of an aesthetic community in the self-relation between man and his alter ego, the objective world. Communism, he says, is 'fully developed naturalism as humanism, and fully developed humanism as naturalism'. Man is to enter into an I-Thou relation with the human nature that exists outside himself. And this, finally, is what Marx means by 'society'. Communism is the emergence of 'society' as a communal relation between the future aesthetic man and his de-alienated world: 'Here for the first time his
natural existence is his human existence and nature has become man for him. Thus, *society* is the complete essential unity of man with nature, the true resurrection of nature, the achieved naturalism of man and the achieved humanism of nature.\(^{18}\)

This entire conception of ultimate communism is fully comprehensible only against the background of the Hegelian *Phenomenology*. Marx follows the fundamental phenomenological theme straight through to the finish of his system. In terms of Hegel's formula, he views ultimate communism as the stage at which man finally comes to be at home with himself in his otherness. It is a peculiar relationship of knowing between man and his self-produced world. Unlike Hegelian knowing, which is through and through possessive and which Hegel had illustrated by saying that a dog devours things to prove that they are not absolutely self-subsistent, the Marxian knowing is scientific and sensory appreciation of things recognized as external to the perceiver. With this important difference, however, Marx reproduces in his notion of communism the Hegelian vision of the goal of history. Instead of spirit knowing itself as spirit in 'absolute knowledge', we have man knowing himself and nature as man in 'communism'.

But as Marx fully realized, man knowing himself and nature as man is not a state of affairs that would normally be describable as 'communism'. For the term 'communism' carries a stubborn connotation of *ownership*, if only by the community as a whole. The concept of communism cannot easily be divorced from the thought of public property and possession, whereas Marx conceives it to be the goal of man to transcend all possessiveness in his relations with that which lies outside himself. Things then will 'belong' to man solely in the sense that they gratify his fully cultivated senses, and the only 'having' will be a sensory and cognitive having. Consequently, the final condition of man will be beyond all ownership, beyond the property principle, and in this sense *beyond communism*. With this idea in mind, Marx closes his discussion of communism with the following statement: 'Communism is the position as negation of the negation and therefore the actual moment of human emancipation and reconquest of humanity necessary for the future historical development. Communism is the necessary form and energetic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society.'\(^{19}\)
XI

TWO MARXISMS OR ONE?

*Without German philosophy, which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism—the only scientific socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being.*

Engels (1874)

There is an apparent gulf between the philosophical communism of Marx's manuscripts of 1844, or original Marxism as I have called it, and 'scientific socialism' as Marx and Engels expounded it in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and other later writings. We seem to be confronted with two distinct Marxisms. The most conspicuous difference is that self-alienated man, who was the central subject of original Marxism, disappears from view in the later version. In fact, mature Marxism is a mental world from which 'man' seems to be absent.

Marx's first system is openly subjectivistic. It is a phenomenology of man constructed on the model of Hegel's phenomenology of spirit. Its pervasive idea is the idea of the self. It sees property as essentially a subjective phenomenon, industry as 'human psychology, sensuously considered', the objective world as man's self-objectification in productive activity, the working man as man alienated from himself, and so on. It is, further, morally or religiously meaningful in a frankly proclaimed way. The evil is alienation. The act of world history is a moral story of man's loss of himself and ultimate recovery of himself or redemption in communism.

In mature Marxism, beginning approximately with the statement of the Materialist Conception of History by Marx in *The German Ideology* (1845–6), the idea of the self seems to disappear. It turns up rather unaccountably now and then, as when Marx writes in this book: 'In revolutionary activity, change of self coincides with change of circumstances.' Nevertheless, the published formulations of Marxism do not give the impression that it has much to do with the self. Its manifest content (to revert to a phrase already used with reference to Feuerbach's and Marx's interpretation of Hegelianism) is not
the self but society. This fact is epitomized in Marx’s statement in the Communist Manifesto: ‘Capital is not a personal power; it is a social power.’ As presented in this document, the Marxian theory of history runs exclusively in abstract social and economic categories. The realities with which it purports to deal are social-economic realities, such as the economic base of society and the ideological superstructure, the antagonistic classes into which society is said to be split, the property system by means of which the capitalist class exploits the proletarian class, and so forth. We are told that abstract ‘productive powers’ of society periodically rebel against abstract ‘relations of production’, which become ‘letters’ on these powers. This is said to be happening again at the present time. Between ‘labour’ and ‘capital’, embodied in the proletariat and bourgeoisie, a mighty ‘civil war’ is raging across the battleground of modern society. The productive powers, vested in ‘labour’, are in rebellion against ‘capital’, which is a ‘social power’ or, alternatively, a ‘social relation of production’. Here everything is impersonal, strictly societal.

Marx even calls into question now the concept of man’s self-alienation, around which his entire thought had revolved. In The German Ideology, he remarks with a certain air of amused superiority that ‘the philosophers’ have conceived the whole historical process as a ‘process of the self-alienation of “man”’. Still more significantly, in the section of the Manifesto that treats of ‘German or “True” Socialism’, he writes caustically that the German literati have ‘written “externalization of human nature” under French criticism of money-relations’, and adds that German ‘true socialism’ has espoused ‘not the interests of the proletariat but the interests of human nature, of man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, and subsists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy’. Thus, the very idea of man has seemingly gone out the window along with the idea of his self-alienation. There is no ‘man’, Marx is saying, there are only classes. As he puts it in the sixth of the Theses on Feuerbach, ‘Human nature is no abstraction inherent in each separate individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.’

It should be emphasized that Marx put forward this thoroughly ‘socialized’ or depersonalized version of Marxism in the immediate aftermath of his work on the manuscripts of 1844. This is shown by the fact that the earlier version and this one commingle in the scattered expository passages of his transitional work, The Holy Family, written in the following year. In other words, there was no hiatus, no gap of time during which Marx came upon and assimilated a new set of ideas unknown to him in 1844. What has just been briefly summarized is the essence of Marxism as it crystallized in Marx’s mind during the elaboration of his phenomenology of man. When he met with Engels in Brussels in the spring of 1845, he was able to expound to his future associate the basic complex of ideas that was to become known as the Materialist Conception of History. The foundations of mature Marxism were laid in the act of creating original Marxism.

The latter attracted little attention during the first decade or so following the publication of Marx’s manuscripts in German in 1932. In recent years, however, knowledge of original Marxism has been spreading, and in various quarters interest in it has been growing. At the same time, the apparent gulf between the original philosophical Marxism and the later Marxian doctrine has created considerable perplexity. The mystery of the relation between them presently seems to be emerging as a dominant issue and focus of interest within the field of Marx scholarship. And considering that Marxism remains today much more than an antiquarian topic in the history of ideas, the discussion has inevitably fallen into the pattern of a debate as to which is the ‘real Marxism’.

The world’s image of Marxism has, of course, been shaped by the published formulations of the doctrine. Such habitual ways of thinking tend to resist change, particularly when institutions have come into being with a vested interest in their perpetuation. For the great majority of Marxists, and especially for the Communists, the mature system remains as always the truly serious and significant creation of Marx, and original Marxism appears at most an interesting curiosity out of his youth. Many

* In his preface to the 1883 German edition of the Communist Manifesto, Engels summarized the underlying theory of history and added: ‘... this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx’. In another preface written some years after, he repeated the summary and commented that ‘when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring, 1845, he had it ready worked out, and put it before me, in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here’ (Selected Works, vol. 1, p. 25). In Ludwig Feuerbach he explained further: ‘Wha t I contributed—at any rate with the exception of my work in a few special fields—Marx could very well have done without me. What Marx accomplished I would not have achieved’ (ibid. vol. ii, P. 545).
enveloped in mysticism. However, the famous passage in the 1873 preface to *Capital* was his only further word on the matter. A part of it has been quoted above.* The remainder reads as follows: 'In Hegel's writings, dialectic stands on its head. You must turn it right way up again if you want to discover the rational kernel that is hidden away within the wrappings of mystification. As noted earlier, Marx also observed in this passage that he had criticized the 'mystifying aspect' of the Hegelian dialectic nearly thirty years before, i.e. in 1844. 

The cryptic reference here to his unpublished manuscripts is entirely understandable when we recall that he did indeed develop in them a systematic criticism of Hegel. Having turned Hegelianism 'right way up again' by reading the *Phenomenology of Mind* in materialistic economic terms, he proceeded to criticize its author for representing the *Produktionsgeschichte* as a process of spirit's becoming in terms of knowledge. This inversion of Hegel's dialectic of history was the constitutive act of original Marxism. And now, in 1873, Marx describes it as the constitutive act of the mature Marxian dialectic. The plain implication is that he considered the manuscripts of 1844 the birthplace of mature Marxism, the founding documents of scientific socialism.

It must be noted that Marx and Engels employed the terms 'dialectic' and 'dialectical method' in a substantive as well as methodological sense. 'Dialectic' refers to the Hegelian (or Marxian) general conception of the historical process. Likewise, 'dialectical method' means the dialectical mode of conceiving history. Engels, for example, expressed himself as follows when he paraphrased in *Ludwig Feuerbach* what Marx had written in 1873 about the inversion of the dialectic: 'Thereby the dialectic of concepts itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and thus the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing, and placed upon its feet.'

Clearly, Marx and Engels are not using the term 'method' in the modern rigorous sense when they speak of placing Hegel's 'dialectic' or dialectical 'method' upon its feet. They are speaking of the transformation of Hegel's dialectical mode of conceiving history into Marx's. According to the former, history is a spiritual process of production; according to the latter, a material process. And the former, they say, was the 'conscious reflex' of the latter, wrapped up in mystification. In other words, the Hegelian philosophy of history was a mystified economic interpretation of history—Marxism in embryo. With this idea in mind, Engels concludes *Ludwig Feuerbach* with the statement that, via Marxism, 'The German working-class movement is the inheritor of German classical philosophy.'

Scientific theories normally arise after their authors have immersed themselves in the empirical data that the theory seeks to explain. But not so with the Marxian science of history according to its founders. This science came into being by means of the transformational criticism of Hegel's philosophy of history. Engels, for example, declares in *Ludwig Feuerbach* that Hegel himself brought all past philosophy to its culmination and at the same time 'showed us the way out of the labyrinth of systems to real positive knowledge of the world'. He goes on to criticize Feuerbach for casting Hegelianism aside after he had turned the weapon of criticism against it: 'Feuerbach broke through the system and simply discarded it. But a philosophy is not disposed of by the mere assertion that it is false. And so powerful a work as the Hegelian philosophy... could not be disposed of by simply being ignored. It had to be "sublated" ("aufgehoben") in its own sense, that is, in the sense that while its form had to be annihilated through criticism, the new content which had been won through it had to be saved.' This, he adds, was Marx's historic accomplishment.

In 1859, Engels stated this same point still more plainly in a review of Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*. Here he said:

> What distinguished Hegel's mode of thought from that of all other philosophers was the tremendous sense of the historical upon which it was based. Abstract and idealist though it was in form, yet the development of his thoughts always proceeded parallel with the development of world history and the latter is really meant to be only the test of the former. If, thereby, the real relation was inverted and stood on its head, nevertheless the real content entered everywhere into the philosophy; all the more so since Hegel—in contrast to his disciples—did not parade ignorance, but was one of the finest intellects of all time. ... This epoch-making conception of history was the direct theoretical premise for the new materialist outlook. 

Thus, Hegel's philosophy expressed the 'real content' of world history, albeit in an inverted idealist form. Its critical trans-
formation by Marx yielded the scientific Materialist Conception of History.

Engels' account represents a fair summary of the genesis of original Marxism in the manuscripts of 1844. But his reference is to the genesis of the fully developed Marxism of the later writings. What he says of the rise of mature Marxism specifically applies to original Marxism. It follows inescapably that he and Marx saw in the latter simply the initial, as yet philosophically formulated version of the former. From their standpoint, there were not two Marxisms but one. Alternatively, there were two in the peculiar and limited sense in which the adult may be said to be a different person from the child. For them scientific socialism, embryonic already in Hegel's Phenomenology, was delivered into the world in Marx's manuscripts of 1844. The philosophical terminology of the latter was simply the umbilical cord binding the new-born child to its philosophical parent. And mature Marxism was the baby grown to adulthood. Consequently, it was perfectly proper to speak of the mature doctrine in terms applicable to original Marxism.

At the time these various statements were made by the founders, the manuscripts of 1844 had not been published, and their very existence remained unknown to the public. Consequently, it is small wonder that their followers, or many of them, despaired of making any sense out of their remarks about the genesis of scientific socialism out of German philosophy. Marx and Engels seemed to be speaking in riddles—and, indeed, they were. If Hegel had mystified the dialectic, they mystified for posterity their relationship to it. What they were saying about the manner in which Marxism arose was true. But it was specifically true of original Marxism, and this remained hidden in Marx's desk drawer. So the followers could only speculate in vain as to what he and Engels meant by the mysterious 'inversion' of Hegel of which they were laconically speaking from time to time. A treatise could be written on the history of these fruitless speculations, both those by Marxists and those by non-Marxist students of Marx.

Why, then, did he not make the hidden documents public? Evidently, because he realized that their publication would create more perplexities than it would dispel. Marxism as he and Engels had presented it to the world had nothing to do with man's Selbstdifferenz; it even, in one place, ridiculed the idea.

Its subject was not alienation but class war, not the conflict of an alienated generic man with himself but rather the conflict of classes in contemporary society. Marx no doubt felt that it would confuse and disorient the always insufficiently class-conscious workers if he were to introduce them to the philosophically formulated first form of the creed. Besides, the essence of the original document lived on in his later writings, so why bother to publish it?

Engels maintained the same secretive attitude when the archives came into his possession after Marx's death in 1883. Some years later he made public the 'Theses on Feuerbach' as an appendix to a new edition of his own Ludwig Feuerbach. In 1893 a Russian visitor, Alexis Vodn, suggested that Marx's other early philosophical writings also ought to be published. He reported afterwards that Engels showed embarrassment when this subject was raised, and answered that 'Marx had also written poetry in his student years, but it could hardly interest anybody'. Was not the fragment on Feuerbach 'sufficient'? And ought he not to continue work on Marx's unfinished economic writings rather than publish 'old manuscripts from publicistic works of the 1840's'? Besides, Engels concluded, 'in order to penetrate into that "old story" one needed to have an interest in Hegel himself, which was not the case with anybody then, or to be more exact, "neither with Kautsky nor with Bernstein". [This fascinating postscript to the 'old story' illustrates very clearly the dilemma in which Marx and Engels found themselves. Inasmuch as they had withheld from the public the materials that recorded the genesis of Marxism in an inversion of Hegel's Phenomenology, the whole problem remained impenetrably obscure. Only by publishing the records of the vital intermediate stage, philosophical original Marxism, could the founders have explained and proved their point about the organic link of later Marxism with the Hegelian philosophy of history. Since they failed to do this, the false legend gradually arose that Marx's early philosophical period was pre-Marxist, and that Marxism itself came into being only in the aftermath of...
of his apparent break with German philosophy in the middle 1840’s. His intellectual career was divided into a pre-Marxist early philosophical period and a post-philosophical later Marxist period. A typical example of this way of thinking may be cited from a work by Paul Sweezy. After mentioning Marx’s move to Paris in late 1843, he states: ‘It was during the next few years, spent mostly in Paris and Brussels that he broke with his philosophic past and achieved the mature point of view from which he was to write his later economic works.’

This image of Marx as a thinker who originally dabbled in German philosophy and then went on to achieve a new, mature, Marxist point of view in his later economic writings completely conflicts with the testimony from Marx and Engels that has been examined here. This testimony of the founders clearly implies that the later economic works were written from the point of view acquired by Marx in 1844 in the process of deciphering Hegelianism in economic terms, and that the post-philosophical Marx is a Marx for whom Hegelian philosophy is esoteric economics. If so, however, mature Marxism is an organic outgrowth of original Marxism, and those who see in the manuscripts of 1844 no more than ‘certain not yet mature thoughts’ (Pazhitnov) or ‘mere preliminary stages to his mature theory, stages that should not be overemphasized’ (Marcuse) are deeply in error. That they are preliminary stages is true. But according to Marx and Engels, it is true in the special sense in which it may be said that the child is a preliminary stage to the mature person. Here the essential fact is continuity in change. The preliminary stage largely predetermines the later one, and its importance cannot be overemphasized.

If we accept the belief of Marx and Engels in the essential unity of the Marxian system from 1844 onward, we still have to explain the appearance of duality. Although the original and later versions are by no means wholly dissimilar in appearance, the disappearance of man and his alienation from the mature system changes the face of Marxism so considerably as to create the impression that we are dealing with two distinct complexes of thought.

I have already suggested the explanation that seems to be called for.* The transition to the seemingly ‘dehumanized’ mature Marxism actually occurred at that point in the manuscripts of 1844 where Marx decided, uncertainly but irrevocably, that man’s self-alienation could and should be grasped as a social relation ‘of man to man’. Only man himself can be this alien power over man, he said, but this relation of man to himself takes practical shape as a relation between the alienated worker and ‘another man outside him’, i.e. the capitalist. In this way the inner conflict of alienated man with himself became, in Marx’s mind, a social conflict between ‘labour’ and ‘capital’, and the alienated species-self became the class-divided society. Self-alienation was projected as a social phenomenon, and Marx’s psychological original system turned into his apparently sociological mature one.

One of the passages of Marx’s The Holy Family, written just at the time of his transition from the earlier to the later formulations of the system, illustrates this point quite vividly:

The possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, apprehends the alienation as its own power, and possesses in it the appearance of a human existence; the latter feels annihilated in this alienation, sees in it its own impotence and the reality of a non-human existence. To use an expression of Hegel’s, it is a depravity in revolt against this depravity, a revolt necessarily aroused in this class by the contradiction between its human nature and its life-situation, which is a manifest, decisive and total negation of this nature.15

Society is here envisaged as a self-system whose inner dynamics are those of alienation. The antagonistic classes are collective expressions of the conflicting forces of the self-system. The proletarian and capitalist class, or labour and capital, are opposing sides of ‘one and the same human self-alienation’.

What Marx sees in society, then, is a self-system in conflict, a split self writ large. However, he ceases from about this time to be clearly conscious of the fact that this is what he sees. To put it differently, that which he sees presents itself to him from now on simply as ‘society’. Thus, in his short work Wage Labour and Capital, written in 1847, he asserts that ‘capital and labour are two sides of one and the same relation’.16 ‘One and the same human self-alienation’ has now become simply ‘one and the same relation’. Marx also describes labour power as a com-

* See above, pp. 146–59.
Marx’s theory of history is frequently presented by quoting his own résumé of it in the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy*. But a theory that takes all reality as its province could not have been adequately summarized in a single paragraph. Marx had, moreover, produced a full-scale exposition of it in *The German Ideology*, a large work written jointly with Engels in 1845–6. The book was not at the time publishable, since most of it consisted of arid polemics against erstwhile Young Hegelian associates.

But the first part, written by Marx himself under the title ‘Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook’, was a systematic statement of the developed Marxian position. Here Marx amplified in some seventy-five pages the set of eleven theses on Feuerbach written in the spring of 1845. When Engels made the theses public in 1888, he observed that he had reread the book itself and discovered how incomplete was his and Marx’s knowledge of economic history at that time. He also, however, characterized it as an exposition of the Materialist Conception of History, and called the theses ‘the brilliant germ of the new world-outlook’. Part I of the book clearly must be classified as mature Marxism. It is now available to us, and the discussion in this chapter is based primarily upon it.

In the later preface just referred to, Marx described *The German Ideology* as the book in which he and Engels had undertaken to ‘work out together the contrast between our view and the idealism of the German philosophy, and in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophic conscience’. And here, indeed, we encounter a Marx who is convinced that he has made a fundamental break with his German philosophic past.

For him the opposition of the ‘materialist’ and ‘idealist’ outlooks
is not an opposition between one position and another within philosophy. It is an opposition of science versus philosophy. His own new materialist position is opposed to the various idealist positions, Hegel's in particular, as a post-philosophical to differing philosophical views of the world. As all this implies, he uses the terms 'philosophy', 'science', 'materialism' and 'idealism' in a special way of his own not to be confused with the conventional usage of his time and ours.

In Marx's mind the ancient philosophical terms 'idealism' and 'materialism' have taken on unique new meanings governed wholly by the earlier thought-processes in which we have seen him engaged. To begin with 'materialism', he does not mean by this term what we are accustomed to mean when we use it in philosophical discourse. It does not have a physical or mechanical or physiological connotation, nor does it question the reality of conscious mind. It does not refer to a theory about the nature of the stuff of which the universe is composed, although Marx assumes that this is material stuff. And the term 'idealism' in his usage correspondingly differs from 'idealism' as employed in conventional philosophical discourse.

For Marx the materialist-idealist antithesis is an antithesis of approaches to the understanding of history. It is wholly a question of the nature of one's image of the human historical process, which can be seen from either of two opposite points of view. This arises from the circumstance that man, who is fundamentally a productive being, produces mentally as well as materially. As an intellectual he engages in 'mental production'; he is a 'producer of the concept'. As a worker, on the other hand, he produces non-conceptual objects in the course of what Marx variously calls the 'material life-process', 'material activity', 'material praxis', or 'material production of life'. Now the idealist image of history, according to Marx, reflects the thinker's tendency to visualize it all in terms of his own activity of mental production. Thus, Hegelian idealism pictures history as essentially a process of thought-production on the part of the thinking spirit.

The idealist starts from the 'heaven' of theory and attempts to descend to the 'earth' of practice. He proceeds from man's 'sacred history' or thought-process in the effort to comprehend the historical process as a whole. The materialist, on the other hand, begins with the 'real life-process' or 'practical develop-

mental process of man'. He takes his stand on 'earth' and adopts man's 'profane history' as the starting point for theory. Abandoning the vain effort to descend from heaven to earth, he rises from earth to heaven. He treats the sacred history as a mental reflex of the profane one, the history of mental production as an epiphenomenon of the history of material production. His underlying principle is that 'Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life'. Marx defends it on the ground that man cannot think, and cannot live at all, without producing the material means of life. Here is the doctrine of economic base and ideological superstructure, better known in Marx's later formulation in the preface to his Critique of Political Economy: 'The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.'

Thus, the dichotomy between materialism and idealism turns for Marx on the question of whether you start from earth and ascend, or start from heaven and descend, in your conception of human history. It is a question of whether you take the practical life of man or his fantasy life as the foundation for theorizing. To borrow a later expression, materialism, for Marx, is essentially and exclusively 'historical materialism'. It is a way of thinking about history that takes the practical developmental process as the primary datum and the human thought-process as its reflex. And Marx maintains that this way of thinking is radically new and unprecedented: 'In the whole conception of history up to the present this real basis of history has either been totally neglected or else considered as a minor matter quite irrelevant to the course of history.'

The transition from idealism to materialism is equivalent, in Marx's view, to the transition from philosophy to science. The philosophy-science antithesis is simply the idealism-materialism antithesis regarded under the aspect of falsity and truth. As Marx expresses it: 'Where speculation ends—in real life—there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, the practical developmental process of man. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence.'
This implies a usage of 'science' and 'philosophy' no less unique than the usage of 'materialism' and 'idealism'. By 'science' (Wissenschaft) Marx simply means thinking that has real life as its object. Science is knowledge of the world as it is, or the clear, direct, unobstructed view of reality. And this is the materialist view, the one that focuses upon the practical developmental process as the primary datum. Scientific thinking, insofar as man or history is the object, means materialist thinking, i.e. Marxism, and what makes it scientific is nothing at all but the fact that it is true.

'Philosophy', on the other hand, means confused thinking that does not depict reality. Marx does not mean that philosophical thinking lacks a real object. All consciousness is consciousness of real life: 'Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being (bewusste Sein), and the being of men is their real life-process.' To illustrate the proposition, Marx says that the existence of a revolutionary consciousness or revolutionary ideas in a given epoch implies the existence of an actual revolutionary class. *Philosophical consciousness too is a reflection of reality, but through a glass darkly. It represents the real world, but not as it really is. Philosophy qua philosophy is idealist. It is a theoretical consciousness that takes consciousness itself rather than 'real life' to be the primary datum and so reverses the true order of priority as between life and consciousness. It sees real life through distorted idealist spectacles as a manifestation of the thought-process. Thus, Marx 'Hegelianizes' the very definition of philosophy. He says of philosophy in general what he had said earlier, in his manuscripts, of the Hegelian philosophy in particular. This he attempts to justify by saying that the Hegelian philosophy of history is the final outcome and climax of the entire human philosophical enterprise.

Generalizing the argument still further, Marx joins the philosophical false consciousness together with the religious and other non-scientific forms of consciousness under the general category of 'ideology'. Ideology is consciousness of reality in which 'men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura ...'. It is, therefore, an illusionary consciousness, although the ideological thinker does not know it to be illusory.*

The whole of German philosophy, of which Hegelianism is the finest expression, belongs to 'German ideology'. Even the Young Hegelians, who claim to have transcended Hegel, remain prisoners of illusion and purveyors of ideology. They take the religious consciousness (Feuerbach) or the critical consciousness (Bauer) or the individual's consciousness (Stirner) to be the prime datum. It is only with the attainment of genuine materialism (Marx), which sees not consciousness of any kind but 'real life' as the prime datum, that human thought ceases for the first time in history to be infected with ideology. The transition from idealism to materialism is the transcendence of philosophy and all ideology in the 'representation of the practical activity'; with this 'real positive science begins'.

Plainly, the entire reasoning process just reviewed is a restatement and generalization of the reasoning about Hegelianism in Marx's manuscripts. There he argued that the Hegelian philosophy was a false consciousness of reality in that it represented the material 'history of production' as a history of spirit's thought-production; and that Hegelianism turned upside down gave you a true consciousness of what has been and is actually happening in history. Now Marx broadens the argument. Hegelianism becomes the prototype of all ideological thinking since history began. And the transition of Marx from Hegelianism to inverted Hegelianism, now called the Materialist Conception of History, becomes the transition of mankind from the philosophical stage of mystified ideological thought to the stage of positive science. The argument has been broadened, but it is the same argument. Marx is speaking from the text of his manuscripts of 1844.*

The continuity is further visible in Marx's elaboration of the doctrine of materialism in the 'Theses on Feuerbach' and The German Ideology. On his view, a materialist is not only one who proceeds from the practical developmental process in his con-

* Marx holds that the illusory ideological consciousness serves the interest of the ruling class, but he does not assume that the ideological thinker is necessarily a cynical paid servant of this class. Ideological thinking has an unconscious aspect as well as the conscious one. Thus, in a passage of Ludwig Feuerbach quoted in the previous chapter, Engels says of Hegel that 'even though unconsciously, he showed us the way out of the labyrinth of systems to real positive knowledge of the world.'
ception of history. He also proceeds from history in his conception of the world of material objects apprehended by man in sensory experience. For a materialist in Marx’s peculiar sense of the term, this ‘sensuous’ (sinnliche) external world is a materialization of all past productive activity of the human race. The sensuous world around man is a nature produced by history, or in Marx’s words ‘an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations . . .’.10

He fully recognizes the novelty of this conception in the history of materialism. Calling it the ‘new materialism’,11 he criticizes all past doctrines of materialism for the failure to grasp the external material objects as materializations of human activity. This is the burden of his first thesis on Feuerbach, which reads as follows:

The chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach’s) is, that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the object or sense perception, but not as sensuous human activity, as practice, not subjectively. Hence in opposition to materialism the active side was developed abstractly by idealism— which of course does not know real sensuous activity (sinnliche Tätigkeit) as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinguished from the objects of thought: but he does not understand human activity itself as objective activity.12

Amplifying this criticism of past materialism in the text of The German Ideology, he says that Feuerbach’s error was the failure to comprehend ‘the sensuous world as the total living sensuous activity of the individuals composing it’.13 He maintains that even the objects of simplest ‘sensuous certainty’ are actually historical products. Thus the cherry tree was transplanted to Europe by commerce only a few centuries ago, and solely by virtue of this historical fact is it given to Feuerbach’s senses. Here Marx comments in an ironic footnote that Feuerbach ‘cannot cope with the sensuous world except by looking at it with the “eyes”, i.e. through the “spectacles”, of the philosopher’.14 In short, there would be no sensory world at all for the philosopher if he lacked the eyeglasses given to him through history.

As far as the nature that preceded human history is concerned, Marx goes on, it hardly exists anywhere save perhaps on a few Australian coral-islands of recent origin and does not, therefore, exist at all for Feuerbach (who lives in Germany).
speaks of ‘self-alienation’. He no longer, for example, explains the alien character of the objective world around us, and the object-bondage, by the alienation of man from himself in his producing activity. Instead, he offers as the explanation the fact that man produces the objective world within the ‘division of labour’ (*Teilung der Arbeit*): ‘The social power, i.e. the multiplied productive power, which arises through the cooperation of different individuals as it is determined within the division of labour, appears to these individuals, since their cooperation is not voluntary but natural, not as their own united power but as an alien force existing outside them. . . .’

‘Division of labour’ seems on the face of it to be a totally different idea from ‘self-alienation’ or ‘alienated labour’. On closer analysis, however, it turns out that the transition is essentially a metamorphosis of one and the same basic idea. The lever of the metamorphosis was Marx’s decision in the manuscripts of 1844 to treat man’s self-alienation as a social relation between the working man and another man outside him. The alienated self-relation was thereby transformed into a social relation of production, and this was given the name ‘division of labour’. Marx borrowed this term from the political economists, who meant by it simply occupational specialization. As was the case with the other key terms so borrowed, however, he enlarged upon its meaning. He interpreted the division of labour as the social expression of self-alienation. This is clear from the following passage in the manuscripts of 1844: ‘The division of labour is the political-economic expression of the sociality (Gesellschaftlichkeit) of labour within alienation. Or, since labour is only an expression of human activity within externalization, an expression of life as externalization of life, the division of labour is nothing other than the alienated, externalized positing of human activity as a real species-activity or activity of man as a species-being.’

Having thus originated as a concept of the ‘sociality’ of self-alienation in the productive process, ‘division of labour’ becomes the comprehensive category of mature Marxism corresponding to the category ‘self-alienation’ in original Marxism. The *Entfremdungsgeschichte* of the manuscripts turns into a history of the division of labour in all its ramifications and transformations. The division of alienated man against himself becomes a division of man against man, of class against class, and of the worker against himself, within the division of labour. The several non-
economic spheres of alienated productive living are now called spheres of the division of labour. The outstanding example is the state. Thus, Marx writes in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* that 'by the word “state” is meant the government machine, or the state in so far as it forms a special organism separated from society through the division of labour'.

In *The German Ideology*, he traces the origin of the division of labour to the division of labour in the sexual act within the family, and so brings his theory of history into a relation of sorts with the Old Testament's. But the division of labour first truly became such, he goes on, from the moment when a division of mental and physical labour arose and with it 'the possibility, may the fact, that intellectual and material activity—enjoyment and labour, production and consumption—devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labour'. This stage too began within the family, where wife and children became slaves of the husband and hence the first form of private property.

Thus, division of labour, as a social relation of production, is primarily a *property* relation between the producers themselves and that which they produce, on the one hand, and a non-producer on the other. It is the relation in which a producer stands in his activity to another man who does not produce but appropriates the product, or the bulk of it, as his private property. Accordingly, Marx now says of the division of labour what he had previously said of alienated labour, viz. that private property is its outgrowth and consequence: 'Division of labour and private property are, moreover, identical expressions; in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to the activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity.' And further: 'The division of labour implies ... the division between capital and labour, and the different forms of property itself.'

If alienation was the general historical condition of man for original Marxism, division of labour is the general condition for mature Marxism. Each historical mode of production has been accompanied by a particular 'form of intercourse' (*Verkehrsf orm*) or set of 'social relations of production.' And Marx describes every such form of intercourse or set of social relations of production as an expression of the division of labour in society. It is, in other words, a form of the relationship between non-owning producers and non-producing owners of the materials and means of production. Changes in technology bring changes in the mode of production and thereby in the concrete form of the division of labour in production. Thus, medieval agriculture, associated with landed property or the division of labour between feudal lord and serf, gives way in modern times to capitalist industry, which is associated with property in the form of capital and the division of labour between capitalist and wage worker. In *The German Ideology* Marx essays an historical survey of the forms of property in the tribal, ancient, feudal and bourgeois periods as different expressions of the division of labour determined by developments in the mode of production.

Class conflict, the theory of which he also develops here for the first time, emerges as the decisive expression of the antagonism inherent in every form of the division of labour. Having earlier viewed the self-relation in alienated labour as hostile, Marx now sees the division of labour as a hostile social relation of man to man, and class war as the multiplication of this hostility on the scale of society as a whole. The periodic past rebellions of the productive powers against the relations of productions have been rebellions of the producers against the prevailing form of the division of labour and its class of beneficiaries, and 'all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse'. Though class conflict is for Marx the supreme form of historical collision, it is by no means the only one. Since the division of labour has been ubiquitous in history, showing up within the family and between families, within the community and between communities, within the class and between classes, etc., the whole history of the race presents a panorama of contradictions. As Marx now sees it, hostility of man to man has always pervaded every pore of the social organism since the original division of labour within the family.
XIII

DIVISION OF LABOUR AND COMMUNISM

In the division of labour, man is divided.  

Engels (1878)

Original Marxism presented history as a story of man’s self-alienation and ultimate transcendence of it in communism. Mature Marxism retells the tale, with added embellishments, in terms of the division of labour. It remains, however, essentially the same story. The change of manifest content, or of what Marxism seems to be about, goes along with a latent continuity of thought. Having in 1844 translated ‘alienation’ as ‘division of labour’, Marx subsequently read the division of labour as alienation. That is, he found the same meaning in the division of labour that he had previously found in the idea of alienation.

Thus, the division of labour in all its expressions is condemned as evil, and first of all on the ground that it means deprivation of freedom. Marx holds that the labour performed under every historical class division of labour in society has been essentially unfree. The social relations of production have always been coercive relations of domination and servitude. The producers have always stood in a relation of servitude to the class of those who appropriate the product as private property. And the history of this relation, from the time of primitive slave-labour to that of modern capitalist wage labour, is one of increasing servitude. In The German Ideology and elsewhere, Marx maintains that the last historical form of it is the least free, despite the legally free status of the wage worker in bourgeois society. Here, he says, labour has ‘lost all semblance of self-activity’.1 Thus, all history up to now remains for Marx a progress of human bondage. It is a story of man’s ever worsening enslavement under the division of labour in society.

Marx treats the division of labour in the ordinary sense of occupational specialization as a function of the class division of society between workers and non-working property-owners (or what we may call the ‘social division of labour’). He considers it under the headings of division between town and country labour, division between mental and manual labour, and finally the occupational sub-divisions within these categories. In all these forms, moreover, the division of labour is made out to be synonymous with slavery. It is the enslavement of the human being to a partial and limited sphere of activity: ‘For as soon as labour is distributed, each man has a particular exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood.’ Further: ‘The antagonism of town and country can only exist as a result of private property. It is the most crass expression of the subjection of the individual under the division of labour, under a definite activity forced upon him—a subjection which makes one man into a restricted town-animal, the other into a restricted country-animal, and daily creates anew the conflict between their interests.’

Marx never abandoned this conception of occupational specialization as slavery. Indeed, it becomes an almost obsessive theme of his own later writings and also those of Engels. The following passage from the latter’s Anti-Dühring is one of very many expressions of it:

In the division of labour, man is also divided. All other physical and mental faculties are sacrificed to the development of one single activity. This stunting of man’s faculties grows in the same measure as the division of labour, which attains its highest development in manufacture. Manufacture splits up each trade into its separate fractional operations, allots each of these to an individual labourer as his life calling, and thus chains him for life to a particular detail function and a particular tool. . . . And not only the labourers, but also the classes directly or indirectly exploiting the labourers are made subject, through the division of labour, to the tool of their function: the empty-minded bourgeois to his own capital and his own thirst for profits; the lawyer to his fossilised legal conceptions, which dominate him as a power independent of him; the ‘educated classes’ in general to their manifold local limitations and one-sidedness, to their own physical and mental short-sightedness, to their stunted specialized education and the fact that they are chained for life to this specialized activity itself—even when this specialized activity is merely to do nothing.’

Engels credits the earlier utopian socialists with the discovery of the evil of occupational specialization. This is, indeed, one of
the few genuine points of contact between Marx and his socialist predecessors, especially Charles Fourier. But they were not the source of his view.

His position grows out of and presupposes the philosophical conception of man presented in the manuscripts of 1844. Man was defined as a free conscious producer in need of a 'totality of human life-activities'. This in turn was Marx's translation into anthropological terms of the Hegelian concept of Geist, which Hegel had seen as 'manifesting, developing and perfecting its powers in every direction which its manifold nature can follow'.

And from this definition of the species-character of man it followed that man cannot realize his human nature so long as he is a specialized animal bound down to some one occupation all his life. He cannot be free without the opportunity to cultivate his manifold creative faculties in every possible direction. Somewhat inexplicably in the absence of an explicit restatement of this position, Marx and Engels in their later writings present occupational specialization under the division of labour as evil, unnatural and enslaving.

In fact, all the symptoms that Marx had previously treated under the heading of 'alienation' are now attributed to the disease of division of labour. Occupational specialization is seen as something that defeats the self-realization of man, something that dehumanizes him. In The Poverty of Philosophy (1847), the division of labour is said to contradict the 'integral development of the individual'.

In Wage Labour and Capital, Marx writes that the capitalist wage labourer 'becomes transformed into a simple, monotonous productive force that does not have to use intense bodily or intellectual faculties'. In Wages, Price and Profit (1865) he says that the worker in modern machine industry 'is a mere machine for producing alien wealth, broken in body and brutalized in mind'. Here once again is the tormented man of the manuscripts of 1844, who mortifies his body and ruins his spirit in productive activity performed under compulsion of greed. The difference is that the latter is now defined as the greed of another man separated from the worker by the social division of labour.

In Wage Labour and Capital, which outlines the argument later amplified at great length in Capital itself, Marx constructs his peculiar conception of capitalism as a system of ever intensifying division of labour within the division of labour. That is, within the social division of labour between wage worker and capitalist, the former is subjected to greater and greater division against himself through specialization. Within the enslavement of wage labour to the capitalist greed for profit, labour is also subjected to increasing slavery of specialization. And this situation worsens in a vicious circle. Competition among capitalists for economic survival impels one or more to raise productivity of labour by introducing new machinery, which intensifies the division of labour in the factory. Others are compelled to follow suit, so that 'division of labour is necessarily followed by greater division of labour, the application of machinery by still greater application of machinery, work on a large scale by work on a still larger scale'. This, says Marx, is 'the law which gives capital no rest and continually whispers in its ear: "Go on! Go on!"'. So goes the self-destructive inner dialectic of capitalist production as represented by Marx in Capital. The upward curve of technological progress is simultaneously a downward curve of dehumanization of the worker under the division of labour. This in turn is a prime component of the increasing misery that Marx sees as the efficient cause of the proletarian revolution.

In Chapter XII of Capital, he gives a short economic history of society under the aspect of ever increasing occupational specialization. He traces the phenomenon from its simple beginnings in the family and the primitive community through handicraft production in the guilds to the modern 'manufacturing division of labour'. The tale reaches its frightful climax when manufacturing, dating from the middle sixteenth century, becomes 'machinofacture' at the close of the eighteenth. Marx writes of the manufacturing division of labour: 'It transforms the worker into a cripple, a monster, by forcing him to develop some specialized dexterity at the cost of a world of productive impulses and faculties. . . . Having been rendered incapable of following his natural bent to make something independently, the manufacturing worker can only develop productive activity as an appurtenance of the capitalist workshop. Just as it was written upon the brow of the chosen people that they were Jehovah's property, so does the division of labour brand the manufacturing worker as the property of capital. Thus, increasing subordination of labour to specialization means increasing subordination of labour to capital, which again means
its increasing subordination to specialization, and so on in a vicious circle.

Not content with telling the story of man’s decline and fall under the division of labour, Marx gives also, mostly in footnotes, a rambling history of opinions about it. In various ways he damns those who have praised the division of labour, and praises those who have damned it. He finds an ancient theoretical advocate of it in Plato, whose *Republic* was just ‘an Athenian idealization of the Egyptian caste system’. He says that political economy, itself a product of the manufacturing period, generally approves of the division of labour, but that Adam Smith, who praised the phenomenon at the start of *The Wealth of Nations*, condemns it later in the book. As usual, Hegel grasped the crucial point. He held ‘extremely heretical views concerning the division of labour’, as shown by the remark in his *Rechtsphilosophie*: ‘When we speak of educated men, we mean, primarily, those who can do everything that others do.’

Marx makes small reference to the state in his theory of history. As indicated earlier, he sees the governmental machine as one of the countless expressions of the division of labour, its officials being subjugated to the specialized activity of governing. Moreover, he considers that the state *qua* state is authoritarian in nature whatever the formal facade of democracy, and therefore questions the very idea of a ‘free state’. But the authoritarianism of the state is not what preoccupies him in his doctrine of history as the evolution of human bondage.

He is concerned with servitude under the division of labour generally, and sees the realm of production as its primary sphere. Marx, in fact, tends to take the term ‘political economy’ quite literally, and to incorporate his political theory within his economic theory. The social relations of production are themselves the principal power relations. Not only is the ruling class a ruling class by virtue of being a possessing and exploiting class; its exercise of power is manifested primarily in the activity of exploiting. Otherwise expressing it, the prime object of rule is labour itself, and the prime locus of domination and servitude is the social division of labour. From Marx’s point of view, the state is essentially a defence mechanism by which the beneficiaries of this division strive to perpetuate it. It is a glorified police force
selves and abolishing the division of labour.18 The terminology has changed but the idea has not. The recovery of the alienated world of ‘material powers’ still means to Marx the ending of object-bondage and the repossession by working man of his lost faculties of productive self-expression in industry: ‘The appropriation of these powers is nothing more than the development of the individual capacities (Fähigkeiten) corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves.’19

The communist revolution thus remains a revolution of self-change in its essential meaning to Marx, and he says so in the third thesis on Feuerbach and the formula of The German Ideology cited earlier: ‘In revolutionary activity, change of self coincides with change of circumstances.’ This cryptic sentence presupposes the entire Marxian Weltanschauung as originally expressed in the manuscripts of 1844. The ‘change of circumstances’ is the change in the relation of working man to the world of externalized productive powers, which had been lost to him through alienation (division of labour) but are now restored to him by the revolutionary act of counter-appropriation. Since the powers of production materialized in industry are his powers, i.e. his own faculties for creative expression of himself, the recovery of them is his ‘regaining of self’. He is now the master rather than the servant of his own externalized nature—his anthropological nature.

This is the concealed background of a famous later statement by Engels about communism: ‘The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious Lord of Nature. . . . The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. . . . It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.’20 To the reader unfamiliar with the entire background of Marx’s thought, it may seem that this refers to the mastery of nature by means of technology. In actuality, it refers to the mastery of technology as man’s own nature outside himself. The kingdom of necessity is the alienated world of history, the realm of object-bondage. The ‘extraneous objective forces’ over which man is to become lord in the kingdom of freedom are understood as the externalized forces of the species-self. The nature to which man will no longer be subservient is his own nature.

Returning to the discussion in The German Ideology, Marx continues to suppose that the external change of self will bring internal change of self as well. The repossession of the productive powers materialized in industry will liberate those that lie within man, and labour as hitherto known will give way to free, spontaneous creativity along all possible lines. Thus, communism means ‘the transformation of labour into self-activity’, and ‘Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life, which corresponds to the development of individuals into complete individuals and the casting off of all natural limitations’.21 Marx illustrates the casting off of limitations by saying that ‘in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any possible creative activity along all possible lines. There is no longer a slave and master, but human beings free and equal in the kingdom of freedom. . . . The object, externalized by man and held as foreign to him through alienation (division of labour) but now restored to him by the revolutionary act of counter-appropriation, is his own productive powers.’22

Man will cease to be divided against himself in slavery to some one specialized mode of activity.

Having translated ‘alienation’ as ‘division of labour’, Marx could no longer discuss the revolution of self-change under the heading of ‘positive transcendence of human self-alienation’. That is why we find no treatment of communism in the later writings comparable in length to the manuscript of 1844 on communism. After The German Ideology, Marx confines himself to occasional brief allusions to the ultimate stage in which man is to be reintegrated with his human nature externally and internally. It is notable, however, that self-realization in free...
how freely cooperative, without specialization. The complete individuals could hardly be pictured as wandering from machine to machine or from workshop to workshop just as they had a mind.*

In the unfinished third volume of *Capital*, Marx adumbrates an interesting solution for this dilemma. The inspiration lies in original Marxism, in which the advent of communism was viewed in terms of the transformation of the alienated man of history into an aesthetic man whose world is a sphere and object of art. Marx suggests that the future social regulation of production in industry, and the exercise of authority requisite in it, will be artistic in essence. The co-operative labours in the factory 'necessarily require for the connection and unity of the process one commanding will, and this performs a function, which does not refer to fragmentary operations, but to the combined labour of the workshop, in the same way as does that of a director of an orchestra'. The old authoritarianism of the factory regime, based on servitude under the division of labour, would be supplanted by a free conscious discipline such as that which prevails in a symphony orchestra. Authority would no longer be authoritarian when it had become a matter of artistic discipline on the part of workers expressing themselves in the factory as performers in an orchestra. As we saw, original Marxism had nothing to say about practical economic arrangements under communism: If mature Marxism has next to nothing to add, the main reason is that Marx continued to think of communism in terms of the transformation of economics into aesthetics.

Nor did the distribution problem figure in his thinking in any important way. His best known reference to it comes in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*:

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want;

* Engels himself emphasized this in a short polemical article of 1872 against the anarchist tendency in socialism: 'The automatic machinery of a big factory is much more despotic than the small capitalists who employ workers have ever been. . . . Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to return to the spinning wheel' ('On Authority', in *Selected Works*, vol. 1, p. 637). These commonsensical remarks by Marx's more fact-minded partner come close to nullifying his whole mystique of the future revolution in factory existence.
society; the standpoint of the new materialism is human society or socialized humanity (vergesellschaftete Menschheit). Socialized humanity is humanity brought back into total harmony with itself by the abolition of the antagonism inherent in the social division of labour. All subordinate expressions of the division of labour, and the antagonism inherent in it, vanish along with the basic one. Socialized humanity is not only a classless but also a stateless, law-less, family-less, religion-less and generally structure-less collectivity of complete individuals who live in harmony with themselves, with each other, and with the anthropological nature outside them. It hardly needs pointing out that this society without social structure is not a social order in any meaningful sense of that term. Speaking in the younger Marx's vein, it is an un-society.

The only community with which Marx was concerned, in the final analysis, was the community of man with his internal and external human nature. As he himself said in 1844, 'Human nature is the true community of man.' His doctrine really has no place within the context of modern socialism as a quest for community-forms in the field of society. It is understandable, therefore, that he never ceased to scorn the 'utopian socialism' that concerned itself with the devising of changes in the structure of society. In the end, he found himself at odds with some of his own followers in the Social Democratic Party of Germany on this issue. Utopian socialism was raging in the party, he complained in a letter of 1877. Numerous members of it were 'playing with fancy pictures of the future structure of society'.

Only on one occasion did he himself attempt to say something concrete about the future order. This was in The Civil War in France, written in 1871 on the occasion of the suppression of the Paris Commune. This was a propagandistic tract provoked from Marx under pressure of a particular unanticipated political event. In one passage he allowed that communism would be a system under which 'united cooperative societies are to regulate the national production under a common plan'. In the very next breath, however, he lapsed back into his usual antipathy toward any discussion of communism as a social system. Speaking of the working class, he said: 'They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society is pregnant.' By the 'elements of the new society' he meant the creative powers of man, now shackled,
as he saw it, to the lust for money. The elements of the new society were elements of the self.

The difference between Marx and those among his followers whom he berated for playing with fancy pictures of the future structure of society is not that they were utopians and he was not. The difference is that their utopia was a new state of society, while his was essentially a new state of self. To them socialism meant certain concrete changes in the social order. To him it meant a religion of revolution, with universal human self-change as the goal.
The book can also, though with difficulty, be read as a straight treatise of economics, and many have done so. It then appears as an infinitely tortuous, unsuccessful endeavour to demonstrate the a priori inevitability of a falling rate of profit and various consequences in the way of intensified exploitation of the labour force. But unless we grasp it as drama, and in fact as one of the most dramatic books of modern times, we shall comprehend neither the powerful influence that it has exerted upon history nor its basic underlying significance. It is, moreover, drama in the tragic mood, and it may be pertinent to add that its author was all his life a lover of Aeschylean and Shakespearean tragedy.

It may be said without much exaggeration that Marx was one of those thinkers who spend their lives writing a single important book under a number of different titles. In this instance, even the titles show a certain continuity. He started out in the summer of 1844 to write a systematic Kritik of political economy. Resuming the work in the later 1840's, he wrote up the results in 1857-8 in a huge new set of manuscripts on the Kritik of political economy.* In the following year he published in book form an elongated preface to the theory under the title of 'contribution' to the Kritik of political economy. And when the book was finally finished in 1867 and published under the title of Capital, it was sub-titled Kritik of political economy. This major work of Marx's is simply the form in which he completed the book he started to write in his manuscripts of 1844.

The continuity of titles reflects an underlying continuity of idea and intent. Having had only the sketchiest preliminary acquaintance with political economy when he first created Marxism, Marx went on in the later years to digest mountains of economic literature—the 'economic filth' as he often called it in letters to Engels. And he enlarged the literature of economics with much material of his own that has been of interest to economists in one way or another and has influenced subsequent thinking about the economic aspects of society and history. Yet he never became a political economist as such; he always remained a critic of political economy. Thus, his design in Capital was not to show how capitalism works but how forces immanent in it work its destruction inevitably.

From this point of view Capital is the attempted proof of a preconception. Marx had postulated in the manuscripts of 1844 that the communist revolution grasped 'in thoughts' must necessarily work itself out also 'in reality'. His understanding of this necessity was explained in various writings of the middle 1840's. In The Holy Family, for example, he said that it was not a question of what this or that proletarian or the proletariat as a whole conceives as a goal, but of what the proletariat would be driven involuntarily to do by virtue of its life-situation in society. The German Ideology was more specific, envisaging the future situation as follows: 'Thus things have now come to such a pass that the individuals must appropriate the existing totality of productive forces, not only to achieve self-activity but also merely to safeguard their very existence.' The first purpose of Capital was to demonstrate how and why things must inevitably come to 'such a pass'. That is why Marx addressed himself in it not to history as a whole but specifically to the modern capitalist period.

The object was to write the obituary of capitalism in advance of its decease. But this is not the only sense in which Capital is a book of criticism of political economy rather than of political economy as such. From the start Marx conceived the idea of a Kritik of political economy on the analogy of Feuerbach's Kritik of theology and religion via Hegelianism. Political economy was presumed to be a science of the earthly accumulation of capital corresponding to the accumulation of spiritual capital in heaven, i.e. to man's externalization of himself in the image of God and his resulting self-estrangement. The criticism of it would consist in showing, in terms of the political economist's own conceptual categories such as labour and capital, that man is similarly alienated from himself when, under the domination of egoistic need, he externalizes his productive power in the form of money. This is the standpoint from which Marx proceeded in the creation of original Marxism. And this, mutatis mutandis, is the standpoint from which he wrote Capital.

It is not, therefore, surprising that before we come to the end of the introductory part. 'Commodities and Money', we find him returning to his starting point: the analogy between economics and religion. This is preceded by an analysis of the nature of the commodity, of which Marx says that, though it seems at first a simple humdrum thing, it really is full of metaphysical subtleties and theological whimsies. As a useful object
or use-value, a commodity is the embodiment of a certain quantity of concrete human labour in a material substratum supplied by nature. As an exchange-value or ‘phenomenal’ value-form, on the other hand, it is an objectification of ‘abstract labour’ or a ‘mere jelly of undifferentiated human labour’, this being defined as so much expenditure of ‘social average labour power’. Commodities qua commodities are ‘crystals of this social substance’.5

As such, Marx says, they are ‘social hieroglyphs’ that mirror the character of the labour itself as an attribute of its reifications. The mystery of the commodity-form is that ‘the social relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour presents itself to them as a social relation, not between themselves, but between the products of their labour’. Marx goes on: ‘To find an analogy we must enter the nebulous world of religion. In that world, the products of the human mind become independent shapes, endowed with lives of their own, and able to enter into relations with men and women. The products of the human hand do the same thing in the world of commodities (Warenwelt). I speak of this as the fetishistic character which attaches to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced in the form of commodities.’ A little further on, he explains that the fetishistic character of commodities is manifest in the fetishistic character of money, which is ‘the direct incarnation of all human labour’.6

Marx’s use of the term ‘fetishism’ (Fetischismus) dates all the way back to the manuscripts of 1844, where he wrote: ‘The nations which are still dazzled by the sensuous splendour of precious metals, and are therefore still fetish-worshippers of metal money, are not yet fully developed money-nations.—Contrast of France and England. The extent to which the solution of theoretical riddles is the task of praxis and effected through praxis ... is shown, for example, in fetishism. The sensuous consciousness of the fetish-worshipper is different from that of the Greek, because his sensuous existence is still different.’7 Without abandoning this premise that theoretical riddles have their solution in praxis (which changes the form of consciousness by changing the underlying life-conditions), Marx has extended the notion of fetishism to the ‘fully developed money-nations’ and made modern capitalist man the supreme example of the fetish-worshipper. But the basic idea behind the doctrine of the fetishistic character of commodities was formulated already in
labour power' alive. Capital, 'in its unbridled passion for self-expansion', develops a 'greed for surplus labour', an 'impulse to suck labour dry', or a 'vampire thirst for the living blood of labour'. Feeding on living labour like a vampire-bat, this blind, ruthless, insatiable and diabolically sadistic force of greed confiscates 'every atom of freedom' both in bodily and intellectual activity:

Obviously, therefore, throughout his working life, the worker is to be nothing but labour power; all his available time is, by nature and by law, to be labour time, is to be devoted to promoting the self-expansion of capital. In its blind, unbridled passion, its werewolf hunger for surplus labour, capital is not content to overstep the moral restrictions upon the length of the working day. It oversteps the purely physical limitations as well. It usurps the time needed for the growth, the development, and the healthy maintenance of the body. Capital does not enquire how long the embodiment of labour power is likely to live. Its only interest is in ensuring that a maximum amount of labour power shall be expended in one working day.

Marx accompanies this characterization of capital with long quotations from British factory inspectors' reports on horrible cases of exploitation of child labour and women's labour in the early and middle nineteenth century.

The other path by which capital proceeds in the 'unbridled passion' for surplus value is that of increasing mechanization of the labour process, which means to Marx, as we have seen, increasing dehumanization of the worker. The devices for raising labour productivity by introducing a more and more minute division of labour are so many torture devices that 'mutilate the worker into a fragment of a human being, degrade him to become a mere appurtenance of the machine, make his work such a torment that its essential meaning is destroyed; estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in very proportion to the extent to which science is incorporated into it as an independent power'. They 'distort the conditions under which he works, subjecting him, during the labour process, to a despotism which is all the more hateful because of its pettiness.' Increasingly, then, the workers became 'living appendages' of a lifeless mechanism—the factory. Labour at the machine prohibits free bodily and mental activity, says Marx over and over, and even the lightening of it 'becomes a means of torture, for the machine does not free the worker from his work, but merely deprives his work of interest'. He goes on: 'All kinds of capitalist production, in so far as they are not merely labour processes, but also processes for promoting the self-expansion of capital, have this in common, that in them the worker does not use the instruments of labour, but the instruments of labour use the worker... Through its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labour comes to confront the worker during the labour process as capital, as dead labour, which controls the living labour power and sucks it dry. The divorce of the intellectual powers of the process of production from the manual labour, and the transformation of these powers into powers of capital over labour, are completed... in large-scale industry based upon machine production.'

Here is Marx's description of the 'despotism of capital' or 'autocracy of capital'. The scene is the factory—a place of detention ruled by a dictatorial Nicht-Arbeiter through his militarized minions. Massed inside are a great number of machines, each one feeding upon and slowly destroying its living appendages, who exist only to promote the self-expansion of capital and only as long as they continue to promote it. The instruments of labour that they themselves have created are instruments of torture and tyranny turned against them. Each worker is enslaved to a minute, mindless operation that he is forced to repeat endlessly. His every movement is performed at the coercive behest of an 'alien will'. And the unseen dictatorial power, whose will this is, continually contrives to prolong the torture by a few more minutes beyond the monstrous portion of the twenty-four hours already given over to it. Clearly, the 'despotism of capital' is Marx's portrait of hell.

If we enlarge the portrait to universal proportions, we have his image of the world as a whole. Capital would have been more accurately entitled The World as Labour and Capital. What it essentially depicts is a universal labour process performed under a universal despoticism of capital. For Marx the whole earth is the scene of a process of production motivated by capital's 'boundless drive for self-expansion' (massloser Trieb nach Selbstverwaltung). It is continually spurred on and accelerated by a werewolf hunger for surplus value. And the vast world of materialized labour that emanates from this process confronts the exploited and
that man's self-alienation in productive activity is a 'fact of political economy', Marx proceeded to elaborate his economics as economics of self-alienation.

The basic underlying continuity is visible, on the one hand, in his concept of capital, which is simply the name now given to what he had called in the manuscripts a passion of greed. The infinite \textit{Habsucht} of which he had spoken in 1844 becomes the boundless drive for self-expansion in value. Capital in the physical sense of means of production is seen as the material expression of a dynamic force or life-urge towards self-aggrandizement in terms of wealth. Starting as before with Adam Smith's notion of capital as command over labour, which he now alters to read command over \textit{unpaid} labour, Marx posits a 'passionate hunt for value' or 'urge towards absolute enrichment' as the force behind it. The command over unpaid labour becomes for him the means of extracting unlimited surplus value to gratify this urge.

Marx still sees in money the power over all things, and in the acquisitive mania a will-to-power in pecuniary guise.* The self-expansion of capital is a movement of world conquest: 'Accumulation is a conquest of the world of social wealth. It increases the mass of human material exploited by the capitalist, and thus amplifies his direct and indirect \textit{dominion (Herrschaft)}. At this point Marx inserts a lengthy footnote on Luther's study of the usurer, which 'shows forcibly that the love of power is an element in the impulse to acquire wealth'. And he proceeds to quote Luther as saying that the usurer 'wants to be God over all men'.\textsuperscript{19} The same applies to Marx's capitalist. His life-urge to absolute enrichment is an urge to become the Absolute in terms of the power that wealth commands.

This is an economic concept in name only. The word comes from Adam Smith and the political economists; the idea, from Hegel and the world of German philosophy. Marx's \textit{Kapital} is just as much a citizen of this world as, for example, Schopenhauer's \textit{Wille} or Nietzsche's \textit{Wille zur Macht}, with which it has obvious affinities. But the immediate affiliation of the idea is Hegelian. The \textit{absolute Bereichungstrieb} is a translation in economic terms of the drive to infinite self-enrichment that Hegel ascribes to spirit, which is insatiably greedy to appro-

\* See above, pp. 138-9.
priate all things cognitively as 'property of the ego' and thus to assert its power over them. The Hegelian dialectic of aggrandizement, whereby spirit is driven to infinitize itself in terms of knowledge, reappears in Marx's mature thought as a dialectic of the self-expansion of capital—a movement of self-infinitizing in terms of money. Hegel's *Logic*, which he reread while working on *Capital*, remained for him always the 'money of the spirit'. He saw in Hegel's 'epistemological totalitarianism' (as it has been called here) a mystified expression of a monetary totalitarianism in capitalist production. That is why Marx, unlike most others of his erstwhile Young Hegelian circle, never ceased to be a fascinated devotee of Hegelian dialectics, and an irascible opponent of all those who in the later years tended to dismiss the dialectical idea as a 'dead horse'. On the other hand, it may also cast light on his inability to write the short treatise showing 'what is rational' in the dialectic, but 'enveloped in mysticism'. For the dialectic remained so enveloped in Marx's mind.

The passion of greed was described in the manuscripts of 1844 as an inhuman force that holds sway over everything. In *Capital* this proposition is reiterated in conjunction with a great mass of factual data from the history of capitalism during the Industrial Revolution. At the same time, the inhumanity of the inhuman force is drawn with a descriptive power far surpassing that shown in the original sketch. There Marx was content simply to identify the force as something utterly alien that renders all productive activity 'nicht freiwillig', causes the producer to mortify his body and ruin his spirit, and reduces him to the depths of self-alienation. Now he gives us a graphic portrait of it. The force takes shape in the pages of *Capital* as an absolutely vicious monster that literally swallows up its victims, devouring the living blood of labour and growing more and more thirsty for this sustenance the more it drinks of it. Like Hegel's cunning deity, which actualizes itself by the destructive using up of mankind, the monster does no work but only subsists and grows bloated on the labour power of the masses, who grow progressively more dehumanized in the process. The victim, having 'sold' his productive powers to the inhuman force, is reduced to 'living raw material' or 'personified labour time'. He is slowly and agonizingly destroyed in the monster's deadly embrace, becoming a mere machine broken in body and brutalized in mind. At the end, however, he rebels.

This drama at the heart of *Capital* is, in its latent content, a drama of the inner life of man, of the self in conflict with itself. It is a representation of man being dehumanized and destroyed by a tyrannical force of acquisitiveness that has arisen and grown autonomous within him. The force controls his movements, usurps his life-energies, torments him mercilessly, drives him relentlessly to aggrandizement for the sake of aggrandizement, and ruins his life. At the same time, the dehumanized victim of the compulsive drive towards absolute enrichment is aware of his 'dehumanization' and rebels against the force responsible for reducing him to this state. No work of literature or psychiatry known to this writer has portrayed with comparable descriptive power the destructive and dehumanizing essence of the neurotic process of self-alienation. No one has shown more graphically than Marx what slavery and misery man may endure when he comes under the sway of the drive to infinite self-aggrandizement.

Marx showed at times a dim realization that he was dealing with a servitude within man and a conflict of the alienated self with itself. He said, for example, in his speech of 1856 on the anniversary of the *People's Paper*: 'At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy.' But this was, at best, a slip of the tongue. The ostensible subject of *Capital* is capitalism. The process depicted in it is not identified as the self-alienation process but as the process of capitalist production in modern society. Instead of the *Selbstverwertungsprozess* of original Marxism, we have the *Selbstverwertungsprozess* of mature Marxism. This is shown as a social drama of enslavement of man to another man rather than 'to his own infamy'. The change, however, is merely a metamorphosis. It results from Marx's fateful decision in 1844 to treat self-alienation as being, for all practical purposes, a social relation of man to man.

As the reader will recall, he postulated a reality behind the alienated man's relation to himself as to 'another, hostile, powerful man, independent of him'. Thereby the alien inner man was personified in the capitalist. Self-alienation was socialized, i.e. treated as a social relation of production between worker and capitalist, and Marx started down the road to *Capital* with its projection of the neurotic process of self-alienation as the

* Italics added.*
Marxism, as we have seen, did not arise out of an empirical study of economic processes in modern society. Marx had next to no direct knowledge of workers and working conditions, and had only just begun the study of political economy, at the moment of creation of his economic interpretation of history. The path by which he arrived at it was the path of transformation of Hegelianism on which he had been travelling ever since 1841. Marxism was the final outcome in his mind of the movement of thought set going by Feuerbach's suggestion that Hegelianism was no mere philosopher's fantasy but a mystified reflection of the actual state of affairs in the world. According to Feuerbach, all one had to do to speculative philosophy in order to reach the simple daylight of reality was to turn its gaze 'from the internal towards the external'. Marx proceeded to do this in his own way, and the final result was his projection of man's self-alienation as an impersonal social process. Truly, Marxism may be seen as Hegelianism inverted. Speaking very broadly, the relation between them may be described as follows: Hegel represents the universe as a subjective process; Marx, turning the system around, ends up by representing a subjective process as the universe—the social cosmos.

Having arrived at this point, Marx maintained that he had gone beyond philosophy, and in a very significant sense he was right. But beyond to what? He claimed direct insight into 'reality', and on this ground described his own representation of it as real positive science. Now it is quite true that he had an arresting vision of something real. Were this not so, incidentally, Marxism could scarcely have achieved any large influence in the world and drawn followers after the manner of religious movements from time immemorial. But the reality that Marx apprehended and portrayed was inner reality. The forces of which he was aware were subjective forces, forces of the alienated human self, conceived, however, and also perceived, as forces abroad in society. Insofar as this determined his thinking, it was not 'real positive science' at which he had arrived out of Hegelianism. Instead, he had gone beyond philosophy into that out of which philosophy, ages ago, originated—myth. For this is the decisive characteristic of mythic thought, that something by nature interior is apprehended as exterior, that a drama of the inner life of man is experienced and depicted as taking place in the outer world.

In this modern instance of it, an historic sequence was reversed. Whereas philosophy had once arisen against a background of myth, here myth arose against a background of philosophy—the Hegelian philosophy. A phenomenology of spirit, in which the world was consciously represented as a subjective process of realization of a world-self, became first a new phenomenology in which Marx pictured the world as a process of realization of a human species-self. This was done consciously and without mystification, and original Marxism remained fundamentally on the ground of philosophical thought. At a decisive point in it, however, Marx made the transition to the mythic mode of thought. The subjective process of Entfremdungsgeschichte was embodied in an image of society. And Marx went on to elaborate the Materialist Conception of History as the doctrinal enclosure of a mythic vision in which the dualism of conflicting forces of the alienated self was apprehended as a dualism of social forces, a class struggle in society, a warfare of labour and capital. From this standpoint it might be said that mature Marxism is mystified original Marxism. The classic vehicle of this mystification is Capital.

In forming his concept of society, Marx started with Hegel's picture of 'civil society' as a multitude of egoistic human atoms competing in the marketplace. He then sought the 'anatomy' of civil society in political economy, but the anatomy of political economy, in turn, was given in the idea of 'political-economic alienation'. The consequence was original Marxism's image of
other. Marx calls the collective capital-personality by various ironic names, such as ‘Monsieur Capital’ or ‘My Lord Capital’.\(^1\) The collective labour-personality is called the ‘Collective Worker’ (Gesamtarbeiter). It is the ‘totality’ of the labour force of society, and the individual worker is ‘an organ of the Collective Worker’.\(^2\) Thus, society is a self-system after all, a collective dual personality.

Its life-process as it takes form in Marx’s main work is an inner drama projected as a social drama. The *dramatis personae* are My Lord Capital and the Collective Worker. These are the only ‘people’ in Marx’s social universe.* The social scene is a great arena whereon the collective capital-personality and the collective labour-personality fight out the war of the self in terms of such issues as the length of the working day. My Lord Capital has a vampire thirst for the living blood of labour. He is insatiably greedy to incorporate it all as his own substance. He will stop at absolutely nothing to extract a little more of the life-energies of labour in his unbridled passion for self-expansion. But My Lord Capital undermines himself: ‘Fanatically bent upon the expansion of value, he relentlessly drives human beings to production for production’s sake, thus bringing about a development of social productivity and the creation of those material conditions of production which can alone form the real basis of a higher type of society, whose fundamental principle is the full and free development of every individual.’\(^3\)

Producing under the relentless compulsion of My Lord Capital’s drive for surplus value, the Collective worker sinks deeper and deeper into an abyss of misery in accordance with the ‘absolute general law of capitalist accumulation’, which Marx formulates as follows: ‘The accumulation of wealth at one pole of society involves a simultaneous accumulation of poverty, labour torment, slavery, ignorance, brutalization, and moral degradation, at the opposite pole—where dwells the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.’\(^4\) Eventually,

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\(^1\) As G. D. H. Cole expresses it, ‘In essence, there is but one product, but one gigantic associated capitalist and but one many-handed labourer yoked to the task of creating Surplus Value.’ Commenting, he says that for Marx ‘not individuals, but only social classes possess ultimate reality’. He adds: ‘It is impossible thoroughly to understand Marx’s thought without appreciating this mystical view of reality’ (*Capital*, Introduction, p. xxviii). The essential point, it seems to me, is not that Marx views social classes rather than individuals as possessing ultimate reality, but that his image of society is the image of a collective dual personality.
Macht, and his recovery of himself by the total vanquishment of this force. The ending of the worker’s material impoverishment was incidental to the real goal—the ending of his dehumanization.

The moral structure of Marx’s myth is related to that of Hegel’s philosophical religion of self in an important way that remains to be noted. Hegel, it will be recalled, built an apologia of pride, a doctrine of the beneficence of moral evil, into his philosophy of history as the self-realization of God. The process by which humanity transcends human limitations on the path to absolute knowledge is seen as a destructive one, but Hegel justifies the crimes committed and the suffering caused on the ground that man in the end becomes God, or alternatively that God in the end overcomes all self-estrangement and becomes fully himself and free. For Marx, on the contrary, the self-infinitizing movement of capital is dehumanizing. Instead of liberating man, it prevents him from realizing his human nature in free productive activity. As suggested earlier, a basic shift of moral position, associated in part with Feuerbach’s influence, is reflected in this.

It must now be added, however, that Marx remains faithful to the Hegelian scheme in that he too represents the destructive process as the decisive cause of the constructive outcome. Thus, in the important passage of Capital quoted above he holds that the acquisitive fanaticism is itself responsible for creating those new conditions of social wealth in which this fanaticism will no longer exist. Moreover, ever increasing suffering under the despotism of capital is seen as the change-producing factor, the motive force of the overthrow of the despotism. Capital becomes, therefore, the agency of capital’s own destruction, and Hegel’s notion of moral evil as the prime beneficent force in history lives on in Marx’s thought. He sees in the dehumanization process itself the means of man’s ultimate humanization. He entrusts to the force of greed that he recognizes as absolutely evil the decisive responsibility for ensuring the triumph at the end of that which is constructive and good. In a significant sense My Lord Capital is the hero as well as the villain of Marx’s mythic narrative.*

* In Ludwig Feuerbach Engels made explicit the underlying presupposition concerning the historical beneficence of moral evil. Criticizing Feuerbach’s ethics of love as quite ‘shallow’ in comparison with Hegel’s view, he wrote: ‘With Hegel evil is the form in which the motive force of historical development presents itself. This contains the twofold meaning that, on the one hand, each new advance necessarily
One of the characteristics of true mythic thinking is that the thinker is not aware of it as mythical. For him it is a revelation of what empirically is. The inner process that the myth represents as outer is actually perceived to be taking place in the outer world. It fills the field of mental vision as an overwhelmingly immediate and tangible presentation of external reality. To describe and depict it appears, then, as no more than the true empiricism, and to act in terms of it the utmost realism. So it was with Marx. Now that reality had been grasped, he said, philosophy—speculative thought—had lost its medium of existence. It had given way to ‘real positive science’, which would consist in the transcription of the apprehended reality. The ‘reality’ to which he referred was something that he actually saw in a vision of the kind just described.

What he beheld in the vision was a process or movement, a movement of the social world. In one place he called it ‘the real historical movement which is turning the world upside down’. Elsewhere he described it as a ‘real social movement which already, in all civilized countries, proclaims the approach of a terrible upheaval’. It must be emphasized that he was not using the term ‘movement’ in the sense meant when we speak, for example, of communism as a world-wide movement. He was not referring to any such circumscribed socio-political fact as an organized mass movement of people to gain certain objectives. He was speaking of the process projected in Capital, the movement of class-divided society to the final point of crisis and convulsion at which the Collective Worker would rise up in awful wrath and destroy My Lord Capital.

appears as a sacrilege against things hallowed ... and that, on the other hand, it is precisely the wicked passions of man—greed and the lust for power—which, since the emergence of class antagonisms, serve as levers of historical development—a fact of which the history of feudalism and of the bourgeoisie, for example, constitutes a single continual proof. But it does not occur to Feuerbach to investigate the historical role of moral evil” (Selected Works, vol. II, pp. 345-6).

* According to Ernst Cassirer, it is characteristic of mythic consciousness that ‘the entire self is given up to a single impression, is “possessed” by it ...’. Mythic consciousness, he suggests, lacks the ‘free ideality’ of theoretical thinking. ‘Here thought does not confront its data in an attitude of free contemplation ... but is simply captivated by a total impression’ (Language and Myth, pp. 33, 57). Speaking of mythic presentations, the authors of another study write: ‘They are products of imagination, but they are not mere fantasy ... True myth presents its images and its imaginary actors, not with the playfulness of fantasy, but with a compelling authority’ (Henri and H. A. Frankfort, Before Philosophy, p. 15).

It was a visible presence before his mind. This is reflected in his continual references to it as a movement taking place ‘under our very eyes’. The frequency with which this expression appears in his writings after 1844 is remarkable. In the Manifesto he speaks of ‘an historical movement going on under our very eyes’. In The Poverty of Philosophy he says that socialists need not concern themselves with devising programmes for the future, but ‘have only to give an account of what passes before their eyes and to make of that their medium’. Again, in Herr Vogt he writes that it ‘is not a matter of bringing some utopian system or other into being but of consciously participating in the historical revolutionary process of society which is taking place before our very eyes’.

So overpoweringly vivid and compelling was Marx’s vision of the ‘real social movement’ that he feared the final upheaval would come before he had completed the grand demonstration of it in Capital. ‘I am working like mad all through the night at putting my economic studies together so that I may at least have the outlines clear before the deluge comes’, Marx asserted to Engels on 8 December 1857. He was working like mad to forestall the world cataclysm with his book about it. He was afraid that the world would turn upside down before he had shown how and why it would happen. In a letter written in 1858, he said: ‘I have a presentiment that now, when after fifteen years of study I have got far enough to have the thing within my grasp, stormy movements from without will probably interfere. Never mind. If I get finished so late that I no longer find the world ready to pay attention to such things, the fault will obviously be my own’. These statements, written in the relatively tranquil 1850’s, tell little about the actual social world of Europe at that time. They reveal a great deal, however, about the inner world that Marx apprehended as outer.

True, the European scene in those years did not present a picture of perfect calm. There had been the revolutionary events of 1848, and the ensuing period saw its share of strikes, labour unrest, commercial slumps and international episodes. These were mostly minor events at best. Significantly, Marx admitted and even emphasized this fact. For him, however, these minor events were signs and symbols of the reality that he beheld in the vision. He saw it manifesting itself in them. In his speech on the anniversary of the People’s Paper in 1856, he used
the good forces are fighting for their life against the evil ones. Since it is his conflict that is being enacted out there, the thinker naturally feels impelled to do his part, help the good forces along, urge them to battle, cheer their victories, bemoan their setbacks, and in general give them all manner of active support. He wants to join the fray, and bids others to do the same. The point is to participate in the action already going on, as he sees it, outside him.

This is the special logic (or 'psycho-logic') of mythic thinking as it relates to practical action. The answer to the question as to what should be done is given in the mythic vision itself, and can be summed up in a single word: 'Participate!' In so far as the mythic thinker gives any recognition at all to the problem of conduct, he answers immediately, emphatically and categorically in this vein. So Marx, as noted above, says that it is not a matter of bringing some utopian system or other into being (i.e. of defining a social goal and purposefully endeavouring to realize it) but simply of 'consciously participating in the historical revolutionary process of society which is taking place before our very eyes'. Here the participation takes the form of 'revolutionary praxis'. To engage in practical revolutionary action on the side of the proletariat is to promote, help along and accelerate the 'real historical movement which is turning the world upside down'. Moreover, since the theory of revolution is simply the 'literary expression' of this movement, revolutionary praxis is the conscious enactment of the theory, and Marx is convinced that all 'theoretical' problems have their solution in social praxis.* This is his celebrated doctrine of the unity of theory and practice. Not pragmatism but mysticism is its foundation.

If the projection of an inner moral drama upon the outer world is the essence of myth, the urge and injunction to 'participate' is the origin of ritual. Later the ritual activity may come to be performed as a merely symbolic re-enactment of the events recounted in the mythic narrative. But it is not so in the beginning. Originally the call to participate expresses the mythic thinker's passionate felt need to accelerate the ongoing drama of events as he experiences it in the vision.† This imperative of

* See above, p. 102.
† One school of thought is inclined to give ritual precedence over myth. Lord Raglan, for example, writes that a myth 'is simply a narrative associated with a
CONCLUSION

MARX AND THE PRESENT AGE

And the relation to himself a man cannot get rid of, any more than he can get rid of himself, which moreover is one and the same thing, since the self is the relationship to oneself.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

Although Marx died more than three-quarters of a century ago, adequate assessment of him probably remains a matter for the future. If importance may be measured by impact, he is certainly one of the most important minds of modern times. Yet his influence has diminished in recent decades and continues to do so today, especially on his own continent of Europe. And in so far as Marxism remains a powerful force in the world, the explanation seems to lie not so much in its enduring persuasiveness as in the imperatives of political power in those countries where Marx’s Weltanschauung has become a political mythology, a narrative associated with the rites of single-party politics.

But let us disregard the question of decline and continuity of Marx’s influence, and conclude with a brief evaluation of his thought, or of those basic aspects of it that have been considered here. Many of the critical conclusions have been indicated in the course of the analysis. As a starting point for a summary of them it may be helpful to ask what Marx has to say to us now, or how relevant his thought is to the problems and concerns of the present age as they arise in the non-Marxist countries of the West.

First, it seems that he has very little to say to us on the subject that preoccupied him all through the middle and later years of his life: capitalism. The reason is not that he was a poor economist, but that he was essentially something other than an economist. He was a moralist who came to speak in the idiom of political economy, and Capital is basically a work of German philosophy in its post-Hegelian development into myth. Marx’s economics, growing out of the premise that man’s self-alienation is a ‘fact of political economy’, were economics of self-alienation. The alienated species-man of original Marxism is writ large in
utopian vision of the future world was, if not scientific, at least rather prophetic of real possibilities. Marx's concept of communism is more nearly applicable to present-day America, for example, than is his concept of capitalism. There is deep irony in this. *Capital*, the product of twenty years of hard labour to which, as he said, he sacrificed his health, his happiness in life and his family, is an intellectual museum-piece for us now, whereas the sixteen-page manuscript of 1844 on the future as aesthetics, which he probably wrote in a day and never even saw fit to publish, contains much that is still significant.

The sociological emptiness of Marx's idea of communism has been explained in an earlier chapter. If he scorned the efforts of socialists to visualize a new form of society and castigated those of his own followers who were 'playing with fancy pictures of the future structure of society', the reason is that the controlling concern of his own thought was the structure of self-hood. From the start communism had meant to him essentially the restoration of community in the self-relation, and communist 'society' had been defined as the 'complete essential unity' of man with himself. It meant the society of man with the inner self and with the anthropological nature outside him. Although Marx later became sparing and cryptic in his references to the higher stage of communism, his idea of it did not change. The 'elements of the new society with which collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant' were the creative powers of the human self, both those within all living individuals and those of the species-self externalized in the form of industry.

The world revolution would be the universal act of human self-change. It would liberate the creative powers from the acquisitive mania, and men would finally become whole and harmonious as productive beings realizing themselves in a totality of life-activities and aesthetic appreciation of their surroundings. They would arrange their no longer alienated world according to the laws of beauty, and labour in the historical sense would be abolished. As Marx put it in a passage of *Capital* quoted earlier, the 'higher type of society' would have as its principle the 'full and free development of every individual'. This higher type of society was only an abstract postulated setting of a new mode of human life. In the unfinished third volume of *Capital*, Marx called it the 'realm of freedom'. There would remain, he said, a minimal realm of necessity or amount
of work that must be done, although the producers would 'accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it'. He then went on: 'Beyond it begins that development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can flourish only upon that realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its fundamental premise.'

Marx's aesthetic utopia, his vision of the abolition of labour in a post-historical world in which human existence would take on the character of creative leisure and artistic expression, was astonishingly modern in a way. It anticipated the rise of this possibility a century or so later in a context of development that has no relation to a proletarian revolution and *Aufhebung* of private property. The possibility arises out of the technological revolution that is taking place within the framework of a greatly modified capitalist economic system, and first of all in America. Automation and the unlocking of the productive powers of the atom have begun to pose the question of a profound reorientation of man’s existence on this planet, a reorientation from the work-centred life to a different kind of life. In a sense, it might be said that the problem of the *good* life may become inescapable for a growing proportion of mankind. The revolution involved is not a political one but rather a revolution of man's attitude towards himself and the purposes of his existence, a revolution of values. If economic labour is largely abolished by the technological revolution in its later phases, what use will men make of the unprecedented freedom to do what they want to do as distinguished from what they have to do? What kind of living will take the place of a large part of what has been called working for a living? Will the post-compulsion world be one in which people realize their creative potentials as free human beings, or will it be one of unutterable tedium? The next stage of history may conceivably carry out an experiment on human nature and give the answer to these questions.

Although his idea of the abolition of labour, and with it the old rigid divisions of labour, may, therefore, have been prophetic, Marx's thought as a whole is not seriously related to the issues just posed. Indeed, it never occurred to him to pose them. He did not see that the shortening of the working day might, beyond a certain point, prove the opposite of a blessing, that it
the self, that the ‘alien, hostile, powerful man’ is an inner man, the absolute being of his imagination, has he hope of transcending his alienation. To set it apart from himself and outside himself as ‘another man’ is to resign this hope. It is the ultimate evasion—the escape into insanity. This, philosophically speaking, was the meaning of Marx’s differentiation of the alien power from alienated man and envisagement of it as ‘personified capital endowed with will and consciousness’. Society was split into two collective personifications of the forces at war in the self, and Marx lost conscious hold on the concept of self-alienated man. Here the myth was born, and with it the illusion that self-change could be accomplished through the ritual of participation in an historical revolutionary movement of society ‘taking place before our very eyes’.

The moral escapism at the core of Marx’s thought finds expression, finally, in this conception of the means of self-change. Collectivizing the process and evading the issue of individual responsibility for self-liberation, he ended up by invoking one set of destructive passions to destroy another. Dispossessed by capital of his productive powers, dehumanized man was to be motivated by wrath, hatred, envy and greed in the war to re-appropriate them. The lust for power was to be annihilated by a counter-lust for power, and greed by a counter-greed. It is true, as Marx said in his unpublished papers, that man on the morrow of such a revolution would exist in a state of ‘infinite degradation’, but groundless to suppose that such degradation must be the beginning of his radical self-reform. There could be no greater confession of failure on Marx’s part than this mode of envisagement of the moral revolution of self-change that he had postulated as the goal for man. The failure was not, of course, Marx’s alone, for much of modern thought prepared the way for it. It only brought into sharp focus the wider failure of modern thinkers to comprehend certain fundamental truths of the inner life of man that were discovered and enunciated ages ago in different parts of the world, and later lost sight of.

It is sometimes said that Marx, for all his shortcomings, was a great fighter for human freedom. The analysis that has been offered here yields a different conclusion. It must be said, and can hardly be stressed too strongly, that the search for freedom was the whole urge and inspiration of his system and myth. The pervasive theme was the anguish of servitude and the quest for liberation from it. But the servitude in question was an inner one, a bondage of man to a force within himself that Marx, in his ambiguous statement of 1856, called ‘his own infamy’. The emancipation of labour meant the release of the creative powers of man from servitude to his own greed. The problem of freedom was meaningful to Marx in this one sense. Whether he deserves to be called a great fighter for freedom of the self from such enslavement seems highly questionable to me, for reasons that have been indicated. It would seem more accurate to say that he deserves to be remembered as a fallen warrior in the fight.

So far as freedom on the social and political planes is concerned, however, Marx not only made no positive contribution but performed a very great disservice. He confused the problem of freedom in the sense in which it alone had meaning for him with the problem of freedom in society. The division of the self against itself in productive activity became, in his mind, a division of man against man, and the inner despotism was projected as a social reality under the title of ‘despotism of capital’. Accordingly, the liberation of the creative powers and the reintegration of man with himself was associated by Marx with the abrogation of a conflict in society and the establishment of a unitary or classless society that would be devoid of inner antagonisms. The search for freedom and harmony within the self issued in the notion that men could realize freedom by transforming society into a completely harmonious and therefore stateless ‘vast association of the whole nation’.

This was a false notion, reflecting a complete lack of appreciation of the necessary conditions of social freedom. Whereas freedom and unity belong together in the life of the self, the same is not true of the life of society. Here freedom presupposes a structure of relatively autonomous smaller societies within the larger social framework, and political, legal and other arrangements providing orderly and open outlet for the manifold tensions and conflicts that are inseparable from the social condition. To confuse the search for unity of a divided self with the search for unity of a divided society, as Marx did, was potentially dangerous to freedom on the plane of society. This finds confirmation in the experience of Russia after the conquest of power by the party of Lenin, who wanted to realize Marxism in the world.
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Kant said: cognition is an act of appropriation, Hegel said: appropriation must be "practical" - so how have we to understand it? The point is that technology proved Hegel right.

Reflections: acting on the (strange!)

notion that production is not productive
here whatever is in matter and externalization of the self, i.e., a kind of emanation and not creation. If so in the case of the producer he, another
man robs me of the product of my hands, it is as though he takes both of my self - the external self, there self-alienation.

In Marx the concept of Man (or Human Duality) becomes species being the species - man as a species - species. Neither of course is real. Man or Men. 178.