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MARX'S CONCEPTION OF MAN

(With Particular Reference
To His Theory Of The Individual
In Society)

By

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MARX'S CONCEPTION OF MAN - TU'MEH

PREFACE

As the title suggests, my thesis deals with Marx and not Marxism-Leninism. In the last fifteen years, especially in France and Germany, there has been a revival of interest in his thought. The main concern of this renaissance is the search for a new basis to his humanism. The need for this seemed most urgent to those western scholars, sympathetic to Marx's thought, who saw in the practice of Communism a sacrifice of the master's deeply humanistic position to other less noble ambitions.

Their research has been primarily centered around a very important work of Marx which, until very recently, had remained unknown to a large part of the world, especially the English-speaking world. Marx never published the work and neither did Engels. It was first published in German, in 1932 by the Marx and Engels Institute; Moscow, in the collected works of Marx and Engels. The title given to it was Okonomisch - Philosophische Manuskripte. In 1953,

it was translated into French by J. Molitor. The first English version was published by Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., in 1959, using a translation by the Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow. The first western scholar to translate the original manuscripts into English was T.B. Bottomore of London School of Economics and Political Science. His translation - The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts - is published with a rather long introduction by Erich Fromm in the latter's Marx's Concept of Man (New York: Ungar Publishing Co., 1961).

The point of departure in my essay is The Manuscripts. This makes the content of the essay somewhat controversial, for it is a point of issue in current Marxian literature, whether Marx's early and later works (The Manuscripts is considered amongst the early works) form a coherent continuity of thought. In other words, what should be expected in this essay is not the traditional interpretation but rather the interpretation of Marx in its revived form.

My plan in the thesis is to first introduce Marx's conception of human nature in general. Then, I shall present

his view of man, especially the individual, as alienated, in class society. The means to his emancipation constitutes the material of the third chapter. The fourth discusses his view of communism as a community of fully actualised individuals. Except for minor occasional remarks, I shall defer my elementary critical comments till the last chapter, with the intention of exposing Marx as faithfully and interestingly as possible, at first.

I do not claim any originality in the work, except perhaps in my last chapter. But even there I am not altogether sure that the remarks I make have not already been made by others.

Besides Marx's works, one book that has been of exceptional help to me is Robert Tucker's Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, being the most recent work on the subject. Also, as my bibliography indicates, I have made extensive use of French sources.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Richard Scott for his most illuminating guidance and valuable advice. My thanks also go to Professor Roland Puccetti for

placing his Marxian scholarship at my disposal. Many thanks to the Faculty of the Department of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut, for giving me the chance to write on the subject.

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CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL NATURE OF MAN

Though the title of the chapter suggests that it will deal with a particular aspect of human nature - Marx's view of man as a natural social being, a species being - it will not, however, be limited to that aspect. It will include what ordinarily any investigation into human nature involves, namely a search for what is considered to be innate in man, if the particular view under consideration accepts such a classification, and what is considered to be acquired. In more specialized language, what the role of heredity is, and what that of environment is. The justification I give for naming the chapter the way I have is the relative importance, as we shall see, that Marx attributes to this aspect of man. Without further ado, let us proceed to the examination of these two aspects.

Heredity

A careful examination of Marx's and Engel's opinions of human nature would reveal some recognition of certain

'innate', or what we would ordinarily call hereditary elements, manifested in human conduct. We should not be misled by the term in taking it to imply that these elements are carried from one generation to another through what biologists would normally call the genes. No where do our authors describe them in that way. In fact rather recently Soviet scientists have announced the Mendelian genetics to be wrong. One of the reasons for that is because the theory allows or could serve as a basis for racist theories, since according to it an individual is conceived to be 'better' or 'worse' according to his genes.¹

The hereditary elements, according to Marx and Engels, are mainly three: differences in mental capacities among different men; adherence to tradition; self-interest. How they come to be there, Marx or Engels never explain. All they give is peripheral remarks, in a very confusing and scattered manner, of their innateness.

Innate Mental Capacities.

Marx talks of certain "natural fertility of mind,"

1. C. Milosz, The Captive Mind, (New York: 1955), p. 47.

certain "natural endowments," certain "inclinations" which he thinks offer different individuals the opportunity to find jobs suitable to their natural bents and talents.¹ With Engels, he complains that division of labour petrifies all other "physical and mental productive capabilities and instincts" in the process of developing one of them to dexterity in the minutest detail.²

They are also aware that these 'inborn' capabilities are not found in uniform quantity and quality in all individuals. Men are not born equal, they exhibit "differences of brains and intellectual capacities." In fact division of labour rests on this inequalities amongst workers. Some operations require more skill, strength and attention than others; and two individuals may not possess them all to the same degree. Some persons lack the capacity for adaptation in a society based on division of labour, and they therefore remain idle and poor.³ "A man without wealth but with energy, solidity, ability and the business sense may become a capitalist..."⁴ Some men are born leaders—Owen, others

1. K. Marx, Capital, (New York: 1906), p. 198.

2. Ibid., p. 396.

3. Ibid., p. 706.

4. Ibid., p. 706-706.

great thinkers, "Aristotle is the greatest thinker of antiquity." Xenophon in his writings shows already a "characteristic bourgeois instinct."¹

However, these statements on the innateness of these differences, are to be read in juxtaposition with other remarks by Marx and Engels which invoke a second thought upon the reader before he draws his conclusion. Division of labour holds for our authors a conspicuous position in determining these differences. Marx quotes the famous passage from Adam Smith to this effect:

The difference of natural talents in different men is in reality much less than we are aware of; and the very different genius which appears to distinguish men of different profession when grown up to maturity is not so much the cause as the effect of the division of labour.

Marx adds the remark that "it is division of labour which has placed on abyss between the philosopher and the porter."² In another place Marx remarks that even "natural" distinctions among men such as "racial differences can and must be removed

1. Ibid., p. 402.

2. K. Marx, The Poverty Of Philosophy, (Moscow:1954), p. 144.

historically."¹

One might as well profess that the indecision of our authors regarding this issue, the inadequacy of their treatment of it, leaves the curious reader rather puzzled and discontented.

Adherence to Tradition.

One outstanding characteristic of considerable weight which apparently was held by Marx and Engels to be inborn is man's adherence to tradition. Men are very reluctant to make changes, either because of a sentimental attachment to something they consider has contributed in one way or another to their formation or because of a certain irrational fear they derive from an unknown future, a dread of the possible void that threatens their next step. It is anguished cosmic responsibility that one feels, who is conscious of the fact that by choosing a new way, he might be betraying a whole historical heritage that is handed down to him.

What has existed for a long time comes for a people

1. M. Bober, Karl Marx's Interpretation of History, (Cambridge: 1948), p. 71.

to acquire a kind of a mystical sacred sanction that ought not be disturbed. In a total detachment people are always apprehensive of feeling the solitary loneliness of the up-rooted, though they might have identified themselves with a new cause. So we see that even fighting people use cries and mottoes of the past. They try to derive vigour and ardour not so much from present deeds as from old names and spirits of bygone days.¹ An image of a glory of the past is revived in their vision. The future becomes, in a way, oriented through the past. "Traditions of all past generations weigh like an Alp upon the brain of the living."² Because of tradition and custom every new form of social order, every new form of production retains for a long time vestiges of the old one. Elements of the old system will remain attached to the new until the latter develops enough momentum to liberate itself from the remnants of the past.

Self Interest

A more important and influential innate human trait is self interest; the desire for power. Marx refers to it as

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1. K. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, (New York: 1935), pp. 9-10.
 2. Ibid., p. 9.

"the most violent, mean and malignant passions of the human breast; the furies of private interest."¹ This is the cause of much suffering in human history, but it is the driving force in social change and progress. Engels praises the achievements of civilization, but he laments the fact that self-interest was the moving force behind them.

But these exploits were accomplished by playing on the most sordid of passions and instincts of man, and by developing them at the expense of all his other gifts.²

There was only one period in human history which was free from this "monster" and that was the primitive society. With the fall of this order, the earth became a scene of turmoil in the struggle for wealth and power.

The egoistic interpretation of human behavior and human conduct is a very well-known theory and it has been widely held by several renowned philosophers and psychologists. There seems to me to be a rather interesting contrast between Marx and another philosopher who advocated this position, Hobbes.

1. K. Marx, Capital, p. 15.

2. F. Engels, The Origin of the Family, (Chicago: 1902), p. 215.

Both Marx and Hobbes held that self-interest has always characterised men. But where Hobbes thought it most strongly manifested itself, Marx thought it was dormant. The solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short life of man in the state of nature, the continual fear, and the constant danger of violent death were all the result of the free practise of the ideal of self preservation and self-interest. The formation of first society under the guardianship of a Sovereign has its primary purpose the private interests of the members.¹ But for Marx, as we have just seen primitive community was joyful and serene, with everybody satisfied simply because self-interest was absent. Peace was on earth.

Marx and Engels do recognize the possession of finer attributes than self-interest, by man - friendship, compassion, self-sacrifice and love. Yet these finer qualities are regarded as private and domestic virtues manifested in the humbler dealings of everyday life. They do not occupy a prominent position in social processes. They are marginal. On the arena of history the persistent human passion that plays a dominant part is self-

1. Leviathan, Part I, Chaps. 13 & 17.

interest.¹ Self interest is not only in the sphere of economics. As will be seen later, society itself and all its institutions are designed according to Marx to serve the interest of the ruling class; ideas and ideals are charged with self-interest. In his comparison of Marx with Mill and Smith, M. Bober says:

If the older English economists assumed the economic man in pecuniary dealings, if Machiavelli constructed the 'political man' in the domain of politics, Marx and his friend went further. With them man is impelled by self-interest in nearly every phase of social life and culture; man had been and still is... the apotheosis of self interest.²

There is no doubt that a question of protest must have been disturbing the reader by now: namely, what the exact status of 'self-interest' is. While our authors speak of it as in-born and instinctive, in their description of primitive communal society they have exempted its members from its viciousness and cruelty. Yet in the dissolution of that order, they again seem to attribute to it a prime role. "The new system of classes is inaugurated by the meanest of

1. F. Engels, Ludwig Fenerbach, (Chicago: 1908), pp. 77-78.

2. M. Bober, op.cit., p. 75.

impulses: covetousness, lust, avarice, selfishness. The old gentile society without classes is undermined and brought to fall by the most contemptible means theft, violence, cunning treason."¹

In concluding ~~this~~ section we shall attempt to salvage an answer at this stage to this protest by being as fair as possible and saying that what they might have meant was perhaps that though this trait is inborn, it was never given a chance in primitive society to actualise. It was not until there was more intercourse among neighboring tribes, and accumulation of wealth started, that this instinct found the appropriate atmosphere to emerge. However, neither Marx nor Engels ever say how accumulation of wealth started, and what made it start.

This of course would anticipate the situation in the future society where probably once more the environment would be such that it could not provoke self-interest to arise. I think we shall have a clearer insight into this problem later on in this essay.

1. F. Engels, The Origin of the Family, p. 119.

Environment.

An indefinite groping into the depth of the human individual isolated from his environment would throw but an insignificant light upon the source of his being what he is. Man's nature does not reside inside of him but is exterior to him. It lies mostly in his environment.

A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a natural being.... a being which has no object outside itself is not an objective being... A non-objective being is a non-being.¹

It is outside ourselves that we should excavate if we are to obtain fruitful results about our phenomenon. The mere summation of the different mental capacities, the persistent inborn traits does not exhaust its being. In fact as we have seen, in the case of the most persistent amongst them, unless given the suitable environment and instigated by the proper forces, it retaliates into a dormant state.

Real human nature embodies an aggregate of concrete responses of definite people to particular environments, as well as the specific ideas, feelings, prejudices, experiences,

1. K. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, (New York: 1961), p. 182.

aims, nourished by a given age and place. "Stripped of all environmental data, human nature is a mere abstraction,"¹ Engel says, and Marx tells us that in order to evaluate human acts, movements, relations, one ought to "deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch."²

The environmental data that occupy the prime position in the formation of human nature are conceived by Marx to be three: geographic conditions of the period and place, labour and social organization. Not that the three are of equal importance, but that they all contribute to their subject. As we shall see, priority is given to some over others.

Geography.

Geography is acknowledged by Marx to have an indirect influence as a formative element of human nature. Its influence manifests itself in determining to a certain extent the degree and kind of mode of production to be assumed, which in turn has a direct influence on man. It is because of this

1. F. Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 83.

2. K. Marx, Capital, p. 668.

perhaps that Marx gives only a passing account of the role of geography, without devoting time or space to its scrutiny. An exhaustive treatment of this issue is to my knowledge, absent from either Marx' or Engels' works.

There are passages however where Marx tells us that where nature is luxuriant in her gifts she treats man like a child and does not compel him to develop himself. But where she is parsimonious in her distribution of resources, she puts man on guard, calls his abilities into constant exercise and forces him to economize, to plan and to enter into all sorts of enterprises.¹ Marx quotes from two English authors; one is Thomas Mun who says: "I cannot conceive a greater curse upon a body of people, than to be thrown upon a spot of land where the productions for subsistence and food were, in great measure spontaneous, and the climate required or admitted little care for raiment and covering... There may be an extreme on the other side. A soil incapable of produce by labour is quite as bad as a soil that produces plentifully without labour."² He also quotes from J. Massey's An Essay

1. Ibid., p. 563.

2. Ibid., p. 563. from Mun, An Inquiry Into the Present High Price of Provisions, London: 1767, p. 10.

on the Governing Causes of the Natural Role of Interest, a similar passage. It is interesting to note here as a historical comment that Marx attributes an importance to this latter anonymous work which he asserts to be the source of Hume's theory of interest.¹

This minor treatment of the subject of geography is to my mind a noteworthy anticipation of the famous contemporary historian, Arnold Toynbee, who in his The Study of History,² attributes a somewhat similar role to geography in the genesis and growth of civilizations. In an oversimplified manner that might be running the risk of a distortion, we could say that for him, geographical factors provide a primary 'stimulus' for the genesis and growth of a civilization, to which the response of a people might be of a triple nature depending on the degree of severity of this 'challenge.' It might be too severe and the 'response' in this case would be an

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1. Justice, being for the interest of a community, loses its significance in two cases: when nature is extremely generous or where extremely thrifty. In the first case it is unlikely that laws of justice would be thought of being set at all; in the second case, it is very unlikely that anybody would abide with any laws of justice. (Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Sect. III, p. I.)
 2. A. Toynbee, A Study of History, Somervell Abridged edition, (London : 1960), Chs. 2 & 3.

abortive birth, or better the civilization would not be born at all; or it might be too lenient, in the sense that there is found plenty of everything; a civilization is born but in that case, the laxity and apathy that it would cause in the attitude of the people concerned would deprive them of zeal and courage in facing changes, when any, and the result would be an arrested growth. Only when the challenge is of neither extreme, when it hits the 'golden mean' so to speak, is the response usually successful, and a civilization is born and in most cases flourishes. We should add however one note of warning: for Toynbee the challenge is not always and exclusively geographical. There are social challenges, challenges by other people etc.. which are stimuli for further growth.

Labour.

Another and very important factor of influence on human nature is labour. It is perhaps the most important factor in the development of man taking into consideration their view, as we shall see, that the precondition of labour in its full and developed sense is a social order.

Labour is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that in a sense we have to say that labour created man himself.¹

Before we proceed to a more extensive exploration of this position, let us note that there is a basic implication involved in it: namely man's naturalism yet his antagonism to objective nature. I explain: Man is not a being that stands against nature as somehow belonging to another. Nature is such that man has evolved in a long process of time; and like everything else once he appears he becomes part and parcel of nature. His acquisition of characteristics that make him different from everything else around him in his environment does not make him cease to be a part of nature. As such he is possessed of certain natural characteristics, tendencies and vital forces, biological and physical, which limit him. They are outside him in the sense that he is dependent on them. They are objects to him as subject. He is limited by them, and he suffers because of them. To this extent man is passive and in his awareness of his passivity, his impotence against them, he becomes impassioned in his desire to discover himself in the

1. F. Engels, Dialectics of Nature in Selected Works, (Moscow: 1955), p. 80.

objects, for it is outside himself that man sees himself, it is in his fields of action that he recognizes his potentialities. "Passion" says Marx, "is man's faculties striving to attain their object."¹ It is in this sense that nature appears antagonistic and hostile, while in fact it is in itself indifferent, impersonal. To satisfy his desires is not enough for man; he has to conquer nature, to become human. So man, a natural being turns against nature, struggles against it. It is his original source, but "yet it is nothing but the given material for his action." As objective and negative, nature becomes something non-real which has to be worked on, recreated; in a sense nullified. "This nullity of the object has a positive as well as a negative significance for consciousness, for it is its self-confirmation."² In other words, the harmony which some great individualists like Rousseau had claimed to discover between man and nature does not exist. Man struggles against nature. He should not rest passively within its bosom contemplating and indulging romantically in it; on the contrary he should fight it, conquer it, dominate it

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 183.

2. Ibid., p. 184.

by work and toil. That is how he comes to develop himself. In the sixteenth century, Marx tells us, bourgeois culture came to conceive of man as being in conformity with nature and hence being only its product and not also the manifestation of his work. "This illusion" he says, "has been characteristic of every new epoch in the past."¹

Albert Camus sees in this relationship between man and nature a remarkable comparison with the Christian conception of it, and both as contrastingly opposed to the Greek view:

"For the Christian, as for the Marxist, nature must be subdued. The Greeks are of the opinion that it is better to obey it. The delicate equilibrium between humanity and nature, man's consent to the world, which gives ancient thought its distinction was first shattered for the benefit of history by Christianity... Marx from this point of view is the Jeremiah of the god of history, and the St. Augustine of the revolution."²

I think the comparison between Christianity and Marx on this point stops here. More important, it seems to me is a contrast between the two which Camus seems to overlook. The

1. K. Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, (Chicago: 1904), p. 267.

2. A. Camus, The Rebel, (London: 1962), p. 158-159.

religious notion that man had been created and put into the world gives an understanding that man though himself has a natural history, it is not all. He belongs also to a world other than nature. A world that transcends nature. For Marx man is nature, turned against itself, coming slowly and painfully to the awareness of its own existence and meaning. As John Lewis, a Marxist and the foremost English authority on Marx, puts it,

Man is not something placed in nature. He is nature passing critically and creative judgement upon her own processes, and selecting this, rejecting that, making the world ever nearer to his heart's desires.¹

One might also quote Woodbridge in this connection:

Without such creatures as man nature might well exist, but she would exist unvalued and unobserved. You cannot add man as some extraneous figure, for he has grown out of nature's own stuff... He is no mere commentator on the world or spectator of it. He is the supreme² instance where nature has evaluated herself.

We seem to have forgotten about labour? No. Labour is the means and the manifestation of the struggle of man against

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1. J. Lewis, Marxism and the Irrationalists, (London: 1955), p. 138.
 2. F. Woodbridge, "Naturalism and Humanism," in Nature and Mind, (New York: 1937), p.93.

nature; of human action.

Man can be distinguished from animals by consciousness or religion or whatever we like, but he himself begins to distinguish himself from animals as soon as he begins to produce his means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by his physical organization.¹

The mere satisfaction of his biological need for food or shelter by utilizing whatever is given to him in his natural surrounding does not distinguish him in any way from the other members of the animal species. By beginning to produce his own livelihood man has begun to struggle against nature and has succeeded in impressing his stamp on it. By shifting things from one place to another, by using them to serve his ends, by altering the climate of his dwelling place; in a word by revolting against a passive role of sheer obedience to what is there, whether adequate to his wants or not, and instead making it adequate, man has transcended his mere animal state. His work becomes a realization of himself in the object; a concretization of ideas in his head.

While the animal merely uses external nature and brings about changes in it simply by his

1. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology (Pascals Trans., New York: 1947), p. 7.

presence, man by his changes makes nature serve his ends, masters it.¹

Labour needs tool and the accomplishment of this step was first done by the use of the hand,

The decisive step in the transition from ape to man lies in the previous commencement of disaccustoming to the aid of thier hands in walking and to adopt a more erect gait.²

using their hands for the development and creation of the more important matters, of producing their means of subsistence. The hand was the first tool. With more and more utilization of this precious tool, with more exploitation of its capacities, with wider confrontation of manifold and variety of manipulations, it came to acquire more dexterity and skill, extending its scope of operations, and descending from one generation to another, having attained at each stage a perfection higher than the stage before. The hand is not only an organ of labour, it is also the product of labour.

Only by labour, by adaptation to ever new operations, by the inheritance of the thus acquired special development of muscles, over longer periods of time; and by the ever renewed employment of this inherited finesse, in new more and

1. F. Engels, Dialectics of Nature, p. 89.

2. Ibid., p. 80.

more complicated operations, has the human hand attained a degree of perfection that has enabled it to conjure into being the paintings of Raphael, and the music of Paganini...¹

With the development of the hand as a tool, developed other organs of the human body. The eye developed; the brain developed until it reached the dimension of quality peculiar to man i.e. consciousness and self-consciousness. Mind or consciousness for Marx, though different from matter is not a substance added to matter; it is a function of a certain kind of matter. i.e., matter at a certain stage of evolution. However we should not be willing to reduce the levels of mind and matter to physical and chemical differences only.

The vital processes of an organism, the development of society, the thought of man are qualitatively unique processes which it is quite impossible to reduce to simple movements of particles.²

Thought is not an 'epiphenomenon'; it is an actuality existent and precisely because it is so, says Henri Lefebvre, a Marxist and the leading French authority on Marxism, that it creates, believes, develops, dies, perishes.³ It is certainly a

1. Ibid., pp. 81-82.

2. M. Shirokov, Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, (London: 1937), p. 42.

3. H. Lefebvre, Le Marxisme, (Paris: 1960), p. 109.

distortion of Marx's thought to describe it as a 'degradation of the spirit.' Marx elevates the spirit; in fact he sees freedom only in the life of spirit. We shall have more to say about this later.

At the beginning consciousness is "hard-consciousness," animal like, biological. It is concerned with immediate sensuous environment; it is at first directly interwoven "with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life."¹

With the development of human labour, and the increased need of man for another, human consciousness was sharpened. Men have come to a stage where they had something to say to each other. This urge created an organ which learned to pronounce and articulate one letter after another, and there was language, or as Marx calls it "practical consciousness."

By the cooperation of the hand, language and the brain man probes for more insights into the nature of things about him, of surroundings, and with the rapid growth of his knowledge of nature around him, the means to react to them and

1. Marx & Engels, The German Ideology, (Pascal's Translation), p. 14.

face them, he becomes different. In other words he uses his primary or basic tools - hand, language - for the discovery or invention of other tools for further production. Marx' generalization of the meaning of 'tool' to include everything that serves to a certain extent the satisfaction of a certain need, or the accomplishment of a certain goal, (a house becomes a tool, as much as a work community, as much as a hammer. Henry Lefebvre has attempted a classification of human tools in terms of the functions they serve,') is of course a clear indication of why some people have described man, in the Marxian understanding as being essentially a 'tool-making and tool-using animal.'

This is justifiable to a certain extent, I believe, because of the emphasis that is laid on tools. But no where does Marx define man in these terms. All he says is that the kind of tool that man uses to transform nature at a certain period of history determines to a large degree his nature by determining the environment around him; and the sorts of tools that men have made and used in the past enable us to distinguish one historical epoch from another.

As individuals express their lives so they are.

What they are coincides with their production, both with what they produce and how they produce. The nature of the individual thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.¹

In other words by an examination of the kind of tools left behind by our ancestral fathers we will be able, to discern the 'social relations amid which labour' was performed and reconstruct to a large degree the kind of man that existed then.

We should always remember, however, that though man is to a high degree determined by the ensemble of these tools and their productive relations, he is never their instrument, or he should never allow himself to become their instrument. Man is always, or should be their master, never their slave. The moment he becomes an instrument, and his activities of no aim but to enhance his instrumental benefits, then he has reached a situation which is no more human. We shall deal with this in a later chapter.

Along with the development of labour and the diversification and perfection of tools appear more sophisticated and

1. Ibid., p. 7.

more complex innovations. Along with agriculture appear spinning, metal working; along with trade and industry, art and science; along with tribes, nations and states and with them politics and law, and with them religion. And in the face of these creation, the more modest production of the working hand retreated into the background.

All the merit for swift advance of civilization was ascribed to the mind, to the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions from their thoughts instead of from their needs;¹

forgetting what was originally at the basis of all.

Society.

The third important force responsible for the shaping of man's nature is society and its institutions; in a looser sense social organization in general. Labour and speech cannot be done by individual men separately, isolated in their own being. "Robinsonades" in production and culture are illusions of bourgeois society, says Marx. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe who has been the favorite of certain economic

1. Engels, Dialectics of Nature, p. 87.

theorists as exemplifying the individual or individualism in economic struggle, undoubtedly took with him to the island knowledge that he had acquired in society; and as soon as he had met Friday a social relationship began.

Labour and speech, both presuppose a group, a social organization in as much as a social organization is characteristically distinguished by them from other non-human groupings. Labour and speech to have been effective at all required a conscious organization, and a conscious organization to have been formed at all required as we have seen labour and with it speech.

Production by isolated individuals outside of society is as great an absurdity as the idea of the development of language without individuals living together and talking.¹

Yet

The characteristic difference between it [society] and a troupe of monkeys is again labour [and the concomitant developments of labour]²

The more we go back into history, the more the individual seems to depend on and constitute a part of a larger whole.

1. K. Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p. 268.
2. F. Engels, Dialectics of Nature, p. 84.

At first it was the family and clan; then community which is a larger clan. "Man in the most literal sense is a 'zoon politikon'" according to Marx, "he is not only a social animal but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society."¹

Marx saw the development of the human individual not as isolated beings but as members of organized society, for it is only there that they have come to acquire meaning. It is by virtue of the manifold of the relations engendered by a social structure that "individuals are individualised and become more than specimen of a species."²

Nature never finds itself faced with individual men but always with men working cooperatively in economic production. And the individual never finds himself faced with nature but with society organised by nature. To quote C. Caudwell, a British Marxist,

As a result of economic production, a man finds himself born not into nature, but into society already organized by inter-penetration with nature, and into nature changed and X-rayed by this.³

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1. K. Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p. 268.
 2. C. Caudwell, Further Studies in a Dying Culture, (London: 1949), p. 126.
 3. Ibid., p. 134.

That is what Marx meant perhaps when he said "Nature neither objectively, nor subjectively exists immediately and adequately for the human existent."¹

The obvious deduction from this is that never at any stage do individuals consciously form a society. Society always forms him.

Society came first, for it would have been sub-human anthropoids, unconsciously and blindly forced to enter into some rude forms of economic production unknown to other animals, which were by this very activity forced to become men.²

This of course is a blunt rejection of the 'social contract' theory as primarily expounded by Hobbes, Locke or Rousseau.³ It is opposed to saying that individuals, at a certain stage, after having lived for a time separately and 'isolatedly' so to speak, decided all at once to enter into a form of society on a contractual basis; this in turn implying a kind of a lease partnership where either side of the contractees has the right to withdraw any time. This seems to be too much

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 183.

2. C. Caudwell, op.cit., p. 134.

3. Hobbes, op.cit., Chps. 5, p. 18, Locke, Second Treaties on Civil Government Sect. 35, pp.184-185. Rousseau, Social Contract, Bk. I, Chap. 6, p. 14, (All Everyman's Library).

of a fiction to serve as an explanation of the formation of society. For, as Karl Popper puts it, it does not only involve a 'historical myth', but a 'methodological myth', for "we certainly must assume that man or rather his ancestor was social prior to being human considering for example that language presupposes society."¹

Marx's position may perhaps be sharpened further if we contrast it with the famous school of 'Psychologism' as an approach to the understanding of society. The central thesis of this doctrine is that "society is the product of interacting minds; hence social laws must be ultimately reducible to psychological laws, since the events of social life, including its conventions, must be the outcome of motives springing from the mind of individual men."² This implies that in the explanation of certain laws and institutions of society, say incest taboos, the appeal is made to certain instinctive characteristics of human nature as the justification. Marx's position however, would be to ask whether this instinct that one is talking about is not itself

1. K. Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies, (London: 1945), Vol. I, p. 89.

2. Ibid., p. 86.

an educational product, that is the effect rather than the cause of social rules and traditions.

Individual men do not decide at a certain moment to create a society, nor do they reproduce society instinctively. Man's behavior, whether in arts, science, law is not in his genetic make-up. In his genetic make-up is only plasticity, the potentiality of innumerable possible shapes which are outside him and imprinted on him. This, that is outside him and that affects him is nothing but the relations in which he finds himself involved with other men, not willingly for he is born into such a relationship. In other words the social relations are not something which are super added to a fixed nature or essence that an individual has, but they are themselves what make the concrete individual what he is.

But the essence of man is not an abstraction dwelling in each individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social conditions.¹

The social relations and forms of intercourse are "the real basis of what philosophers have conceived as 'substance' and

1. K. Marx, Sixth thesis on Fenerbach, in Ideologie Allmande (Paris: 1953), V. 6, p. 143.

'essence of man', and which they have defined and attacked."¹

The plasticity of human nature and its changeable character is given a brief and succinct account by John Dewey in Human Nature and Conduct.² He argues that any impulse - fear or anger or the like, can be organized into almost any disposition depending on the way it interacts with the surroundings. A man may be afraid of spirits, of being deceived, of the dark, of Bolshevism (his example); "the actual outcome depends upon how the impulse of fear is interwoven with other impulses. This depends in turn upon how the outlets and inhibitions supplied by the social environment."³ Human nature is originally malleable and modifiable, but it has not been given the 'chance to act as a trustee for a better human life.' Those who argue that moral and social reform is impossible on the ground that "the old Adam of human nature remains for ever the same, attribute however to native activities the permanence and inertia that in truth belong to acquired customs."⁴ All

1. Ibid., (Pascal's Trans.), p. 29.

2. J. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, (New York: 1922), pp. 95-124.

3. Ibid., p. 95.

4. Ibid., p. 109.

that human nature supplies is a 'tabula rasa' potentially capable of being channelled in many a way according to what surroundings and custom furnish as possibilities.

This view provides Marx with a strong weapon of defence against those who condemn communism as inevitably bound to fail on the pretext that human nature is such that it cannot be subjected to a system like that which socialism claims to be aiming at establishing. He would retort: you are conjuring a human nature which is unalterable under any circumstance. That is wrong. The human nature you conceive of when you speak like this one which is a product of a definite social and economic foundation. The one we aim at generating would be liberated from this particular system and exposed to another to which communism would appear perfectly appealing. A contemporary of Marx by the name of Max Stirner wrote a book The Ego and Its Own,¹ in which he attempted to show that the emphasis upon the social nature of man, as well as the evaluation of all ideas of the social whole, constituted a serious threat to individual freedom and the autonomy of personality.² He

1. Everyman's translation, (New York: 1910).

2. S. Hook, From Hegel to Marx, (New York; 1950), p. 168.

argued that society which the young Hegelians of the period had been extolling was nothing but a 'new master' and new 'supreme being' which was trying to swallow everything into its bosom. The ego is unique, he said, and incomparably unequal; other egos and their relationships are nothing but objects of my ego. Social duties are self-legislated, and they flow from one's individual will and power. 'Sacred society' is nothing but a ruthless tyranny. As Hook puts it,

If Feuerbach is the negation of traditional theology, Stirner is the negation of traditional ethics. One had dissolved the subject (God) into all its predicates, the other had dissolved the predicate (society) into the personal pronouns - I, me, myself.¹

This 'self defeating anarchism' Marx argued could be shown absurd by going to its roots. What Stirner had done was to replace the abstractions, God, Man, with an even more monstrous abstraction, the Ego. What is the self? he wonders. Is it not an abstraction from a whole complex of social relationships? Strip man from his social dependencies, do you find his ego as a substratum into which all these

1. Ibid., p. 171.

relationships were stuck like pins on a cushion? It is perhaps truer to say, concludes Marx, that deprived of all these the individual is destroyed.

It is above all necessary to avoid postulating "society" as an abstraction confronting the individual. The individual is the social being. The manifestation of his life is therefore a manifestation and affirmation of social life. Individual human life, and species life are not different things...¹

Some commentators have interpreted this position of Marx to be an absolute eradication of the individual as a dynamic part in the social scene. "The individual counts for nothing and has no original purpose of his own" what counts is the class or the group to which he belongs.² I am rather hesitant to accept this interpretation. Marx himself says:

It is true that individuals are productively active, join into certain social and political relationship, and the evolvement of the life of different social structures is out of the life process of definite individuals; but individuals are not as they may appear in their own or other peoples imagination, but as they are really effective, produce materially, and are active under definite material limits, pre-suppositions and conditions independent of their will.³

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 130.

2. J. Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner, (Boston: 1946) p.14.

3. Marx & Engels, The German Ideology, (Pascal's Trans.) p. 13.

This seems to be an 'anti-collectivistic' attitude in Marx, and one that forms a fundamental agreement with the 'social contract' theorists, in so far as these were careful to leave the last word for the individual. However, Marx saw that in the group life, results something more and above the mere addition of the separate individual lives. In other words, though the social organization is an association of individuals, yet this association attains a unique quality not found in the mere summation of the individuals, which in turn reacts upon the individual and makes of him what he is. Thus "in a paradoxical manner human beings exist separately but are inseparably united."¹

It might have occurred to the reader by now that such a view of man makes of him a helpless victim in a whirlpool of environmental forces. It is very easy and tempting, after having described consciousness as a function of matter at a certain stage of evolution, and as being determined by social consciousness, to make what might appear to be a minor slip, but which in fact is very important, and arrive at the conclusion that man is a mere passive spectator in a completely

1. Lipson, Issues of Politics, (New York: 1960), p. 49.

determined environment. But No! We have hinted at this earlier. Marxism is a philosophy of 'action.'¹ In fact the chief weakness which Marx thought had been common to all materialism prior to him, with which one should note he was quite familiar, was the difficulty of finding the meaningfulness of consciousness and action in their systems. Whenever the mind had any role at all in altering and transforming environment, it was a very minor one.

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism is that the object, sensuousness is conceived only in the form of the object... but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively.²

And he thought that the great contribution of the idealists from Kant to Hegel was that they had the insight into the essential activity of mind, and he was looking for a sound basis for this important insight, which was to be found in materialism.³ Man is an active figure. Even the simplest of sensations, thought Marx, presupposed an active subject, who approached his object with one category rather than another;

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1. This will be developed in greater detail later.
 2. K. Marx, First Thesis on Feuerbach, in Ideologie Allemande, p. 141.
 3. S. Hook, op.cit., p. 175.

with a set of values, memories and anticipations. There is always an active interaction between subject and object; the object has always something of the subject, and the subject of the object. Given the same surrounding we notice that men of different backgrounds see different things and react differently.

It is true that consciousness is social consciousness, but it is a travesty of Marx to infer from that it sees social consciousness as wholly determined by unconscious economic forces and mind as a mere glow on the surface of material events. "No single step in social evolution, from the fabrication of the first tool and the organisation of the first social tasks, to the great clash of ideologies in our time in which the social struggle is being fought out, can take place without the formulation and activity of ideas."¹ These are the words of a Marxist and an authority on Marx.

When Marx talks of social consciousness what he means by the term is "the outcome of a double process - the environmentalization of organized men begetting all the human values,

1. J. Lewis, op.cit., p. 137.

and the humanisation of nature begetting the material changes in nature through man's own understanding of reality."¹

These big terms mean a simple thing - a mutual modification of environment and man by each other. An elementary example would clarify: If some men wanted to act on an environment, say moving a piece of log. The shape of the log, its weight, its size would all impose upon the man certain requirements - a certain manner of approach, a certain standing position, a certain rythm of action. They have been organized by the task, by the necessities of this piece of nature to which they find themselves opposed. As a result they have changed. More participation in this kind of activity; with more experience; with thought and cooperation of minds working together, they would come invent the lever, an active creation on the part of the mind, which would bring a tremendous change in the environment towards the direction of being dominated by man.²

As society itself produces man as man, so it is produced by him.³

1. C. Caudwell, op.cit., p. 133.

2. Example borrowed from Caudwell, op.cit., p. 133.

3. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 129.

To the extent that men modify their environment they are free; to the extent that their environment modifies them, they are determined.¹

This is certainly a far cry away from a mechanism like Laplace's, for example, which claimed that "if we knew the precise disposition at any moment of all the matter and energy existing in the universe, and the direction of motion of every moving particle, and if we are armed with infinite mathematical power, we should be able to prophesy the exact disposition of all matter and energy in the universe at any future time."² This means that something had possessed this knowledge in the 12th Century, not to say in Plato's time, he or it could be able to predict my desperateness at this very moment, writing this chapter on Marx's philosophy, while in the street outside, a Cadillac driver is disturbing the silence of the night, and the sleep of the neighborhood with his fanciful horn.

For the mechanist, consciousness does not change anything. If it occurs at all it is either a sort of a shadow cast by the brain, or in some sense consistent with the complete

1. J. Lewis, op.cit., p. 132.

2. H. Elliott, Modern Science and Materialism, (London: 1919), Ch. 5.

dependence of mind on matter. Consciousness becomes a product without consequences. Had it not existed nothing would have been different.

With this chapter as a background we are perhaps equipped for a better understanding of Marx's condemning view of historical class society in its relation to man and in particular the individual. Marx's position is a critical one implying that, in the words of Marcuse, "the prevailing relation in class society, between individual consciousness and social existence is a false one and must be overcome before the true relation can come to light."¹

1. H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, (New York: 1954), p. 273.

CHAPTER II

CLASS SOCIETY AND ALIENATION

"Eyes they have and they do not see, ears they have and they do not hear." Thus the Old Testament describes the deadness and emptiness of idols. The concept of idolatry, according to Erich Fromm, is the first expression in Western thought of the whole concept of alienation.¹

Idols (idols can be of many forms - God-like figures; the state; the church; possessions, etc...) which are the works of man's own hands, things he has created, come to be objects of his worship. Man thus transforms himself into a thing. He transfers to the things of his creation, the attributes of his own life; and instead of experiencing himself as the creating person, he is in touch with himself only by the worship of the idol. "Idolatry is always the worship of something into which man has put his own creative powers and to which he now submits, instead of experiencing himself

1. E. Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man, (New York: 1961), p. 44.

in his creative act."¹ He has become estranged from his own life forces, from the wealth of his own potentialities. The more he transfers his power to the idols, the poorer he becomes, the more dependent, the less real.

In the history of thought, alienation has been expressed in many ways: 'original sin'; 'the fall'; 'evil'; but the first philosopher to have given the problem a serious treatment is perhaps Hegel. He coined the terms Eutäusserung (externalization) and Eutfremdung (alienation or estrangement) and, as J.Y. Calvez says, all post-Hegelian philosophy had to deal in one way or another with these notions - with how to reduce human alienation.² Certainly Marx had to.

In the Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel tries to show us that Mind or Spirit is not a self-contained substance, independent of the external world, but a complex being that develops from mere sense awareness, through a series of phases unfolding its potentialities, and an ultimate self-consciousness which contains in itself all previous phases. Being

1. Ibid., p. 45.

2. J.Y. Calvez, La Pensée de Karl Marx, (Paris: 1956), p. 50.

activity, which implies an object on which the activity is exercised, the mind Hegel thought could only become conscious of itself by becoming aware of the objects that the activity brought to being. In other words, Mind could not develop by staying at home; it must work for its living, and this means putting itself into what, to begin with, appeared as opposed and alien - namely matter. This going outside itself by which mind develops its powers is called by Hegel 'externalization.' Alienation results when what the mind has externalized in its work confronts it as a power independent of and opposed to it. Mind is then divided through conflict of these two moments in which it partakes. As F.H. Heinemann puts it, an essential point in all alienation is "the belief that a preceding unity and harmony has been transformed into disunity and disharmony."¹

In the process of this alienation mind moves on to new achievements, until the final synthesis of self-consciousness. The theme of the Phenomenology, may perhaps be briefly summarized as the progress of Spirit through labour from self-

1. F.H. Heinemann, Existentialism and the Modern Predicament, (New York: 1958), p. 9.

externalization, or alienation to harmonious self-consciousness, the transcendence of alienation. In his Philosophy of History, Hegel says "What the mind really strives for is the realization of its notion; but in doing so it hides that goal from its own vision and is proud and well satisfied in this alienation from its own essence."¹

Marx was very quick in grasping this role of alienation which was very central in Hegel's thought.

The outstanding achievement of Hegel's Phenomenology... is first that Hegel grasps the self-creation of the object, as alienation and transcendence of alienation...and conceives objective man as the result of his own labour.²

But as with many other respects of Hegel's philosophy (we will be seeing this rather often in the coming sections) Marx had to perform the operation of demystifying Hegel, of putting him back in a right position, that is on his feet, after he had been on his head.

Marx sees in Hegel's self-alienated spirit, 'an upside

1. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, Trans. by J. Sibree, Cited by Marcuse, op.cit., p. 246.
2. K. Marx, Manuscripts, pp. 176-177.

down portrait of man as an economic producer.' Man is not spirit in its activity of thought production. On the contrary, the Hegelian thinking spirit is a reflection of Hegel's own mind; it is a reflection of man in his real activity of material production. The alienated Hegelian Idea is only a philosophical reflex of man's real alienation in the economic life.¹

The starting point of analysis, Marx says, must be the description of human consciousness amid the conditions of man's existence. What Hegel had done was to submerge every individual consciousness in total consciousness which is formed in history. He, thus, negated all individualism; individual view points cannot for Hegel withhold the march of history. The individual is placed in an articulated determinism of history, of the unfolding spirit in the face of which he is effaced. By crushing the individual, Hegel is crushing the human species as a whole. For Marx "the individual life and species-life of man are not distinct, for the determinate individual is only a determinate species-being."²

Against this "neutralization" of human existence for

1. R. Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, (Cambridge: 1961), pp. 126-129.

2. Ibid., p. 130.

the benefit of the dialectics, Marx adopts a reaction which had been previously initiated by the existentialism of Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard had written, "I think, therefore I am not," because "I think" for Hegel had ceased to convey the significance of Descartes' "Cogito" where thought is an act of the I, and instead thought became that of the dialectics through me. In other words, the absolute thinks through me hence I am not. Heinemann says "Both [Marx and Kierkegaard] reject Descartes' cogito ergo sum; both replace it by Sum ergo cogito."¹

Marx, like the existentialist indicates for man the right to participate in history. What he reproaches existentialism for is not its will to save man from all objectification and loss of individual identity, but the fact that it did not go to the roots of these maladies which are for him economic and not metaphysical or religious. As Lefebvre puts it:

"He [Marx] shows that man's alienation is not explained religiously, or metaphysically or morally. On the contrary, metaphysics, religion and morality contribute to his alienation."²

1. F. Heinemann, op.cit., p. 32.

2. H. Lefebvre, Le Marxisme, p. 39.

Alienation or estrangement means for Marx that though the world (nature, others, himself) is the product of his own labour, man does not feel that it belongs to him. It remains alien to him, it stands opposed to him as an object: He experiences himself in the world passively, separated and isolated from his objects. The worker's product assumes an external existence and exists independently outside himself and alien to him, opposed to him as an autonomous hostile power.¹

In the words of Fromm, for Marx as for Hegel, the concept of alienation is based on the distinction between existence and essence,² on the fact that man's individual existence is alienated from his essence, that in reality he is not what he potentially is, or to put it differently, that he is not what he ought to be, and that he ought to be that which he could be.³

One thing we should note here. I think Fromm's usage of 'ought' here is of particular significance. He does not however draw the conclusion that need be drawn from it: The

1. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 96.

2. Essence here should not be understood to mean the "defining characteristic of man" but rather what his potentialities as a species being are.

3. E. Fromm, op.cit., p. 47.

serenity with which Hegel considers the problem of alienation, ceases with Marx. 'Alienation' comes rather to acquire a pejorative sense which was absent in Hegel's usage. For Hegel alienation was a result of an cognitive imperfection on the part of the spirit at a certain stage of its development. It is a necessary, in fact indispensable element of the process, if the spirit is to reach self-consciousness. It is partially overcome at the particular stages, when spirit recognizes alienation for what it is, and it is completely overcome when spirit attains universal knowledge. For Marx it is a different situation. We land with the concept in the sphere of morality. What makes the man-created world alien and hostile is the fact that man in the act of producing it, objectifies himself 'inhumanly' in opposition to himself. Thus for Marx the world of alienation is one from which man ought to be saved if he is to regain his humanity.

This brings to the central point in Marx's theory of alienation, namely the source of alienation. This is "within the producing activity itself."

How could the worker stand in an alien relationship to the product of his activity if he did not alienate himself in the act of production itself.

The alienation of the object of labour merely summarizes the alienation in the work activity itself.¹

I shall not pause here to show how this is so. Instead I shall review the different forms of alienation which Marx sees manifest in the individual behaviour of members of class society and each of which in its particular sphere, contributes to a greater dehumanization of the human individual. Starting with religious alienation, which expresses itself in an illusion of a transcendent world, we shall descend in a concentric manner to a successive reduction of the forms of alienation in the mundane world, till we reach the most fundamental which lies in the realm of economics.

The method, rather the weapon, which Marx uses in exposing these alienations is criticism. The constructive doctrines of Marx cannot be separated from the critical side of his thought; the latter is a condition for the first. It is by criticism, or faithful description of the situation of man in the spheres of religion, politics, economics, that Marx hopes to accumulate his material for a positive movement. In

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 98.

a letter to his friend Arnold Ruge in 1843. Marx writes:

What constitutes the advantage of the new tendency is that we do not want to anticipate dogmatically the new world, but only find it in the criticism of the old.

He then calls 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 exist.. I do not wish that we raise the banner of dogmatism, rather the contrary.¹

Not the refutation of the enemy but its destruction is the aim of criticism. What shall guide in advance the critical description he is to undertake is a certain intuition of the condition of the human worker. It is he, his individuality, that should be saved, for he is the greatest victim of all forms of alienation. And since all men are to be workers, it is through him that the human individual, humanity, will be saved.

1. Marx, "Letter to Ruge" in "Annales Franco-Allemandes," Cited by Calvez, op.cit., p. 49.

Religious Alienation.

In 1841, Ludwig Feuerbach, the leading left-Hegelian of the period published The Essence of Christianity,¹ in which he presented his view of religion, the fundamental dogmas of Christianity as "realized wishes of the heart."² Belief in God, he held, arises from man's tendency to compare particular imperfect human beings with the general notion of the highest conceivable human perfection. The latter conception is projected outside the human sphere altogether as though there really were a single particular being to which the scattered human excellences belonged.³ God for him is nothing but man "objectified." "God is nothing other than the prototype and ideal of man."⁴ Having invested all the riches of human nature in its idealized form, man feels worthless and abased. The poorer he is, the richer he sees God; the more inferior he feels, the more superior he conceives of God. As a result he finds himself estranged from himself, split between his human empirical imperfect self, and his idealized image of the self-God. He suffers from that. He suffers because being what

1. Translated by George Eliot (Marian Evans) London 1854.

2. Ibid., p. 203.

3. Ibid., p. 13-21.

4. Ibid., p. 33.

he is, a productive creative being, he strives to attain the perfect image he has made of himself, the alien being which he has created and to which he has now become a servant. The religious satisfactions, he thinks he derives from his worship of God are compensatory projected imaginary satisfactions. They are a result of 'externalization' of feeling.

Man - this is the mystery of religion - projects his being into objectivity and then makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject... Thus in God, man has only his own activity as an object... God is, per se, his relinquished self.¹

A criticism of religion and God, thought Feuerbach, was enough to liberate humanity from them. Man would be freed once it was demonstrated to him that the religious life is one of his self-estrangement. In other words, the alienation is surmounted by a cognitive act of recognition of the intricacy of the situation. Once we know what it involves, we get rid of the illusion.² This is by no means an adequate account of Feuerbach's view on religion. However it is sufficient I hope to prepare the ground for Marx's criticism of religion.

1. Ibid., p. 29-31.

2. My account is from both Hock's and Tuckers interpretations of Feuerbach in From Hegel to Marx, and Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, respectively.

Marx got Feuerbach's message. He understood his humanism: man's ultimate end is simply to become fully human, which he cannot so long as he remains alienated from himself in religious fantasy of self-realization. But Feuerbach's theoretic solution was not enough for Marx. The reorientation of thinking which Feuerbach called for is an escape rather than a solution of the problem. Marx's main reproach of Feuerbach is that he "accepts reality, that he only wants to establish correct consciousness."¹

Though the object of worship had been exercised by Feuerbach, yet the subjective movement of faith, the artificial need to believe was always there to be exterminated. To get rid of it we have first to understand its basis. Why should man need this super-terrestrial, and super-temporal being? What is this fundamental despair of which a religious movement is but a compensatory reaction? The basic point of departure for Marx is this: "Man makes religion; it is not religion which makes man."² But why does man form religion? It is useless to find the explanation in God who has no

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1. R. Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, p. 101.
 2. Marx, Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, (Paris: 1953), p. 83. Hitherto referred to as Introduction.

existence. We must find it in man himself. We all know or have heard at least of the famous metaphor from An Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, on religion as the opium of people. Unfortunately interpreters have laid stress on 'opium' rather than any thing else; this is perhaps a danger involved in all forceful metaphors. However, the intention of this text is of another weight in Marx's thought. "Religious misery" he says "is at once an expression of real misery and a protest against that real misery. Religion is the sigh of the hard-pressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people."¹

That religion could hypnotize human conscience into deep resignation is undoubtedly, in many cases true. It leads man into a blind justification of the existing order of social injustice and a resignation in the midst of suffering and exploitation. However, there is more to Marx's criticism. It is more radical. Religion is the spirit of a period without spirit; the soul of a world without a heart. It is a protest against real misery, because it is an expression of real misery.

1. Marx, Ibid., p. 84.

We could perhaps reverse the order of the paragraph with Calvez, to reach "religious misery is an expression of an actual misery" as a conclusion.¹

If man is alienated in his religious existence, according to Marx, it is because he projects in his aptitude for self-alienation; and this could be explained only if man is divided within himself. If man does not already lead an abstract existence vis-a-vis himself, he could not have constructed this major abstraction which is religion. In this respect Marx has surpassed his predecessor Fenerbach in depth. For while the latter thought that by exorcising God, man regains his integral essence, Marx saw in religion nothing but a reflection of a scission in man. Divided in essence, he objectifies his essence, and religion is but this objectification, this distraction from himself. We could say, following Calvez, that this religious illusion is provoked by a void between man's essence and his actual existence, what he could be and what he actually is; and Marx's aim is to reconcile the two. Man is originally alienated, strange to himself, and

1. Calvez, op.cit., p. 90.

religion in truth is consciousness of self and the self-feeling of man who has not yet found himself or has lost himself again.¹

That is why a crusade for atheism is not of primary urgency. It is more important to transform the earth, and to see how man lost himself, and how he is to restore himself. "Religion is but the false sun which revolves around man while he is not yet fully aware." It is inverted vision of an inverted world.²

Now we can see why Marx affirms that religious criticism is the beginning of all criticism. For a theocentric religious attitude we substitute a radical homocentrism. The science of the absolute gives place to anthropology which reveals man as divided within himself. Hence we must turn and "destroy the secular form of this self-alienation. Criticism of heaven turns into criticism of the world, criticism of religion into criticism of law, and criticism of theology into criticism of politics."³

The first step in our secular criticism is the criticism of abstract contemplative philosophy. If religion is the opium

1. Marx, Introduction., p. 84.

2. Ibid., p. 84.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

of people, philosophy says Marx, is the distinguished 'sophistic of the intellectuals.' Speculative philosophy is the educated man's substitute for religion.

Philosophic Alienation.

All serious philosophy, Marx thought, is the spiritual quintessence of its time.

Philosophers do not grow out of the earth like mushrooms; they are the fruits of their epoch, of their people whose most subtle, most precious and least visible energies are expressed in those philosophic ideas.¹

This is why in Marx's eyes, there is an alienation in philosophy and the Philosopher's mode of existence, especially the German philosophy of the time; for one of the dominant characteristics of their philosophies was its preoccupation with the resurrection and the justification of the German state. As we shall see later, Marx advances vehement attacks on the state. What is important here however is that Marx generalized from the criticism of these particular philosophies to the criticism of speculative philosophy in general. In Holy Family, (1845),

1. Marx, Article 19, in Kölnischen Zeitung, in Lefehvre, Morceaux Choisis, p. 36.

he attacks not only Hegel and Feuerbach, but also Stirner, Strauss, the Bauer Brothers, as well as all the right and left Hegelians. "Those sheep who present themselves as wolves and are taken to be so," he sarcastically describes them, "because they imagine themselves to be revolutionaries while they are only philosophers."¹

Basically Marx would not have had something grave against philosophers, had he thought of their activity as mere play; as purely invented contradictions. If Marx criticizes, it is because philosophy for him is a serious thing, and the alienations in life. But what the philosopher ultimately achieves, he thinks, is a reconciliation of these oppositions only in thought. In other words he does not resolve them. This flight from reality, which is the very expression of philosophic alienation should be explained; and the explanation is to be found in the philosopher himself; in the surrounding in which he exists and of which he forms a part. But first, to two major targets of Marx, for a better understanding of philosophic alienation.

1. Marx, Idéologie Allemande, T. VI, p. 146.

Hegel:¹ First of all we must hit the head: and that is Hegel, for whom, Marx says, "history passes first to Athens and later exclusively to Germany, and finally to Kupfergraben (the name of the Street where Hegel lived) where the despot of modern philosophy has situated his residence."²

Why despot? Because he is an idealist and idealism is but the imperialism of thought. By altering its concepts it thinks it has transformed reality. Like all despots either reality escapes it, or it murders reality by imposing itself upon it. A philosopher who takes idealism seriously is alienated from himself in the same way as the philosophy which he adopts is strange to the world. We must note here that it is not Hegel's dialectics which is at stake, but his idealistic climate.

Why does Hegel represent in the eyes of Marx the most absolute type of Idealism? It is not necessary, in fact it is impossible, to recapture Hegel's Phenomenology in full here. What we should recall is that one of the fundamental bases of

1. We should note here that it is a controversial issue amongst Marxian scholars whether Marx's point of departure is from Hegel's Phenomenology or his Philosophy of Right. My discussion is mostly based, as the footnotes indicate, on Marx's criticism of the Phenomenology, as it appears in the Manuscripts of 1844.

2. Marx, Idéologie Allemande, T. VII, p. 67.

this thought is that: What is real is rational and what is rational is real. Since the universe obeys the law of Reason it is natural for him that Reason also dominates history. That is why Phenomenology is altogether suspended between two ideas or two moments of consciousness. It goes from an unconscious idea at the beginning, which is alienated from itself in its antithesis matter - to reach at the end of the journey the idea - conscious of itself, absolute knowledge, God - the final synthesis. Hence it is natural for Hegel to trace the whole of history at the level of consciousness - from a self-alienated consciousness to a self dealienated one - nature playing only the role of otherness, of anti-consciousness of which consciousness takes hold in forming itself. What this leads to is that instead of consciousness being that of history, history becomes that of consciousness.¹

Several consequences, according to Marx, result:

The subject of history is not man. History is divine. It tells the story of a God, of an absolute knowledge, the stages of the universe being nothing but moments of his proper consciousness. Even in human history man is no more the subject.

1. This exposition of Hegel is from R. Habachi's 4eme Cahier pour une Pensée Mediterranéene, (Beirut: 1961), pp. 11-24.

He is the theatre where the drama of another consciousness - total consciousness - is being played. For Marx, once God (since Feuerbach) has been eliminated, the only subject of history becomes man himself. Hence all history becomes the history of man in the making, either because he has lost himself, or because he has not yet found himself. This point is central in Marx, that we are still at a prehistoric stage. Real history is inaugurated at the moment when man will have restored possession of his total being.

Another consequence of Hegel's position is its formation. So fascinated by the terms, 'history,' 'absolute knowledge' he has come to view history in retrospect, starting from its end. His point of reference has become something outside actual history; hence he has come to overlook the conflicts that actually occur in reality, in favor of those that occur in consciousness; he has neglected the actual man in his self-production in history and replaced him with a phantom of man. In a word he substituted logical explanation for ontological reality. That is why only the time of consciousness, the stages which thought traverses interest Hegel.

When Hegel conceives wealth, the power of state etc. as entities alienated from the human being, he conceives that only in their thought form. They are entities of thought and thus simply are alienation of pure thought. The whole movement therefore ends in absolute knowledge.¹

So nicely do our conflicts and solutions appear in an abstract world, so elegantly and harmoniously are the conflicts resolved; as if the thought of a conflict is identical with the conflict itself; and the thought of a solution could replace the actual solution.

The whole history of alienation and of the retraction of alienation is therefore only the history of the production of abstract i.e. of absolute, logical speculative thought.²

The relations of man to nature, of man to the world pass unperceived. The mutual enrichment of man and nature - man by humanising nature, and nature by objectifying itself to man - all this is replaced by a skeleton of reality; by essences, intelligible because they are empty. Marx never ceases along the pages of the Manuscripts to hurl these criticisms at Hegel.

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 174.

2. Ibid., p. 174-175.

The human character of nature, of historically produced nature, of man's products, is shown by their being products of abstract mind and these phases of mind, entities of thought.¹

Finally, this vehement attack on Hegel which summarizes in fact all the previous ones. "Hegel makes of man, the man of self-consciousness, instead of making of self-consciousness the consciousness of man."² In other words, real man has been sublimated. The concrete man, living in the thickness of the world, unable to disengage from the resistances in which he is rooted and to which he owes the significance of his being, has become for Hegel, nothing but a stage of a consciousness suspended between its first stage and last. The Phenomenology is nothing but a mystification, for it explains a reality which escapes it. "The Phenomenology is a concealed unclear and mystifying criticism."³ We are faced with a system that reveals a double betrayal: a philosophy to which reality has remained strange, at the same time a philosopher who, reduced to his proper thinking, remains a stranger to himself. A thinker having fled in front of

1. Ibid., p. 126.

2. K. Marx, Holy Family in Morceaux Choisis, p. 41.

3. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 176.

reality conceived of a reality in flight from itself: "The philosopher, himself an abstract form of an alienated man, sets himself up as the measure of the alienated world."¹ This condemnation hits the heart of the Hegelian position, the contemplative position which according to Marx, is the contrary of philosophy properly so-called because in it thought is alienated from reality.

Fenerbach: With Feuerbach we leave idealism in favor of materialism - from an accentuated idealism, we move to a radical materialism.

The point of divergence between Feuerbach and Hegel is profound - that of the relation of thought and being. Being is no longer an attribute of thought as it was for Hegel where the idea engendered history. No! thought is an attribute of being. Being is the subject, thought the function.

The real relation of thought and being is the following: Being is subject and thought is attribute... All speculation on right, will, liberty, personality attempted without man,

1. Ibid., p. 174.

outside of him, above him is nothing but speculation without unity, without necessity, without substance, without foundations, without reality. Man is the condition for the existence of liberty, personality and right.¹

In his Theses which date 1843, Feuerbach anticipated Marx in the inversion of Hegel, in putting him back on his feet. Human attributes are no longer those of consciousness, or of history, but of actual human existents. It is because Hegel gave privilege to thought, that man is self-estranged, forgets to live his human existence. The old preference is shattered in favor of man. A new humanism.

Feuerbach was hailed by Marx,

Feuerbach is the only one who has a seriously 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.²

His enthusiasm can be seen also in his following reaction.

I advise you speculative theologians and philosophers to rid yourselves of the notions and preconceptions of the old speculative philosophy, if you want to get to things as they are

1. L. Feuerbach, Preliminary Theses Towards the Reform of Philosophy, Collected Works, pp. 229, 244. Cited by Habachi, op.cit., p. 53.

2. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 171.

in reality i.e. to the truth. And there is no other road to truth and freedom for you than the road through the brook of fire (Feuerbach). Feuerbach is the purgatory of our time.¹

In 1845, Marx's enthusiasm cooled down. Though he still treated him with very high respect and admiration as we observe in the German Ideology, yet Feuerbach was not to be exempted from attack. "The Eleven Theses on Feuerbach" contain the criticisms. I shall not take them in the order of their appearance. Instead I shall group them in terms of the following themes: Man (human essence), Nature, and Knowledge and Action. The first two I shall discuss now, the third I shall leave for the coming chapter.

When Feuerbach talks of man, wonders Marx, what man does he have in mind? In Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach had said that man observes his humanity only when he "cracks" his individual limits, his isolated 'me', into the totality of 'human essence', whence his cult of humanity and his apology for love and solidarity. This view of humanity quickly appeared to Marx as involving an equivocal mysticism. For if 'human

1. K. Marx, Mega I, p. 175.
Cited by Tucker, op.cit., p. 81.

essence' does not lie in each particular individual, where else could it reside. Are we faced here with a new alienation where every man to attain his universal essence must abandon his proper individual life? This criticism will become clearer once we analyze the conception of 'nature' for Feuerbach. Feuerbach's brute materialism opposed the object to the subject. On the one hand he proceeds a brute matter independent of human existence, on the other, a man already realized independently of his activity in the world. But where do we find such a dichotomy in the world? We have seen already how for Marx the entire field of human existence is modelled by the human hand; and with this modelling goes a constant reshaping of human nature, which is not something closed and complete in itself, but which is open to nature and is in constant interaction with it. Hence Marx reproaches Feuerbach for having failed to realize that man is not an entity already achieved; an object of contemplation, but a process which is being completed in the very heart of nature. "Man is the world of man"¹ says Marx, which means that he is a net of communication

1. K. Marx, Introduction, p. 84.

with nature and other men. That is why the essence of which Feuerbach talks alienates man. It figures him outside of history, while he is essentially historical, being formed in history. Any definition a priori, like Feuerbach's, or any rational formalism of his existence like Hegel's, risks posing barriers to the development of man. As it was put once, where human vitalism is obstructed, there is alienation. Where man is formalised, there is a sign of man who dies.¹

With his view of 'human essence' as something outside of the human individual, Feuerbach relapsed into Idealism, into abstract explicative thought. Feuerbach's materialism is a form of alienation too, for it gives man the illusion of an inert matter, while matter is being made in history; the illusion of a man already made, while man is a process which is being realized in history.

Political Alienation.

Philosophy is the intellectual's substitute for religion. We are going to find that both these forms of alienation have their explanation in another which is at a more basic and

1. "Teilhard de Chardin" Unpublished lecture by Father Joseph Fennigan.

immediate level: namely, that of political life; the life of the individual within the political community of the state.

The reader may have already guessed what Marx's thesis will be: All state organisation, under the pretext of coordinating human relations, elevates a wall in each individual, thus blinding his faculties, and hence cutting him off from himself. He is then led to absorb this or that philosophy or religion, of which Marx has presumably already exorcised the dangerous infections.

As in his criticism of philosophic and religious alienations, he starts by applying Feuerbach's method of 'transformational criticism' as Tucker calls it,¹ to Hegel's political theory. From there he generalizes to the concept of state as such. He starts with the ambition of demystifying Hegel and putting him back on his feet again in the field of politics as well. In the same way as his speculative theology provided a key to philosophic and religious alienation, so perhaps "man's estrangement in the political life must be

1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 103.

reflected... in Hegel's philosophy of the state."¹

In his Philosophy of Right,² Hegel tries to establish the fact of economic inequality, that the interaction of individuals give advantage to some at the expense of others. The zone of economic needs - where men set to work, to produce - Hegel calls civil society. This is a zone of conflict, of personal interests, of egoism; whence he got his theme of the "struggle of master and slave," we may call this the economic society or the world of private relations, in opposition to political society, the sphere of public relations.

Hegel understood labour and the world of labour. And it's for the protection of the labourer that he wanted to dress up all society with an arbitrary state which organizes the actions of its citizens and protects the weak amongst them from the strong, defends them against the exploitation of the powerful. In order to see how for Hegel is able to perform this function we must situate him in the general climate of his philosophy.

1. Ibid., p. 103.

2. For Hegel's doctrine of the State Consult Eric Weil, Hegel et l'Etat, (Paris: 1950). Also H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, pp. 169-224.

The State, for Hegel, is an 'exterior' and superior necessity to society, and imposes itself upon the individual; yet it is part of society, immanent to the needs and duties of its members.

In contrast with the spheres of private rights and private welfare (the family and civil society) the state is from one point of view an external necessity and their higher authority. Its nature is such that laws and interests are subordinate to it and dependent on it. On the other hand, however it is the end immanent within them and its strength lies in the unity of its universal end and aim with the particular interests of individuals, in the fact that individuals have duties to the state in proportion as they have rights against.¹

In terms of the triadic formula, the state is the synthesis of the family and civil society as thesis and anti-thesis respectively. It presents a higher degree of reality, of rationality. In fact it is an element of a universal and absolute rationality. Hence in relation to it, all non-political social forms - family, civil society - appear to our philosopher as inferior moments in the march of history, deriving their significance and existence from it. As Marcuse puts it "Hegel sees the state as an 'independent and autonomous

1. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, (Chicago: 1955) 261, p. 83.

power' in which the 'individuals are mere moments', as the march of God in the world."¹

There is a reciprocal relation between the individual and the State. He who adheres to the State expects in return a recognition of his rights. The rights recognized by the state are proportional to the duties towards it. He who respects it, is protected in return. Thus, man as a citizen, member of the political society, can find the solution to his conflicts as worker in the economic sphere. By means of the State - the superior zone - the conflicts of the inferior zone of civil society are resolved.

This is in a summary manner, not egregiously oversimplified I hope, Hegel's theory of the state. Marx quickly proceeds to show that man-the-citizen is but an alienation of man-the-worker. And far from uniting them as he had hoped, Hegel created in his theory of the State an unsurmountable wall between the two.

"Just as religion does not create man, but man religion, so the political system does not create the people but rather

1. H. Marcuse, op.cit., p. 215.

the people create the political system."¹ Marx starts by inverting Hegel's position as it stands, clearing it of its mystical kernel. What Hegel has done in viewing the state the way he has is to have constructed an ideal entity, rational and real according to him, at the price of neglecting the forces which had led him to the conception of the state in the first place. What for Marx, appears as the real relations of men amongst themselves and with nature appeared to Hegel as a simple 'phenomenon' and accidental 'manifestation' of the real in the making. For Hegel, Marx wrote "the family and civil society appear as a somber shadow over which shines the light of the State."² And he rejects this. Society is not an expression of an imperfect State rather the state is an expression of society of an imperfect stage of its development. It is only political superstition that gives both to the illusion that civil society is in need of a state to be integrated. On the contrary, the state is maintained because of civil society.³

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1. Marx, MEGA I, p. 424.
Cited by Tucker, op.cit., p. 104.
 2. Marx, MEGA I, p. 425.
Cited by Calvez, op.cit., p. 174.
 3. Ibid., p. 179.

Members of society in their state of conflict and misery externalize themselves as citizens on a plane where they conceive of their conflicts as all resolved. As in religious alienation, where man projects a being so much greater than himself, and worships it to the extent that he forgets to live his own proper life, so it is in the practical sphere of political life. The individual in his private life, in his life of economic needs and labour and in his public life, lives no more in the same universe. He becomes dualized. While the worker struggle in his private section of the world, he expects or awaits a solution to descend upon him from the public section - the state. In his miserable fight in the sphere of private interests, he imagines himself as a citizen of a political state where his species being, his 'communal life' is actualized.

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.¹

1. K. Marx, 'On the Jewish Question' in Lefebvre, Morceaux Choisis, p. 217.

The state not founded on the people, exterior to it provides only an imaginary solution for a man who is not in complete possession of himself as an individual, but split within himself wandering in worlds of illusion.

In the State, man is an imaginary member of a fictitious sovereignty; he is stripped of his real life and filled with an unreal generality.¹

The State makes of real man an abstraction; does not satisfy man except in an imaginary manner.²

Endowed with all reality the state, not civil society, is the rational. This is expelled from history. Hegel's idealism has played the villain's part of eradicating the reality of man for the benefit of the omnipotence of the State. Created by man, it has come to acquire an objective existence and a dominant spell over him.

We may ask now about the origin of man's political illusions or superstitions. Marx has already given us the answer: something is wrong with society itself. There is a real contradiction in society which it pretends to do away with by considering the state as another sphere, another world.

1. Ibid., p. 218.

2. K. Marx, Nachlass, p. 391, in Lefebvre, Morceaux Choisis, p. 214.

The real subject of investigation is not the political individual, but the social individual. If political life is intrinsically an alienated life, it is because the individual must have in civil society the source of this alienation. The State, and the citizen are alienated creations of man. But that there should be such an aberration is a proof that in civil society the worker, the individual in his private life, is already alienated. Political alienation is there because it is preceded by a social alienation.

Social Alienation.

We descend now a step further down our concentric zones towards the magic door which is to reveal the secret of human misery. In grasping this level of alienation we attain a new depth; we approach the real and authentic source of our confusion. To start with, a direct consequence of the alienation of the individual from his life activity and his species life is that he is alienated from other men.

In general the statement that man is alienated from his species life means that each man is alienated from others and that each of the others is likewise alienated from human life.¹

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 103.

While in religious, philosophic and political forms of alienation, the alienation was primarily manifested in an illusion - in an ideal world, or a different sphere of action where the individual conceives of himself to be a participant - here at the social level alienation is above all in the form of a division, effective both within the individual as well as the society around him.

Marx discovered that society is in fact radically divided and simultaneous with social division is the individual's division within himself - in his being as a "real" man in society. The division manifests itself in the irreducible opposition of classes and their struggle.

Classes are particular social groups to which adheres this or that man in terms of only certain qualities of his human existence. Men identify themselves with their classes which in themselves represent only a part of what they are as men. This way they lose a whole part of their human essence, this (the part) being identified with another class.¹ Men do

1. What actually determines a class, Marx never gives a clear and explicit indication. However, from the varied description of a 'class', one could perhaps, following Calvez, deduce four fundamental elements that characterize a class: (a) a certain kind of life. (b) certain interests constitutive of this

not participate any more in their human species, but in this or that side of society. The opposition in the consciousness of the individual man is found concretised in the opposition between two groups of men. Alienated man, whose activity seems strange to him, who appears to be in the service and under the domination of another alien and hostile power independent of him, discovers such power in society itself. A hostile powerful man actually existent, is conceived by Marx, to whom the worker and his activity belong. This he identifies with the capitalist whom he describes as the 'non-worker.' Instead of one being estranged from himself, we have now two. 'The Individual' in general has vanished and instead we have two personalities standing in hostile confrontation against each other in society.¹

The possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and assured in this alienation, looks at it 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 impotence and the sign of a non human existence.²

kind of life, (c) a certain level of culture determined by the technological conditions of work, and (d) a 'prise de conscience,' an awareness of the kind of life and the solidarity of those that participate in it. This last point is important because without it, a class exists only as a potentiality. (Calvez, op.cit., p. 197-200).

1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 146.
2. K. Marx, Holy Family in H. Lefebvre, Morceaux Choisis, p. 164.

The important Hegelian theme of the constant struggle of 'Master and Slave,' reappears here in Marx. Self-alienated man at war with himself, breaks apart into warring 'worker' and 'capitalist,' "the one embodying his rebellions productive powers, and the other embodying the inhuman force."¹ We have seen that for Marx the individual represents the species as a whole. The division in himself means the splitting of humanity into warring classes of workers and capitalists. The war of self-alienated man with himself becomes a class-war along the battlefield of society - the proletariat being the incarnate of non-man, dehumanized man (Urmensch), the capitalist of dehumanized force as power. The scene of history is set for the ultimate battle."²

Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, bears comparison with what Marx has done here. The theme of the story is the separation of the conflicting constructive and destructive forces in man. Recognizing how irreconcilable these forces of good and evil are, Dr. Jekyll says, "If each, I told myself, could be housed in separate identities,

1. R. Tucker, op.cit., pp. 146-147.

2. Ibid., p. 147.

life would be relieved of all that was unbearable." In Stevenson's fantasy the destructive forces in Dr. Jekyll are separated from him and personified in another man outside him, Mr. Hyde. In Marx's Manuscripts of 1844, a similar operation is performed upon a self-alienated man in general."¹

One more thing to say. The mere presence of classes, though an important revelation of disunified man, does not in itself create a total alienation, if in fact men recognize the existence of classes and the inherent conflict that comes with it, and proceed hence to look for the cause to do away with it. There will still be missing here the illusion that usually accompany alienation. The illusion in this case is this: that it is possible to have a harmoniously running society even though one is faced with the resistant reality of opposing classes. This, according to Marx, is what certain so-called ideologies of liberalism try to impress upon people. Social alienation, he says, consists in the unresolved opposition between the false appearance of a universal society and a radical division of classes.²

1. Ibid., p. 147.

2. J.Y. Calvez, opcit., p. 187.

Marx poses a question here against all social systems that claim harmony. If concrete society is really harmonious, why do men still exhibit the need for a reconciliation at a superior also illusory level which is the State? The evil is at the social level and we might as well face it, instead of only thinking or projecting a desire for social harmony while in fact reality contradicts it.

The immediate question now is to ask from where the society, postulated as unified - but only so in an illusory manner - gets its class division. Self-divided individual? Not really, for both are simultaneous. The secret resides in economic existence. It is in the worker - for who is closer to the human heart than he who humanises nature and with it recreates himself as man - in his alienated economic world, in the depth of mines and amidst the roars of machines. That is where we must search for an answer. We reach now the center of our concentric zones; the key to human suffering but also to its redemption.

Economic Existence: The Root of all Alienation

Lack of competence shall be the primary reason for not going into a presentation of Marx's economic doctrines. Another reason is the non-necessity, really, of going into that when our proper concern is not economics per se, but rather the philosophic and moral situation of man, the individual within the framework of certain economic traditions. It is the opinion of some Marxian scholars¹ that Marx was never an economist proper and neither did he intend to be one. His plunge into the study of political economy (especially the capitalist system) had always behind it the aim of finding scientific practical support for his moral humanistic stand. He was always careful never to separate economy from human existence, production from human consciousness. Marcuse points out that Marx's analysis of economic structures was always deep seated in its actual human context.

Relations such as those between capital and labour, capital and commodity, labour and commodity and those between commodities are understood as human relations, relations in man's social existence.²

1. Calvez, Bigo, Marcuse and many others.

2. H. Marcuse, op.cit., p. 278.

Tucker argues that Marx's later usage of 'capital' and 'labour' in his Wage, Labour and Capital, as two sides of one and the same relation is a different way of saying what he had said earlier of the possessing class and the proletariat representing two sides of one and the same self-alienation. op.cit., p. 175.

His concentration on the analysis of the capitalist system was because he saw in its workings, the peak of human alienation. Not that alienation appears only in the capitalist society. It exists throughout the whole history of human society, but it reaches its highest point in this society; and the working class is the clearest manifestation of it. Here man, the producer is in revolt against the inhuman force that holds both him and the world in its greedy grasp. The working man is a dehumanization conscious of himself as dehumanization and striving to abolish himself as such.

Alienated Labour.

According to Tucker, Marx uses 'alienated labour' to describe human activity in all different forms of political economy so far. If we should recall; the term 'labour' for Marx should not be restricted to economic activity, but rather should be taken to signify the 'existential activity' of man, which develops his universal nature. Alienation therefore in this context is the negation of the full fledged productivity of man. It is one that does not contribute to the creation of his individuality but to its dissipation. It has created an individual at loss with himself and with the world which is the

product of his own toil. All human producing activity in history, Marx claims, has been alienated labour. Hence the individual has never been fully himself. His activity has always been compulsive, never as self-activity - by which Marx means free activity - in which the individual feels his self-determination in action and his energies as his own.¹

He does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies, but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless.²

He experiences his own activity "as something alien and not belonging to him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation."³

Marx stresses two points in alienated labour, (a) the process of work, where man becomes estranged from his own activity, and (b) the objects of his own work becoming alien to him. In division of labour we find the work process where the individual is alienated from his activities, "...division

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1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 134.
 2. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 98.
 3. Ibid., p. 99.

of labour is but the alienated establishment of human activity as a real species activity..."¹

Division of labour is condemned in all its forms on the grounds that it is deprivation of freedom. It is the enslavement of the individual to a particular sphere of activity at the expense of mutilating all other dimensions of his individuality. He becomes a slave to whatever his occupational specialization makes of him; he becomes a prisoner to a limited activity from which he cannot escape.

Each man has a particular 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.²

"Occupational specialization " is seen as something that smothers the self-realization of man, 'that dehumanizes him', it contradicts the integral development of the individual; the individual 'becomes transformed into a simple monotonous productive force that does not have to use intense bodily or intellectual facilities. Division of labour generates further division of labour, and

1. Ibid., p. 155.

2. Marx and Engels, German Ideology (Pascal's translation) p. 22.

with the advance of technology, we have a corresponding upward curve of dehumanization.¹ This is not to say that Marx derives the tremendous strides of technology in fulfilling certain human wants. He was the first to admit it.² He condemns it however for having created individuals that are slaves of things and circumstances.

The performance of work in the sphere of political economy appears as a vitiating of the worker, objectification as a loss and as servitude³ to the object, and appropriation as alienation.

It transforms the worker into a cripple, a monster by facing him to develop some specialized dexterity at the cost of a world of productive impulses and faculties.⁴

They [the means of production] mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of the appendage of a machine destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into hated toil...⁵

We should not be misled by these passages to infer that it is only the labourer who is attached to a machine, that is estranged from his activity, Division of labour in the capitalist society

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1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 191.
 2. Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, (Chicago: 1954), pp. 10-11.
 3. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 95.
 4. K. Marx, Capital, p. 381.
 5. Marx, Ibid., p. 708.

extends to members of the different vocations and makes them all its puppets. I need only quote Engels on this,

In division of labour the man is also divided..., not only the labourers but also classes directly or indirectly exploiting labour to the tool of this function: the empty minded bourgeois to his own capital... The to his fossilised legal concepts which dominate him as a power independent of him, the educated classes... to their stunted specialized education.¹

In short, the labourer exists for the process of work and not the process of production for the labourer.

This brings us to the other subdivision of alienated labour which has to do with the product of labour. Marx's concept of the alienated product of labour is expressed in one of the most fundamental points in Capital, namely "the fetishism of commodity."

We shall not go into a detailed analysis of Marx's theory of the commodity. However, following Fritz Pappenheim, we could say that its main point is this: Marx considers the essence of commodity to be the separation of use value from exchange value. No article, it is true, can become a commodity

1. Engles, Anti-Duhring (New York: 1939), p. 318.

without having use value, that is "without having sepecific properties that make it fit to serve some consumer's needs." Although this use value is a prerequisite for the object being converted into commodity, qua commodity the object has only exchange value and "does not contain as much as an atom of use value."¹

The system of capitalism relates men to each other through the commodities they exchange. The social status of individuals, their standard of living, their freedom, their power are all determined by the value of their commodities. The capacities and needs of the individuals have no place in the picture. Their humanity is replaced by the commodities they possess. They come to participate in the social process not as individual human beings with human attributes but as owners of commodities. Capitalist system of production has this mystifying result: that it transforms the relations of individuals into "qualities of...things themselves [commodities]" and still more pronouncedly transforms the inter-relations of production themselves into a thing [money]."²

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1. F. Pappenheim, The Alienation of Modern Man, (New York: 1959), p. 67.
 2. K. Marx, Capital, p. 962. Cited by Marcuse, op. cit., p. 279.

In it "labour does not only create goods, it also produces itself and the worker as a commodity, and indeed in the same proportion as it produces good."¹

Exchange value has ceased to be a merely economic category. It exerts such a strong power over our minds that it comes between us and things around us, making it impossible for us to be directly related to our creations and to other persons. We feel ourselves always as potential buyers or sellers. Owning has become the strongest link with the world.

Private property has made us so stupid and partial that an object is only ours when we have it... Thus all the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple alienation of all these senses, the sense of having.²

Marx sees that the person who faces the world with this acquisitive spirit, emanating from focusing an exchange value will find that the object tend to recede, himself staying actually far away from the full sense of possession. He gives the example of the dealer in minerals who can see only their

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 95.

2. Ibid., p. 132.

commercial value, but not their exquisite quality and beauty. He finds such an individual no better off than the poverty stricken individual, who absorbed in his misery, cannot respond to a scene of great beauty.¹ True property is not unshared wealth, but that which is capable of being enjoyed by fellow men. "We are excluded" he says "from true property because our property excludes other men."²

In the words of Tucker, as an acquisitive being, in opposition to an inherently creative being, man feels within him an autonomous driving inhuman force that exerts a "tyrannical sway over him, usurping his productive powers."³

Marx's doctrine of commodity has the basic idea behind it already formulated in 1843, in the essay "On the Jewish Question" and in 1844, in his Manuscripts, namely in his analysis of money as an alienated essence of man's work. This will certainly be an incomplete section if we do not give Marx's understanding of money at least a preliminary treatment.

1. Ibid., p. 134.

2. Cited by Pappenheim, op.cit., p. 87.

3. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 142.

Money.

Marx writes:

Money is the alienated essence of man's work and his being. This alien being rules over him and he worships it.¹

Just as in religion the individual is engrossed in the worship of a creation of his own fancy, so in the practical world the individual comes to worship a feature of his own creation - money. He extols it, gives it an independent powerful existence, becomes its slave. Money is the "worldly God." The 'lust for money' which characterizes production of alienated man, the accumulation of capital, Marx entitles 'greed'. It is a kind of acquisitive mania that sees in money, "the almighty being", the means of exercising power over everything.² He refers to Goethe and Shakespeare, both of whom he was an admirer, as authorities.³ Money he says, "appears as a disruptive power for the individual and for the

1. K. Marx, MEGA I, 661,603. Ibid., p. 137.

2. Ibid., pp. 137-139.

3. He quotes from Goethe's Faust, Part I, Scene 4; from Shakespeare's Timon of Athens, Act IV, Scene 3:
Gold? Yellow, glittering precious gold?
Thus much of this will make black, white; foul,
fair; wrong, right; base, noble; old, young;
coward, valiant.

social bonds, which claim to be self-subsistent entities. It changes fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, stupidity into intelligence and intelligence into stupidity."¹

The ethics of political economy becomes the drive to accumulate at whatever cost. "Accumulate! Accumulate! That is Moses and all the prophets." Unaware of his real human needs, negligent to the cultivation of his individuality as a member of the human species, man aggradnizes he profits, using himself and his human community as means. He steps under the domination of an egoistic need that transforms his free creative self-development into a compulsion to amass wealth.

I cannot help but quote, though long it may be, Marx's beautiful passage which describes the moral of political economy. I apologize for its length.

The less you eat, drink, buy books, go to the theatre or to balls, or to the public house, and the less you think, love, theorize, sing, point fence etc.. the more you will be able to save and the greater will become your treasure which

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 168.

neither moth nor rust will corrupt - your capital. The less you are, the less you express your life, the more you have, the greater is your alienated life and the greater is the saving of your alienated being. Everything which the economist takes from you in the way of life and humanity, he restores to you in the form of money and wealth. And everything which you are unable to do your money will do for you; it can eat, drink, go to the ball and theatre. It can acquire art, learning, historical treasures, political power; and it can travel... But although it can do all this, it only desires to create itself and to buy itself, for everything else is subservient to it. When one owns the master one also owns the servant, and one has not the need of the master's servant. Thus all passions and activities must be submerged in avarice.¹

To the age old concept of alienation Marx tries to give a non metaphysical, non mystical kind of explanation. The alienation of man is not theoretic and ideal - that is to say at the level of thinking and feeling; it is above all practical, and is depicted in all spheres of practical life. Work is alienated, exploited, rendered fastidious and crushing. Social life, human community is consequently seen dissociated into classes, deformed and transformed into a political life wherein it is used, by means of the state, for the benefit of the appropriators of the labour force. Human power over nature as

1. Ibid., pp. 144-145.

well as over its product is turned into false power of control of property. Money, the abstract symbol of man's products commands a spell over men who work and produce as well as those who don't.

The problem lies in the practical realm of human behaviour, and it is therefore in that field and in practice that any call for change, any call for transforming the order which is the cause of misery must be made. "Revolutionary Practice", the principle and guide of the redeeming act, shall constitute then the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER III

REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

From Speculation to 'Praxis'

The eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, "Philosophers have so far interpreted the world. The point however is to change it", epitomizes Marx's reaction to the contemplative philosophic attitude. For him, philosophy had attained its climax with Hegel and died. It has now to be surpassed.¹ Marxism is precisely a transcendence of philosophy i.e. its state of contemplation to its realization in the practical world of human existence. The idealist, we have seen, is he who believes that he has actually solved the problems of the world once he has solved them in thought, or rationally. Hegel was one, who vis-a-vis the daily tragic existence of man had taken a contemplative attitude.

1. It was not an accident, remarks Tucker, that Marx's topic for his doctoral dissection should have been "On the Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature." "It reflects Marx's idea that the present post. - Hegelian period was similar to the post Aristotelian period in antiquity. Hegel was the Aristotle of modern thought". In both cases philosophy assumes (or will assume) a practical attitude towards the world "... subjective consciousness comes into collision with the existing world, and revolts against it." R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 77.

Tired of the passions of reality, says Marx, he retires to think them. Marx rejects this secluded 'ivory tower' sort of solution and opposes to the "palaces of philosophic ideas, the dark alleys of reality."

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 Hegelian philosophy.¹

In real life, speculation gives way to positive and practical activity. Marx does not renounce thought as such, but only thought which would not immediately be practical: for "when reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence."²

This new attitude in Marx is what is known as "Praxis" (Practice). It appears as an attitude of the concrete actual man who acts at every instant with his whole being. It is not to call for a replacement of the superiority of thought over action, by one of action over thought. An authentic Marxist, rather, is "one who does not think without acting nor act without thinking".³ He acts his thoughts and thinks his actions.

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1. K. Marx, Dissertation... MEGA I p. 31. Tucker, op.cit., p. 78.
 2. K. Marx, German Ideology (Pascal's Trans) p. 15.
 3. J. Lacroix, Marxisme, Existentialisme et Personalisme (Paris: 1955) p. 8.

For him any analysis of the present is not for the joy of it but, as we have seen, for promoting action, for helping to constant a better future.

The attitude of 'pure objective knowledge', the pretension of receding from the world in order to judge it from above, so to speak, is not only a betrayal of reality but, consciously or not, is a sign of hypocrisy.

In the spirit of praxis, the Marxist is not one who neglects, but one who understands the movement of history and participates in it. This idea of participation is very important for the understanding of Marx's thought. The Marxian reflects at every moment upon the course of events to see what the right thing is, for man to do. "He joins both the spirit of a learned and that of a militant, in a ceaseless transformation of society in the direction of the dialectical pattern of history."¹ In its inspiration, Marxism repudiates dogmatism in favor of a flexible searching attitude to bring forth its purpose - the regeneration of man.

Praxis as an Epistemological Position.

Going back into the history of philosophy, one might argue

1. Ibid., p. 15.

that Marx's theory of praxis has perhaps its preliminary expression in the thought of the Ancient Stoics who were seeking to uphold the practical moral certainties against the subtle arguments of the sceptics. Epictetus advises us to concentrate on practical moral questions before we proceed to analysis of abstract questions like what truth is or what knowledge is. The first place in philosophy is the use of theorem like "we must not lie". The second place is to demonstrate why we must not lie. The third place, which is both confirmatory of the first two as well as explanatory is to show how this is a demonstration, which will lead to questions like what truth or what falsity is. It has turned out in philosophy, he concludes, that we concentrate on the third and neglect the most important which is the first.¹

In the eighteenth century we find Thomas Reid, the philosopher of common sense maintaining a similar point of view. He writes "The belief in a material world is older, and of more authority than any principles of philosophy. It declines the tribunal of reason, and laughs at all the artillery of the logician".²

In the contemporary world, G.E. Moore has said that in

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1. Epictetus, Manual LI in A. Melden, Ethical Theories (New York, 1954), p. 131.
 2. T. Reid, Inquiry Into the Human Mind, Works (Ed. by Sir William Hamilton.)

order to prove that there are at least two external objects, it is sufficient for a man to hold up his hands to his own view and that of other people.

The concern really of these positions is the fear of, or the annoyance with the subtle philosophical arguments that tend to turn men from their social duties by raising doubts about things that no man would question in his practical dealings, doubts, that are useful perhaps as academic exercises but fruitless in our day to day existence.

The epistemological side of the Marxian theory of 'praxis', though not exactly the same, is on the same line as the aforementioned positions. It stresses that the truth or falsity of our knowledge is not so much in its rationality and logical consistency as in its ability to serve in and be confirmed by practice. In addition it invites to a more activist, progressive role on the part of man in society and the world, which Marx does not fail to emphasize. A clear understanding of praxis, I think, requires a distinction on our part between two principles which, though very often considered as one, should, I believe, be separated. 'These are the union of theory and practice', and 'practice as the criterion of truth.'

When Marx speaks of 'unity of thought and action' what he means is that if there is any such thing as contemplative knowledge, it is certainly useless in itself. Any knowledge which does not culminate in a progressive action on material reality is of no value. It remains in the realm of pure speculative phantasy, and becomes a scholastic problem, a problem for mere mental exercise.

Moreover whether there is such a thing as pure contemplative knowledge cannot be proven. All thought and action are inseparably united. All thought or knowledge necessarily overflows into action. In other words man can never merely know an object, because knowledge by its very nature is destined to produce action. Knowledge cannot remain static. As we have seen, the mind which grasps knowledge is essentially active. On the one hand man himself is being changed by the knowledge he acquires, on the other hand, in the same act of acquiring knowledge man is simultaneously and necessarily utilizing this knowledge to change external reality. C.E.M. Joad has given an excellent metaphor illustrating this stand,

The human being is like a coiled spring waiting to uncoil itself in action at the first stimulus from without. As the starting point of its action it knows or is aware of the stimulus; but this

knowledge, like the release of the spring is only incidental. The true purpose of the human beings activity is not to know the stimulus but to change it ... Knowing is not an end in itself; we know in order to act. Knowledge cannot be understood, nor does it occur independently of its relation to action...

The real concern is not with knowledge, but with action.¹

Marx says

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.²

This brings us to the second principle of Praxis, namely 'practice as criterion of truth.' If all knowledge must lead to action, and if the purpose of all action is to change the reality that is being acted upon, then obviously that knowledge is true which enables us to change the objective world successfully.

The first part of the Second Thesis on Feuerbach which has just been cited is a clear indication of Marx's consideration

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1. C.E.M. Joad, Guide to Philosophy, (New York, 1936)p.475.
 2. K. Marx, Second Thesis on Feuerbach in Ideologic Allemande T VI, p. 141-2.

of praxis as the ultimate criterion of truth. The reliability and certainty of our knowledge therefore is based upon a correct objectively verifiable correspondance between the theory and its application. The greatest proof that our mind has achieved a correct conception of reality is provided by practice. For if we can understand nature to such a degree that we are able to turn its operations to our advantage, for a reconstruction of a better condition of life, then there is hardly any doubt that we have grasped the true nature of its reality. Engel expresses this idea when he says

If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it for ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions, and using it for our purposes into the bargain, then there is an end of the Kantian incomprehensible thing in itself.¹

Along with being a criterion, practice serves a corrective role of false knowledge by offering sometimes indications as to the cause of a failure in a certain application of a theory whenever that occurs. In other words the erroneous elements in our concepts, whenever any, are made evident to us as a result of the corrective influence of practice.

If one is to summarize the basic tenets of praxis as an

1. Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 32-33.

epistemological position, he might say that in opposition to the armchair speculator who conjectures about the world and asserts that "this is how things must be no matter how they appear to be", the marxist is one who refuses to hold a theory about the world whose truth is not confirmed by practice. The validity of a theory remains as such for him only in so far as it provides guide for successful action and fruitful results.

It is a great temptation for people who read Marx's theory of praxis, to identify it with the pragmatism of James or with Dewey's Instrumentalism. I have no intention of undertaking a comparison of Marx's position with these primarily because of my ignorance of them. Besides, doing so would not really contribute to the main concern of my essay.

Activistic Position

To understand the Marxian theory of praxis, merely as a philosophic epistemological position is to miss the very spirit that Marx is trying to put through by the theory itself. The importance that Marx attributed to it was not so much to its distinction in this aspect as to the fact that he considered it the basis from which he could derive social and human implication. We have seen that as an epistemological position it is not a

very new and original discovery. It is one criterion of truth amongst many others, and its fundamentals go as far back as the Greeks. Its novelty was rather in being an inspirational source for action. Why I consider this to be Marx's primary purpose is because of the way in which, I think, the theory reflects itself in his view of man and human society. The theory shows itself under two aspects: one is the positivistic activist attitude in Marx's analysis and interpretation of society, the other is the existential depth which the man of praxis reflects in his psychological and philosophic attitude as an active agent in history. I shall discuss them respectively.

Positivistic Aspect: Just as, in Marx's view, the sciences of nature involve practice in the form of experimentation and manufacture industry, so the science of society, properly understood involves an understanding of how it works as well as the transformation of it. In other words, if the study of nature in the natural sciences is not only a speculative consideration of it but also an activity to control nature, and putting it into the service of man, so also is the study of society - an activity to regenerate it to the best interest of man. Bacon's view of knowledge as power over nature finds a parallel in the field of

human relations as well, in the field of society. Knowledge of society is power over it and ability to manipulate it. And any theory of society, in order to be known whether true or false, right or wrong must be tested in practice. Thus to discover the faults of a society whether in its structure or its superstructure, without suggesting a program, or taking an initiative to alter those defects is to remain in an isolated world of phantasy. To criticize without showing an affirmative path through which the idols of your attack could be smashed and further replaced, is to hold on to speculation that has not revealed its positive weight in practice. Although Feuerbach, Marx argued, was too sanguine about the results of unmasking the religious illusions, though his lectures and books, he considered opposed to religious consciousness, it was all in a purely theoretic manner, whereas the only effective way of opposing it was to overthrow indeed as well as word the social conditions that gave rise to it. Feuerbach's exposure of religion and metaphysics was, he held, abstract, merely contemplative and therefore not fully scientific or practical.

The well-known Marxian position against the Utopian Socialists of the nineteenth century is undoubtedly based on this practical view of society. The Utopian Socialists Saint-

Simon, Fourier and Owen, Marx and Engels argued, regarded socialism as the 'expression of absolute truth, reason and justice', thought that it was a mere accident that it had not been discovered earlier, and assumed that it needed only to be discovered "to conquer the world by virtue of its own power."¹ What was required they held, "was to discover a new and more perfect social order and to impose this on society from without, by propaganda and where possible by the example of model experiment"².

They appealed to reason and justice, and thought that it was sufficient to advocate a new society of the sort they had figured, for the world to be convinced of their schema. "Instead of observing the first beginnings of the new society within the existing one," they imagined just societies 'out of their own heads.' In contrast to this, "the theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our eyes."³

1. Engels, Anti Duhring, p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 291.

3. Marx & Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 27.

The utopians had left vague the means of transition from the existing state of affairs to the future ideal - who is to bring the changes about, and how is he to proceed about doing it. In other terms, they left vague, in fact they neglected the practical side of their dreams, that is the ultimate judge whether their dreams shall remain dreams, or whether they shall come true. Marx had an answer to the two questions of the 'who' and 'how': the proletariat is to bring the change, and the means are to be revolutionary. More of this later.

It might be argued at this stage that the principle of praxis, in its application to social analysis serves as the basis for Marx's rejection of 'good-will morality'. It is very controversial whether Marx did have a moral system or not. By this I mean a system of ethics in its restricted sense as an independent sphere of enquiry like e.g. Utilitarianism or Hedonism, etc.¹ It is certain however, that Marx felt a great antipathy against people who preached morality. In the German Ideology, he says

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1. Rebecca Cooper attributes to Marx a utilitarian ethics: "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). See R. Tucker, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

The Communists in general preach no morality, which Stirner does too much. They do not make moral demands upon man - to love one another, not to be egoists etc... On the contrary, they know well that egoism as well as self-sacrifice is, in certain circumstances, a necessary form of the self-assertion of individuals.¹

Karl Popper explains Marx position like this, "Marx, I believe, avoided an explicit moral theory because he hated preaching. Deeply distrustful of the moralist who usually preaches water and drinks wine, Marx was reluctant to formulate his ethical convictions explicitly.. The principles of humanity and decency were for him matters that needed no discussion, matters to be taken for granted."²

When he criticizes the bourgeoisie for its 'cowardly' acceptance of the morality of the 'good will'. Marx argues that people who preach reform but give support only to projects of gradual improvement show by their deeds that they found little to quarrel with in the existing social order. Involved with this of course is the view that there should be no barriers between thoughts in the mind and practice in the natural world. To think of reform, if your thought is to be of any worth you must practice reform. There is a violent activism in this posi-

1. Marx, German Ideology, Cited by Tucker, op.cit., p. 16.

2. Popper, op.cit., pp. 187-8.

tion that tends to depreciate of the intentions and aims of the moral agent in comparison with his deeds and their effects.

It is often repeated that Marxist morality (in Marxism - Leninism - Stalinism) opposes objective morality to subjective morality. Put in a simpler language, that the consequences of a moral act are what determine its rightness or wrongness and the intention of the agent. The rightness of the act depends in turn on whether the consequences are good for the party, or the communist movement; the act is wrong when its consequences are bad for the movement. This often seem to puzzle non-Marxists, and even faces the Marxist himself with very frustrating dilemmas. Rubashov, the hero of Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon, reminds, us of the kind of situation where when some line of Marxist policy fails, the leader responsible for it may be cast aside and publicly disavowed, although he may have struggled his utmost to bring the policy to success.¹

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1. An incident of a different nature, but which still exemplifies this moral attitude is related by Koestler as a personal experience: He was working as a news-agent for the party in Germany. He knew of a secret raid of the socialists who were in government the Nazi headquarters. He passed the news. The action was carried out. The next day while every paper predicted a civil war between the Nazis and the Socialists, the party paper, to Koestler's surprise, went on as usual with its sneer at the Social Democrat Government. As explanation, it was argued that the action of the police was merely a feint to cover up their complicity. Even though in their outlook, some socialist leaders were subjectively anti-Fascists, objectively, the socialist was a tool of Nazism. They split the working class, hence they help the Nazis. (Koestler's contribution in The God That Failed, ed. R. Crossman. Pennout, p. 32-33).

I am not sure that the Communist Party claims that this line of thinking finds support or is based on Marx's view of morality that was presented. However if it does, which I suspect is the case, then I believe that it is a radical perversion of the original position. What the present attitude involves, I think, is that the moral agent concerned appears merely as a means to securing certain aims of the Party and nothing else. In Kantian terms, he stops being a person, a being with a certain moral value, an end, and becomes a link in an impersonal process. To say this is one thing, and to say that one's moral preachings are meaningless unless he himself shows how he practises them, fruitless unless in practice they contribute positively to the transformation of society, and with it the individual towards the better (better in Marx's sense), is quite another thing.

Existential Aspect: By its very nature, the principle of praxis rejects any systemization of thought into a rigid closed compound.

In this respect Marxism is not a system of philosophy. A system of philosophy one might say is a certain manner of organizing reality to render it intelligible. Epistemological and Ontological problems occupy a central and perhaps the central part of its

concern. Logic decorates its paths. The primary concern of Marxism is human existence. Epistemology or Ontology, occupy a minor part in it. It rejects any systemization of thought and of human life. Every moment of human existence is real, more real than any abstract theory about life and the universe. A way of life is what it primarily calls for, and it does that with the mysticism and zeal of the believer, not with the serenity and logic of the detached philosopher.

Jean Lacroix says "All philosophic systems are necessarily inadequate to the subject matter of Marxism, for this is concerned with human existence."¹

In Marxian philosophy, man and in particular the Marxist, is engaged in history and the world, building the world, creating it in a sense, and with that forming his own nature, making history, for history is nothing but the creation of man by human labour. For Marx man does not engage in the world, as if it was in our free will to choose to engage or recede from the world; he is engaged and history has meaning only in so far as it tells the story of man in his engaged existence. Between disinterested thought and engaged existence, there is a gap for Marx and

1. Lacroix, op.cit., p. 7.

this gap is bridged by the attitude of praxis. Praxis pictures the communist - "the conscious incarnate of the proletariat" - as actively engaged in the world, involved in an analysis of the historical situation he is in, living intensively the movement which is to transform it, acting his thoughts and thinking his acts. In a word making history with his whole being.

Lest it should be assumed that I wish by this interpretation to impress upon the reader a comparison of doctrines between Marxism and existentialism, let me make the following clarification. It is necessary whenever we use the term 'existentialism' or 'existential' in a discussion like this, to distinguish between two senses of the word. In one sense the word expresses an attitude that belongs to existentialism as a doctrine, or a school of thought. In another sense it expresses an attitude that belongs to a climate of existence. Existentialism of doctrine is what we read in voluminous books, hear, heatedly argued, in seminars, listen to rhetorically discussed in academic lectures. Existentialism of climate is what we see manifest in the behavior of the man of the street, the priest, the student, the professor - an implicit or explicit call, an express desire on the part of the individual for the intensification of his existence in an atmosphere where it is in danger. Though not the same, the

two senses are not exclusive of each other, in fact they seem to be complementary. For it is more likely that it is in an existential climate that a doctrine of existentialism arises, which in turn modifies and justifies that climate. I am using the term in its latter meaning i.e. to signify a climate.

In a universe where humanity is threatened with a total annihilation, where the individual, in face of advanced technology and mass society feels the threat of his non-existence, of his insignificance with every step he takes, he revolts to concentrate on his existence as such, drinking it to the lees, so to speak. He focuses on his subjectivity, dethroning Apollo to install Dionysius, murdering reason to make live passion, in order to prove his being and to regain psychologically his internal security. It is an existential attitude, that subjugates history and the world to the triumph of the individual. This drama, I think, manifests itself also in Marx.

In class society according to Marx the individual is mutilated, sells his capacities, his labour to the machine and to capital, loses his sense of identity and his significance in a world he has created. The proletariat reveals this condition par

excellence. It lives in a society where it is in constant threat of annihilation-moral not physical annihilation. In it is killed all sense of dignity and equality with the rest of humanity. Capitalism drives it to the lowest form of degradation. It represents the residue of man.

The communist - proletariat conscious of himself, his wretchedness, revolts to establish his existence in this microcosm, and with it to generate a new man, a full individual. The communist acts. He does not build up theories about how to resolve the conflicts of the individual i.e. the present society by imagining in his head an ideal society and then just dreaming of it. He acts to dispel the phantom that menaces his being. He acts to abolish an order in which man, the individual and the species, no longer have his destiny in its own hands, but has become an appendage of a machine and a commodity for exchange.

We perhaps, have already noticed that in contrast to the free unplanned existential revolt of the individual, there is in the Marxist outlook a more organized and a more ambitious and far reaching aim.

The communist, says Marx, is one who believes in the spontaneous revolt of the masses. One might add, the 'revolt to exist.'

Rene Habachi, commenting on Marxism, writes. "Marxism is the existential cry of the mass."¹

This rather brief and adventurous interpretation of Marx's position might give us a vague clue as to why some contemporary existentialists came to a very close flirtation with the communist Ideology.² There is certainly more positiveness and concreteness in Marx's position than Sartre's for example, which spends more time describing the individual's existence than suggesting a way out of his solitary loneliness. In L'Age de La Raison, Sartre's admittedly autobiographical hero Mathieu, in an interview with his communist former friend, shows a sharp nostalgia and a kind of sympathetic envy for him. He feels more bitterly than usual the loneliness of his search for freedom and admires more than halfway the collective revolutionary attitude of his friend.³

The Revolution.

The Revolution within the context of Historical Materialism: A general reaction of most people who read Marx's philosophy of history is a sign of puzzlement at, and an attitude of criticism of, the role of the Revolution in the framework of his later

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1. R. Habachi, "Ier Cahier pour une Pensée Mediterranéene." (Beirut: 1960)
 2. Simone de Beauvoir, See e.g. The Long March.
 3. L'Age de la Raison, See M. Grene, The Dreadful Freedom.

economic thought: How does the Revolution, a free act of conscious men, fit into the rigidity of a situation determined by economic laws? The Revolution, according to Marx cannot just happen at any time, depending, say, on the whim of a group of individuals or on the fact that certain people are politically or economically dissatisfied. A simple act of will does not in itself constitute the motor of the Revolution. It requires actual conditions under which it could flourish, and these conditions are primarily economic. Marx says

At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or-what is but a legal expression of the same thing - with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.¹

Where does the conscious act of the Revolution enter in this picture? The key to the answer lies, I believe in 'Praxis'. In his important study of the philosophy of Engels, R. Mondolfo, the Italian marxist, makes of the concept of praxis, man's conscious interaction with the objective world, the key to an understanding of historical materialism, which, he says,

1. Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p. 12.

emphasizes the role of mind and will in history in opposition to philosophical materialism where this is lost in its deterministic outlook.¹

When men come to understand the real forces operating in society, and acquire knowledge about the ripe conditions for a social revolution, they gain control over society and exercise power over its forces.

Once we have them (forces) and understand how they work, the gradual subjection of them to our wills and the use of them for the attainment of our ends depends entirely on ourselves.²

A passage of similar vein, though less optimistic is given by Marx

...When society has got up upon the track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movements, it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth - pangs.³

But one could not perhaps argue that sheer mastery of

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1. R.N. Carew Hunt, Marxism Past and Present, p. 36.
 2. Engels, Anti-Duhring, p. 40.
 3. Marx, Preface to Capital Vol. I, p. 14-15.

nature and society is in itself something good. It depends more, one should think, on how one utilizes this knowledge. I think our century presents us with a paradigm case of this issue. While on the one hand our atomic possessions are an indisputable victory over nature, they are on the other hand a monstrous threat to human existence: all depending on what one does with them. Rousseau's criticism of civilization has at least this defensible element in it. Man's inventiveness and intelligence unless used for the benefit of mankind, could not aspire to any moral significance.

To understand, therefore society and its forces is not enough. One must act. And the action of the marxist is to liberate man, the individual, from the servitude he has driven himself into. Once again we notice Marx's aversion to principles in isolation from practice. The constant recurrence of this theme in Marx's writing is of paramount significance. Camus conceives of it as one of the main ambitions of Marx "... principles will be destroyed forever and with them the society which profits by them. This in fact is Marx's ambition."¹

The privileged mediator in capitalist society, which takes upon its shoulder the responsibility of acting is the

1. Camus, op.cit., p. 40.

Proletariat. 'The historic mission of the bourgeoisie is in its creation of the conditions that prepare for its ultimate destruction' and the liberations of man. By driving the proletariat to a state of utter misery, by making aware of its wretchedness, it gives birth to the solution of the problem, which lies in the revolutionary act. The 'activist passiveness' of the Marxian stand as Camus calls it, finds its expression here. The fundamental principles of bourgeois production are revolutionary. Marx recommends them, and prescribes that they be developed, for they provide the basis for the emancipating act on the part of its most victimised portion.¹

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.²

The proletariat can and must accept the bourgeois revolution as a condition of the working class revolution.³

There is a clear recognition by Marx therefore, that the human will play an important role in the execution of the Revolution. The ultimate cause of the Revolution rests of course in the basic conflict at the level of production. But once the

1. Ibid., p. 172.

2. Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, op.cit., p. 13.

3. Marx, Cited by Camus, op.cit., p. 172.

conflict appears on the surface, the proletariat, becoming aware of it, and its relation to it can utilize its power to enhance the Revolution.

Communism points out that although the Revolution is inevitable, man is a conscious actor in the drama and is able to use all his powers at the right moment to foster and to give direction to the Movement.¹

The Originality of the Proletarian Revolution: Compared to all previous revolutions, the Communist Revolution announced by Marx claims a supreme originality. Unlike all previous revolutions, which are primarily political,² it will be a social revolution. The word 'political' for Marx indicates always the presence of a particularity, or an unsurmounted partiality.³

In a political revolution, one class, hence a limited group of people emancipate itself with the pretension that it is for all society.

What does a partial, simply political revolution rest on? On this: that a fraction of bourgeois society emancipates itself and assumes general supremacy; a limited class departing from its particular situation undertakes the emancipation of all society. This class emancipates society only on the assumption that all society is embodied in its situation.⁴

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1. McFadden, The Philosophy of Communism, p. 151.
 2. Marx, Nachlass in Lefebvre Morceaux Choisis, p. 160.
 3. Calvez, op.cit., p. 488.
 4. Marx, An Introduction..., p. 101.

In other words the universality that all partial political revolutions claim to have rests on a fiction which is actually betrayed by social reality. It is not enough as is the case with bourgeois revolutions that there be found a class, with the right revolutionary energy, and the consciousness of its proper force to be capable of vindicating the general interest and supremacy of society. What is really necessary is the right agent which would carry on this task: and it is in the absence of such a class capable of epousing the universal interest of mankind that Marx saw the failure of all previous revolutions.

In 1848 he says "All previous historical movements were movements of minorities or in the interest of minorities."¹ All partial revolutions operated by a class for the interest of a class; these revolutions of minorities have pushed history. Hence the famous affirmation "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle."²

What has been said should not be understood to mean that Marx claims that there could be a political revolution as such without social consequences. Undoubtedly all social revolutions have caused some social reconstruction or reorganization even if they were not consciously aimed at such a purpose. But

1. Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 24.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

the new revolution will be a social revolution in a different sense: for one thing it will be consciously so; for another, it will effectively influence the whole of society, and not a particular class, and finally it will introduce man to a completely new kind of social existence where his whole being as individual and as species will be radically transformed. For these desired consequences to actually occur, the need is essentially, as we have already said, for the agent - in it lies the hope for the original Revolution. Again we say the agent is the Proletariat.

According to Sidney Hook, the term 'proletariat' came into current usage by the German intellectuals with the spread of the French Socialists ideas among them, around 1830. Though they spoke in the name of the proletariat, the only proletarians they knew were the ones talked about by the French Socialist writers.¹ Marx was one of those intellectuals.

What is so particular of this class that could justify the claim it aspires at? What determines the proletarian class? The proletariat is possessed of a universality that was ~~lack~~ in all previous revolutionary classes: a universality of deprivation

1. S. Hook, op.cit., p. 191. Robert Tucker feels that the thinker who was the real source of Marx's idea of the Proletariat was Lorenz von Stern - a conservative Hegelian, sociologist despite the fact that Marx does not acknowledge his debt to him. (p.114-116) Hook disagrees with the view.

and absolute need. It is a class that does not appear to take its position like any other particular class in rapport with the other classes of society: but rather one which is not recognized by other classes. And since that a class be recognized it must have rights and possessions, it is therefore a class which is denied all property wherein the rights could find their support. It is a class that is completely negative. It is all society in negation, because it is completely excluded from the society in which it exists, while in previous societies, the suppressed classes still had some rights and properties, which is what enabled them to become rulers in later epochs, in the capitalist society, the more technology develops, the more degraded and more profound, the more universal becomes the misery of the proletariat. Its movement "becomes the independent movement of an immense majority."¹

In 1843, Marx first formulates the definition of such a class. "A class must be formed with radical bonds, a class in the bourgeois society which is not a part of the bourgeois society, a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere which has a universal character because of its universal sufferings, which claims no particular right because the harm done to it is harm in general and not any particular harm..."

1. Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 24.

a sphere which could not liberate itself without liberating with it all other spheres of society, a sphere which, in a word, is the total loss of man and hence could only regain itself by the full resurrection of man.¹

In another agonizing passage Marx compares the proletariat with Christ on the cross. In the same way, he shows, that the crucified man God is for the Christians the redeemer of man in his reconciliation of humanity with divinity between which he is torn apart, so the proletariat, the crucified of the modern world, torn apart in its antagonisms, suffering most of them, can destroy the conflicts and with that redeem man.²

There is a widespread agreement amongst Marxian scholars that Marx's description of the proletariat was not arrived empirically, that is by actual observation of the conditions of contemporary factory workers, rather it was arrived at a priori. He defined the proletariat in the way he did ascribing to it the qualities necessary to make it the right agent for the Revolution. His first full contact with workers was after he had moved to Paris in the autumn of 1843. By then however he had already formulated in his mind the idea of the proletariat, through the path we

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1. Marx, Introduction... Cited by J.Y. Calvez, op.cit., p. 491.
 2. J. Lacroix, op.cit., p. 10.

have already described. "He had assimilated the concept of the proletariat into the doctrine of human self-alienation that he had developed under the influence of Hegel and Feuerbach. Briefly in Marx's mind (alienated) man became proletariat."¹

By 1848, Marx was no longer contented with a postulation of the proletarian class. He saw it as a reality, actually existing in the factory conditions around him.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property, his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relatives, modern industrial labour, modern subjugation to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion are to him bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.²

The description of the agent of the Revolution is already a description of the new revolutionary process. This is not an action decided upon accidentally. It is the essential action of the Proletariat; it only acts; an act of complete negation of which the Proletariat is passively the incarnate. Starting with private property Marx says, "You are horrified at our intending

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1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 113. Calvez holds the same view of the apriorism of Marx's concept of Proletarian. op.cit., pp. 490-91.
 2. Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 23-24.

to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenth of its population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths..."¹ In the same manner, the bourgeoisie deplures the fact that the communist encroaches upon culture. But is not the Proletariat the negation of culture already accomplished? "That culture, the loss of which he laments is for the enormous majority a mere framing to act as a machine."² They reproach the communist for wanting to abolish the bourgeois family, that is because the family is already abolished for them. They reproach them for wanting to abolish the country and nationality, "The working man" says the Manifesto "has no country." You can't dispossess them of something they don't have.³

The Proletariat has no morality, no family, no homeland. Therefore it clings to its species of which it is 'its naked and implacable representative.'

The contradiction of actual society, the negation of such society pushed to extreme, is the resumé of the proletarian condition. "The Proletariat is this society negated," as Calvez

1. Ibid., p. 29-30.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid., p. 33.

puts it "thus it is, negatively something universal."¹ Whence the amplitude of the Revolution it projects.

In all revolutions uptil now the mode of activity always remained unscathed, and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons; whilst the Communist Revolution is directed against the predecing mode of activity, does away with labour (alienated labour) and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves...²

The Proletarian Revolution does not only abolish one particular form of private property, but all forms of private property concerning the means of productions. It does away with the domination of one class, but with it it does away with all class domination, because it is the negation of all classes and their suppression. It destroys a system of division of Labour, but at the same time it does away with all form of divided labour. It destroys alienated labour, and with it all forms of alienation. It destroys alienated man, to bring forth a new man.

Where is the guarantee, we might wonder with Camus, that in the bosom of the Revolution, orders and class antagonisms shall not arise. And we might answer with him "the guarantee lies in Hegel. The proletariat is the universal in opposition

1. D.Y. Calvez, op.cit., p. 494.

2. Marx, German Ideology, (Pascal's Trans), p. 67.

to the particular, in other words to capitalism. The antagonism between capital and the proletariat is the last phase of the struggle between the particular and the universal, the same struggle which animated the historic tragedy of master and slave.¹

1. Camus, op.cit., p. 172-3.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNISM - THE SELF REGAINED¹

One would have missed the entire purpose of the Revolution and with it the core of Marx's thought if he had not seen in the act of Revolution an attempt towards the creation of the new man, an ambition for a radical change of the individual self. Marx sees the Communist Revolution as primarily the Revolution of self-change. Man who has lost the world he created, to his own lust and greed, who has lost himself in his confused labour must perform an act of re-appropriation in order to change himself. This is Marx's definition of the Proletarian Revolution.² The 'communist action' is this act of reappropriation in which man is to break loose from the chains of alienation. Prometheus, the chief saint, is to be set free at last. He is to find his identity.

Universal dependence, this natural form of the world historical cooperation of individuals will be transformed by this communist (action) into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which born of the action of men on one another have till now overawed and governed them as powers completely alien to them.³

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1. The title of a chapter in Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx.
 2. Ibid., p. 152.
 3. Marx & Engels, The German Ideology, pp. 27-28.

In revolutionary activity change of self coincides with change of circumstances.¹

Communism itself is for Marx this new state of the individual and the generic human self. If Man has existed all through history in a state of self alienation, a dehumanized condition, then communism is the overcoming of alienation. It is man's 'regaining of self', 'the reintegration or return of man to himself', 'the transcendence of human self-alienation'.

Robert Tucker sees a close similarity here between Marxism and Christianity, which among other things, makes him describe Marxism as a "religion of revolution". According to the Christian scheme, he says, man exists all through history in a 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 to freedom - occurs only through the Revolution with which the present final world period is scheduled to close.

Further, like christianity the idea of participation in the drama towards salvation is always there. Medieval christianity, did not portray man as simply existing in a state of sin from which there will be a final redemption. It bid man participate by faith and good work in bringing out salvation. There is

1. K. Marx, Third Thesis on Feuerbach in Ideologie Allemande, VII, p. 142.

therefore a kind of unity of theory and practice which we have seen, is central in Marxian philosophy.¹

Amongst all the writings of Marx, the Manuscripts of 1844 contains the fullest treatment that he has ever given on the topic of communism. In the section entitled "Private Property and Communism", which is supposedly a part of the third manuscript and which comprises sixteen handwritten pages, we get Marx's account of communism brief and in many respects difficult to follow.

In my exposition therefore, I shall remain as close as possible to that section of the Manuscripts referring whenever necessary to other works by Marx and commentators. The subject is dealt with under two aspects: first the immediate post revolutionary period which inspired what I have to say in the section I call "what Communism Is Not", and secondly the positive aspect of communism, ultimate communism.

What Communism is Not.

Marx did not invent the word 'communism'. Many a doctrine of communism had been presented and advocated long before he developed his type of communism, later called 'scientific

1. R. Tucker, op.cit., pp. 24-25.

socialism'. Europe had already been swept by several doctrines which carried this prestigious name. In 1848, Marx inaugurates the Manifesto with the following statement. "A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exercise this spectre. Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies."¹ He goes on to describe how whenever any opposition group or party emerged, it was immediately labelled 'communist'. The word 'communist' was already widespread and common in most political and social circles of Europe at the time. Marx does not hesitate to admit it. In fact he goes on to study those different forms of social order which were all described by one word, and he reveals his dissatisfaction with them. In either Prondhon's Fourier's or Sant Simon's, communism remained still "negative" in character. Neither of these people grasped the "dynamism of the relation of work with capital" to be able to see the possibility of suppressing alienation. Prondhon, for example, wanted "to do away with capital as such" which is the element in which work objectifies itself, but without doing away with the mechanism that created capital and which made the proletariat. Fourier and Saint Simon saw alienation to reside in a specific form of labour, and suggested others-

1. Marx & Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 8.

Fourier, agricultural Labour; Saint Simon, Labour ruled by industrialists - without regard to the relation in the specific form of Labour that should render alienation. In short, Prondhon, Fourier and Saint-Simon did not really address themselves to the root of evil.¹

Their forms of communism were negative because they envisaged only the consequences of alienation and not the source of alienation of itself.

Communism, properly envisaged, is the positive expression of the suppression of private property. The act of doing away with private property constitutes a new form of social order in which the individual is in full control of his powers. But before this stage is reached, there is a preliminary stage which we should note.

Following Hegel, Marx conceives of the act of Revolution to be the final "negation of the negation". In his alienated Labour of world creation, working man, we have seen, has existed as non-man, as a negation of his true self. Consequently, the act by which he appropriates the alienated world of private property will be an act of self-abolition as a proletarian i.e. as a non-man. It is the negation of himself as a negation of

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 124.

himself.¹ "The annulment of alienation... is the negation of the negation."² But unlike Hegel, the negation of the negation does not immediately yield a positive affirmation. Far from being fully human, man on the morrow of the Revolution will still exist in a state of terrible degradation. The 'negation of the negation' for Marx produces at first only "unthinking" or "crude communism", in which man remains more than ever a negation of himself.³

Crude communism is fully egalitarian. It consists in the project of generalizing private property, that is to say, leave all property in the community of a society of Equals. But in so doing, nothing has changed in the fundamental attitude of people towards things - the exclusiveness that characterizes their relation to things and the greed for property. Marx says that crude communism is not a transcendence of private property but the universalizing of it, not the overcoming of greed but only the generalizing of it. In the words of Tucker, it is "the promiscuous socialization of all private property including women."⁴

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1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 134.
 2. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 190.
 3. According to Tucker, this is the stage that Marx later designated as the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat, op.cit., p. 154.
 4. Ibid., p. 155.

This communism (crude communism) which negates the personality of man in every sphere is only the logical expression of private property.¹

Crude communism is so dominated by the idea of possession of private property "that it aims to destroy everything which is in-capable of being possessed by everyone, as private property. It wishes to eliminate talent, intelligence etc. by force. Immediate physical possession seems to it the unique goal of life and existence."²

In addition to not being able to do away with the attitude of private property, it does not do away with the condition of the self-estranged labourer. It does not abolish alienated labour, it only extends it to all men, even to those who have been a little more privileged by owning the means of production. Everybody finds himself now subordinated to the tyranny of the community's capital instead of being subordinated to the equality of wage. Each receives his salary from the general capitalist which is the community.³

Nothing is changed fundamentally. In private property as well as in crude communism, the individual is considered

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1. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 125.
 2. Ibid., p. 124-5.
 3. Ibid., p. 126.

only as the thing in which he is manifested by his production; but the link between his product and himself is not seen. His being as a person is lost in an impersonal relation of commodity production. A precise criterion of the level of degradation them man reaches in the state of 'crude communism' is clearly expressed according to Marx in man's relationship to woman. Basically Marx sees in the relation of man to woman "the immediate natural and necessary relation of human being to human being."¹ It indicates "how far man's natural behaviour has become human, and how far his human essence has become natural essence for him, how far his human nature has become nature for him."²

In 'crude communism' we get a community of women. Marriage which in bourgeois society is incontestably a form of private property is contrasted with the community of women, in which women become communal and common property. The idea of woman as property Marx calls prostitutions where the woman is no more considered as a person, and where man is not man, for he treats not the woman - another human being - as in man. In the "community of women" nothing has changed in the fundamental attitude towards woman as property. She has only been generalized.

1. Ibid., p. 125.

2. Ibid., p. 126.

In the relationship with woman as the prey and the handmaid of communal lust is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself.¹

Compared with the world of material wealth, the woman passes from "the relation of exclusive marriage with the private owner to the relation of universal prostitution with the community."²

It is perhaps evident from Marx's description of 'crude communism' that this view of communism is not concerned with the socialization of the means of production as such. The socialization of the means of production as such is merely an economic fact just like any other economic institution. Anyone who expects to find in Marx's writings a treatment of economic and social organization will be disappointed. Marx never thought of communism in that manner. He took it for granted that in communism there would be plenty of goods for everybody.

Neither of course, did he conceive of a society of regimented individuals, regardless of whether there was equality of income or not, and regardless of whether they were well fed and well clad. As Erich Fromm remarks, Marx who every year read

1. Ibid., p. 126.

2. Ibid., p. 125.

all the works of Aeschylus and Shakespeare, and who brought to life in himself the greatest works of human thought, would never have dreamt of his idea of socialism as having its aim the well-fed and well-clad 'welfare' or 'workers state.'¹

The social ideal of the communists is not egalitarianism. Individuals are unequal. They are born with biological and psychological inequalities. But in capitalist societies the individuals are not allowed one equal chance to develop their personalities... The great majority belongs to an exploited class... Inequality of classes is the only inequality that communism desires to do away with social and not individual inequality. The suppression of the division of classes will liberate the individual and permit him to assure to his personality a maximum development.²

Nothing is as strange to Marx as the standardized individual. Furthermore, Marx's view of communism is not a society in which the individual is subordinated to the state or to a bureaucracy or a machine, or even a society which is not at unison with the individual. His reproach of Max Stirner was precisely because the latter derived his concept of the tyranny of society over the individual by examining contemporaneous societies which in Marx's view were actually tyrannical. But Stirner failed to see that essentially society and the individual are not in conflict; he also failed to see that what communism

1. E. Fromm, op.cit., p. 60.

2. P. Hervé "L'Homme Marxiste" in Les Grands Appels de l'Homme Contemporain, (Paris, 1946), p. 100-1.

was calling for was a repudiation of society which remained superior to the individual; in which there was conflict, in order to replace it with one in which the individual profited spiritually and existentially from it.¹

The society which Marx is calling for is one which gives the individual the full chance to actualize his potentialities. Its claim to this does not lie just in the socialized means of production but what is done with them.

As Herbert Marcuse points out "If the socialized means of production are not utilized for the development and the gratification of the free individual, they will amount simply to a new form for subjugating individuals to a hypostatized universality."²

Communism as Unity of the Self

Social Character of Communist Existence: From 'crude communism', there is an ascent into what Marx calls "positive humanism", a stage which is the positive transcendence of private property, of the alienation of the individual in society, of human self-alienation. So long as any form of communism remains

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1. Marx, Saint Famille trad. Molitor, Deuvres Philosophiques VII (Paris, 1953), p. 213.
 2. H. Marcuse, op.cit., p. 283.

contaminated with the idea of private property, it has not grasped the 'essence' of communism. "It may well have understood the concept of communism, but not the essence."¹

We have already seen that the proletariat has lost not only his product but also himself. He has lost all he has had of humanity in him, his human nature. If therefore, by the Revolution, he is to find anything, it will be in fact all human nature, all the richness of humanity.

With the suppression of economic alienation comes the suppression of all the other forms of alienation that impose themselves between man and his real natural being.

The positive suppression of private property as the appropriation of human life is the positive suppression of all alienation, and the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc. to his human i.e. social life.²

In a brief passage Marx indicates to us the principal traits of man reconquering his nature:

Communism is the real appropriation of human nature through and for man. It is therefore the return of man to himself as a social i.e. really human being, a complete and conscious return that assimilates all the wealth of previous development. Communism as a fully-

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 127.

2. Ibid., p. 128.

developed humanism is naturalism. It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution.¹

Communism is the achieved reconciliation of the relation between man and nature, between man and objectivity, between man and man, between the individual and his generic being.

A unison between man and nature presupposes the existence of a reconciliation between man and man, a reconciliation with society. "The human significance of nature only exists for social man".² The state of hostility of man to man in their alienation is here resolved. Man is not separated from man anymore; he is not separated from society. Society is not anymore something distinct from the individual. It is the veritable individual who is social.³ There is no more difference between the individual life and his generic life. There is a perfect reciprocity between the individual and the species. What was

1. Ibid., p. 127.

2. Ibid., p. 129.

3. Ibid., p. 130.

once only a vague relation of man and nature becomes here fully realized.

It is not enough for Marx to postulate the social character of existence in communism, he has to show how this is so in actuality, how it penetrates all existence even those phenomena which do not expressly appear as social. In carrying out a scientific activity, one which is seldom carried out in direct association with other men, "the performance nevertheless is a social act because it is human." It is not only the material of one's activity that is given to him as a social product. One's own existence is a social activity. "For this reason what one produces, he produces for society and with the consciousness as a social being."¹

More generally we could say that in communism the "universal form of consciousness is only the theoretical form of that whose living form is the real community, the social entity."² As long as communism is not realized, consciousness is conceived as an abstraction from real life and in conflict with it. In communism "the activity of my consciousness as such is my theoretical existence as a social being."³

1. Ibid., p. 130.

2. Ibid., p. 130.

3. Ibid., p. 130.

There is then no divergence, no opposition between theory and the life of practice. There is a union between thought and action. Though they are certainly not the same thing, they are at the same time united one to another.

In resuming his 'socialty' man finds himself in nature:

Only then is nature the basic of his own human experience and a vital element of human reality. The natural existence of man has here become human for him. This society is the accomplished union of man with nature; the veritable resurrection of nature, the realized naturalism of man and the realized humanism of nature.¹

Humanism has become identical with naturalism and inversely.² Man by becoming natural and nature becoming human; by object becoming human, man does not lose himself anymore in it, for it has become social and human. The object becomes social and man becomes social. Subject and object coincide. In his objectification man finds himself for he finds his social being. All objects become for him objectification of himself, they become objects which "confirm and realize his individuality." There is no more an antagonism between the subjective activity of man in his self-manifestation, and the objectification which necessarily accompany the product of the active manifestation

1. Ibid., p. 129.

2. Ibid., p. 127.

of himself. Between the two there is hence an identity.¹ Man becomes himself object.²

Community of Fully Actualized Persons: The originality of Marx's communism lies in the particular relationship it creates between the community and the individual. Hitherto, all forms of community or society have been conceived as abstractions or as something particular juxtaposed in some way or another to the individuals, usually something superior to them. In the new community - a real community and not an abstract or imaginary one - the individual is not something juxtaposed or subordinated to it. On the contrary the community is the full expression of his personal being both as a social and species being. All previous communities, all 'surrogates of community' as Marx calls them, had appeared as a limit only outside of which personal liberty was possible. They had always been independent of the individuals, and constituted exactly the limit of their field of expression as individuals. Society had been in relation to the individual, something contingent, non-essential, accidental. "The sphere of personal liberty is that which escaped the reach of society or community".³

1. Ibid., p. 127.

2. Ibid., p. 130.

3. J.Y. Calvez, op.cit., p. 514.

In Marxian communism, on the contrary, the community ceases, in principle, to be a limit to the development of the individual liberty, to become the open sphere of the expression of the individual personality.

It is only in community has the individual the means of developing (cultivate) his optitudes in all directions: it is only in community that personal liberty is possible.¹

The individual is no longer subordinated to society, as to something exterior and independent of him. The community is nothing but the very being of man become conscious of all the directions, possibilities and dimensions of his individual development. The dimensions and possibilities of the individual are expressed in his needs. The man of communism is a man of need, a man whose needs are multiplied at infinity, whose needs have become universal.² Yet at the same time as his needs increase he finds satisfaction for them in society, that is in man himself. Nothing is sacrificed of the richness of human needs. Communism is not ascetism, neither is it primitivism. In man's return to himself by the suppression of alienation, "all the richness of his previous development" is preserved. However there is no more a single trait of dissatisfaction in

1. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology (Pascal's Trans) p. 64.

2. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 137.

relation to this richness. In saying that man regains himself completely, it means he would not lose anything of the cultural and material gains that he had made. In addition to these, there is in communism an access to the 'real' needs of man. The true needs of man are those whose fulfillment is necessary for the realization of his potentialities as a human being, and the wealth of the human individual is proportional to the extent of his true needs.

In place of the wealth and poverty of political economy, we have the wealthy man and the plenitude of human need. The wealthy man is at the same time one who needs a complex of human manifestations of life, and whose own self-realization exists as an inner necessity, a need.¹ The existence of what I truly need is felt by me as a necessity, as a need without which my essence cannot be fulfilled, satisfied, complete.²

Furthermore, if until communism there had been on the one side richness and on the other poverty, with communism the two coincide. The new state is not only richness but also a realization of what poverty implied as a need. In alienation poverty was an insistence of a frustrated need; it was an

1. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 137.

2. Marx, Dissertation... MEGA I, p. 184, Oeuvres Philosophiques I, p. 82. The insistence of Marx on the 'real needs' of man is similar to what in modern terminology we call 'rational' or 'healthy' needs of man as opposed to his neurotic ones. And the job of the analyst of society is to draw our attention to those of our needs which are illusory and those which are real. (E. Fromm, op.cit., p.62-63)

expression of deprivation. Now it becomes a most elevated need that finds its satisfaction.

Not only wealth but also poverty of man requires in a socialist perspective a human and thus a social meaning. Poverty is the passive bond which leads man to experience a need for the greatest wealth, the other person. The study of the objective entity within me, the sensuous outbreak of my life activity is the passion which here becomes the activity of my being.¹

Need has become a passion entertained by man with regard to himself, and this passion is at the same time the supreme activity of man.²

The dialogue among men in the communist society becomes a constant I-Thou dialogue. The individual, whether in me or in another person is always treated as an end, never as a means only; for in him lies the whole of humanity, and humanity is never to be used as a means. Kant's "Kingdom of Ends" is brought to an actual realization. Man's relation to the world and to other men is one full of human value and of human love. Every one of his relations corresponds to his real individual life.

If you love without provoking love in return, i.e. if you are unable by the manifestation of yourself as a loving person, to make yourself a beloved person, then your love is impotent

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 138.

2. Ibid., p. 138.

and a misfortune.¹

Freedom as Self-Realization: The positive transcendence of self alienation, the self-realization of the individual is primarily for Marx the recovery of freedom. That man is essentially free, Marx does not question for a minute:

Freedom is so much the essence of man that even its opponents realize it... No man fights freedom. He fights at most the freedom of others, only at one time as a special privilege, another time as a universal right.²

But what was crucial for Marx, as it was for Hegel, was that in contemporary society there were barriers which prevented the full actualization of human freedom. As Marx's collaborator Engels points out: if man were actually in his concrete life free, there would be no problem, no Phenomenology, no Logic (Referring to Hegel's works). The Revolution, says Engels, somewhere else, is the leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom.³

All men are essentially free, but the mechanisms of the labour process govern the freedom of them all. The study of the labour process, the repudiation of fetishism concerning production

1. Ibid., p. 168.

2. Marx, Cited by R. Dunayevskaya as the motto of his book, Marxism and Freedom, (New York, 1958), p. 20.

3. Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" in Selected Works II; p. 155.

and the means of production, the growth of the productive forces are all subordinated to the idea of the 'free individual'¹ - the free realization of his potentialities, freedom in the real sense.

Thus in the German Ideology we see Marx attacking division of labour, the labour process which enslaves the individual and turns him into a fragment of man, as the first thing that is eliminated in the new 'city'.

The elimination of division of labour is nothing more than "the development of the individual capacities... the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves."²

Instead of being the servant to the products, he creates, he becomes their master, and freedom lies in becoming the master of one's own existence. "A being does not regard himself independent unless he is his own master, and he is only his own master where he owns his existence to himself."³

Marx's understanding of freedom in the communist society is a radical one: it constitutes in the sense of independence, which is based on man's standing on his own feet, using his own

1. H. Marcuse, op.cit., p. 294-95.

2. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology (Pascal's Trans) p. 66.

3. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 138.

powers, his capacities and relating himself to the world productively. The limitation and dependence than, in class society, were created by division of labour, are now cast aside to give way to the development of an all round individual.

In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity, but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner just as I have in mind without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.¹

Man ceases to be divided against himself, in slavery to some one specialized mode of activity. His five senses are nourished, the free play of his faculties are encouraged to the

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1. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 22. It is impossible however to imagine any factory regime, no matter how freely cooperative it might be without some degree of specialization. As Tucker points out, the complete individuals could hardly be figured as wandering loosely from one machine to another, from one workshop to another. Engels also points this out where he says "wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom is to return to the spinning wheel." ('On Authority' in Selected Works I pp. 636-37). Marx presents an interesting solution to this dilemma by suggesting that the future organization of labour in the factory, and the exercise of authority needed in it will be artistic in essence. The cooperative 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

appreciation of artistic and scientific creations. Unless one is in complete control of himself, in identity with his being, the most beautiful sight will be a more visual perception, the most exquisite music will be mere sound.

Robert Tucker describes Marx's conception of ultimate communism as being primarily "aesthetic in character." Man's relation to nature, to himself is seen as a free aesthetic appreciation of a world he has created and in which he finds himself expressed. The acquisitive alienated man of history is replaced by "the post historical aesthetic man." His relation to his nature - his creation - is one of an artist. Man realizes his ability and tendency to arrange things according to the laws of beauty. The planet itself becomes the new man's work of art. The alienated world will recede to be substituted by an aesthetic one.¹ This is perhaps the significance of Marx's distinction of human creativity from that of certain creative animals like bees. The consciousness on the side of the agent, which characterizes human creation - something we have mentioned in our opening

the "same way as does that of a director of an orchestra." (Capital Vol. III, p. 451. Cited by Tucker, op.cit., p. 199). Instead of the servitude of previous division of labour, the factory will be based on a free conscious discipline on the part of the workers expressing themselves as performers in an orchestra.

1. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 158.

chapter - could be further described as "an aesthetically characterized consciousness." In the same way as the artist can come to realize himself in what he is capable of by producing works of art which he can see himself, so the man of communism can confirm his capabilities in an active creation which is by nature social.

Freed from the alienated labour in whose service he had toiled, the individual does not subside into indolence, setting the dimensions of his being into dormancy. This is not freedom. On the contrary, work becomes not a means of life, but life's prime want for the increased development of an all-round individual.¹

In being the master and creator of his own life, the individual, as Fromm puts it "could begin to make living his main business rather than producing the means for living."² Man, for the first time in history, consciously treats "all natural premises as the creatures of men;" his struggle with nature will be a plan formulated by "freely combined individuals." The true history of mankind will be in the strict sense the history of free individuals, whose intellectual and physical faculties

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1. K. Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' in Selected Works I, p. 24.
 2. E. Fromm, op.cit., p. 60.

are fulfilled in the wealth of their human resources, so that the "interest of the whole will be woven into the individual existence of each." Man is free only if "all individuals are free and exist as universal beings."¹

Quite clearly then, communism is the liberation of man by the liberation of the individual. The abolition of private property inaugurates essentially a social system in which free individuals become masters of their own destiny. Communism is an association of free individuals where the universal satisfaction of their potentialities is what constitutes the principle of social existence. Man sees in nature his work, his reality, he recognizes himself in a world he has made. He overcomes alienation from his work, his fellow men, himself, nature. He fulfills the prophetic aim - the destruction of idols. Communism, in the words of Paul Tillich is "a resistance movement against the destruction of love in social reality."² It is the individual's expression of his existence in order and art.

A letter from a friend answering the question as to why he had adopted the communist ideology, reads³

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1. H. Marcuse, op.cit., pp. 275, 283, 289.
 2. Cited by Fromm, op.cit., p. 59.
 3. I translate from french.

.... We work for it (the ideology) because it is natural to prefer order to disorder, harmony to chaos, the rational to the absurd. We work for it because we know that man has at his disposition the means to transform his destiny... A man has values in our eyes when he works and lives in joy, when he is always young, robust, intelligent, eager to learn, courageous, enthusiastic, willing to divulge the richness that is hidden in himself and in nature. Unfortunately, this total revelation of the human person has been but a pompous thought in the historical situation where fortune has so far thrown us. But fortune is not invincible...

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Recapitulation.

There is in Communism a mystical view of work. 'Mystical' because of the boundless faith that Marx has in it. But this mysticism is not in apprehension of comfort or abundance of material goods. It is rather a mysticism of conquering nature, of humanising it. Marx makes of work, not an obligation but an essential human need. His humanism is a humanism of action; an action directed towards the resolution of natural and human problems, destined to enlighten humanity. The individual who, in class society, is allegedly subdued to fetishistic forces is called upon to break loose from his bondage, to actualize his freedom.

There is a fundamental notion in Marx's the individual is alienated and with him the generic human species. He ought to be de-alienated. A western scholar says of Marx "for him [Marx] the individual is the goal. The individualistic trend is fundamental as an interest of the Marxian theory."¹

1. H. Marcuse, op.cit., p. 283.

Prometheus whom Marx hailed as "the chief saint and martyr of the philosophic calendar" has fallen victim to his own folly. To the forces of his own creations, he has been enchained. He is five times enchained - to political economy, to the struggle of classes, to the political city, to his philosophic conceptions and to his artificial religious paradise.

The individual is a prisoner of his own delirium. He has forgotten to live his proper life to see in history his self realized. Instead he has surrendered impotently to his delusions. He has given up his freedom and his dignity, to replace them with a sterile worship of inhuman idols.

By a dialogue between brain and hand, by a union of speculation and practice, man according to Marx, will discover his proper humanity in transforming himself and the world. Work presents the perfect means to remedy the dissociation between man and man, between man and his nature. By humanising nature, the worker becomes more human. Thus is the imminent dignity of work for Marx. It is not enough to have contemplative reasoning. Reason must be effectively transformative of the world. One aim of Marx was to negate

all purely theoretical thinking, all speculation detached from practical activity; to define work as the fundament of life. He refused to consider thought in isolation from practice. He recognized man only in his interaction, in his work in history. Work is the key to the creation of the 'new man.' This vision of a 'new man' penetrates the very fiber of Marx's thought; a new man of the future, always fresh and young, loving and willing, who is to replace the fatigued and degenerate man of the past.

The one big step that is going to inaugurate this new phase of history - proper history - is the Revolution, which has as its immediate aim the destruction of all fetishism, the rescue of man from all its levels at once. The Revolution is to introduce man to a world stripped of its religious taint, of the idealism of philosophy, of the political state, of social classes as well as the magic and power of money,

In that world will be the condition for freedom. Communism is not itself the goal of human development. It is the condition for the fulfillment of man's life.¹ The

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 140.

free being, for Marx, is one who creates himself and the world and realizes them as such; and man for Marx is essentially a free being. Man is the demiurgus of man. Man creates himself, and the means by which he does that is labour.

The whole of what is so called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labour.¹

It is here that one notices the absolute atheism of Marx. To have said that "religion is the opium of people," is but a sociological criticism; but to see man's destiny as completely restricted within interaction with nature and fellow men; to see in creative work the source of freedom, is undoubtedly a bold affirmation of the ultimate independence of man from all deity.

Marx's view of history is a tragic one. Catastrophies are prerequisites for progress. But it is also an optimistic one where all these catastrophies, all negations, end up in total affirmation. Like Spinozism, Marxism dwells fundamentally in what might be called an affirmation climate. In the

1. Ibid., p. 139.

words of Lacroix, "like the wise Spinozist who conquers his positive essence by a gradual elevation from primary knowledge to an intellectual love of God, so humanity for Marx, is transformed gradually, through dialectics and the class struggle towards the attainment of an integral peace."¹ This is meaning of history for Marx - humanity in search of itself. As Tucker puts it, history for Marx "is the act of becoming" of man, and communism "is the state of veritable being."² Because his social being is what determines his consciousness, the human individual remains alienated so long as the antinomies of society remain. The misery of his consciousness is nothing but a reflection of a society torn apart, of a struggle of classes. Slowly and diligently he conquers his proper objective. The individual is not fully himself until he has lived in community with other men. He passes from alienated consciousness to full consciousness. He reconciles himself with humanity, and humanity with itself.

1. J. Lacroix, op.cit., pp. 22-23.

2. R. Tucker, op.cit., p. 151.

Evaluation

My concern at this phase of my essay is to attempt an evaluation of Marx's thought, as it appeared in my exposition. While I hope to have interpreted Marx correctly, my interest here is in the soundness and forcefulness of my concluding remarks. While criticising I shall refrain from indulging into a consideration of minor details, and instead confine my analysis to some of the main aspects of Marx's thought.

To start with, I should point out that I have very little doubt that Marx's primary concern is the individual. The individual for him, is the basic unit of a 'real' society, and it is his freedom which constitutes the fundamental goal of Marx's thinking. However, in identifying the individual with the generic human species, Marx, I think, has an imprecision; a difficulty rather, which, though he seems to be aware of it, he does not solve. The problem is this. Marx tries to reach a perfect reciprocity between the individual and the species without a desire to engender a threat to the individual of whom, he says, the species is the integral

manifestation. But there subsists, in spite of all, a threat to the individual in Marx's analysis. The important problem of death seems to be a triumph of the species over the individual. The individual certainly dies, the species may not. Marx is aware of this and in his optimism, he consecrated only one phrase to it, "Death seems to be a harsh victory of the species over the individual and to contradict their unity: but the particular individual is only a determinate species - being and as such is mortal."¹ This does not seem to me a solution of the problem but an admission that it is there. One could conceive of the "determinate species being" as being coincident with the species. But this can only be so in an ideal manner. The identification which Marx sees between the two seems possible only in thought. Practice, on the other hand, contradicts this harmony at least in our respect: death. And upon Marx's premise, a theory cannot be true if it fails in practice.

This is not all. Describing the individual as "only a determinate species being," implies that he is nothing but

1. K. Marx, Manuscripts, p. 131.

what he has of his species character, and that the particular differences which distinguish one individual from another do not really participate as essential parts of his individuality. Marx's statement certainly gives room to such an inference, and an uncompromising critic would promptly describe it as an explicit indication of an anti-individualistic trend in Marx. I personally do not think so. Marx was not, generally, very careful about his usage of language, and this might be one of the instances when he was most negligent. Hence it should be viewed with care. Besides, the evidence contrary to such an interpretation of the passage seems to outweigh this one passage: Marx's condemnation of 'crude communism' for its egalitarian character; his fury against division of labour for creating standardized individuals, regardless of their actual potentialities, his stubborn insistence on a society which fulfills the needs of each individual, as the only 'real' society; and many others. Furthermore, the above interpretation of the passage implies that the individual merely exhibits, and does not contribute to the species character of man. This, I think, is not true of Marx. It is certainly false of Marx's view of pre-communist existence where, we

have seen the individual, torn apart amidst the antagonisms of classes, is far from manifesting his species character. However, by his active participation in the historical process, he gradually creates himself, thereby contributing to the formation and actualization of his human character. This of course does not provide a definite settlement of the issue. The point undoubtedly persists as an inconsistency in Marx's discussion of the individual, whatever the reason for its being there may be.

My next remark concerns Marx's view of alienation. The greatest merit in his analysis of alienation is that he saw it as primarily a social rather than a metaphysical or a religious phenomenon. Today, the concept of alienation is mainly dealt with in the fields of sociology and psychology, and it occupies a central part of their concern. One need only read a list of current literature in the fields of sociology and psycho-analysis¹ in the United States, to see the paranoic obsession that the intellectuals of the country

1. To name a few of the better known works: Reisman's The Lonely Crowd; Whyte's The Organization Man; Drucker's The Concept of Corporation; Fromm's, The Sane Society; Packard's, The Hidden Persuaders.

seem to have with this problem. Even when philosophers and theologians deal with it, they cannot afford to overlook what goes on in these respective fields. Marx, is perhaps the most significant precursor of the problem as it appears within its contemporary context. Though his diagnosis of the exact cause of alienation may be questionable, to the perception of the problem as primarily a social one, seems to be the favourable trend today. According to Robert Tucker, who bases his belief on the work of a well-known psychiatrist,¹ Marx's description of alienation is clinically correct. The alienated man of Marx is one who is "devoid of spontaneity," of a "sense of self-determination in life," of the "joy of living;" who has "grown depersonalized"; whose activities and energies, "have become strange to him": who feels subject to an "alien power that dominates him" and finally who is "aware of his condition and resents it"; he tries to revolt against it, to change it.

This description is well in conformity with the description given by psychiatrists of the symptoms of alienation in

1. K. Horney, in Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self Realization, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1950).

highly neurotic persons. Dr. Horney writes of the alienated man as someone who is "removed from himself," who feels "he is driven instead of being the driver," who "has the feeling of not being a moving force in his own life."¹

But when Marx talked of alienation, as he himself admits, he did not think he was discussing a phenomenon of psychology. He started with the concept as a philosophical one, deriving it from Hegel, and then saw it as an economic fact. "We began", he says, "with an economic fact, the alienation of the worker and his production. We have expressed this fact in conceptual terms as alienated labour, and in analyzing the concept we have mere analyzed an economic fact."²

I do not think we talk or even conceive of alienation in the same way as we talk or conceive of a rise in the 'demand curve' for tooth brushes, for example, or a fall in the cost of living of a certain country. These economic facts can be statistically studied and determined, and

1. R. Tucker, op.cit., pp. 144-145.

2. K. Marx, Manuscripts, pp. 103-104.

reliable generalizations and predictions can be made about them. Alienation, I should think, is a phenomenon of individual maladjustment, that involve to a large degree a subjective outlook on the part of people towards things. To describe it, as Marx does, as characteristic of all individuals in all forms of class society, is something, one should admit that is, far from being scientific description. Yet to claim at the same time that it is an economic fact, i.e., something that can be scientifically studied is, it seems to me, to hold two positions that are not simultaneously tenable.

I will try to expand my point further. Though I am inclined to think that alienation is a social phenomenon; I do not think it is an economic fact. The two, of course, are not identical (not even for Marx). A social phenomenon may involve many other factors besides prevailing economic conditions. Besides, while an economic fact is, regardless of how people feel about conditions around them, alienation is primarily a question of how people feel about things. It is not a matter of being alienated, it is rather a matter of feeling alienated. Thus I do not think we can talk as Marx does, of all individuals in all forms of class society as being

alienated. Rather we can talk of a particular individual or group of individuals as feeling alienated because of his or their economic status, his or their problems of childhood or his or their social way of life, etc...

Furthermore, as I have tried to show earlier, Marx's condemnation of the state of philosophy or of religion as forms of alienation has no sound empirical basis. When he talked of political alienation what he had in mind was the German state of the period, whence he generalized to all political states, without going into the trouble of investigating whether this was in fact the case. It was not until 1884, forty years later, that his collaborator Engels undertook the responsibility of trying to show, in The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State, that what Marx had said is actually anthropologically correct. Whether he succeeded or not is a question of anthropology.

The same remark holds mutatis mutandis of the other forms of alienation. When Marx described philosophical alienation what he primarily had in mind was Hegel's philosophy. The religion he was primarily concerned with was Christianity. The society he so violently rejected was no

other than the one immediately around him, and the 'political economy' he analyzed was no other than that of nineteenth century Europe. I do not intend, even if I could, to discredit Marx by portraying his philosophy as being provincial. After all, who amongst the historical thinkers was not conditioned by his immediate surroundings. What I wish to convey however, is that Marx's theory of alienation which provides the key to his condescending views of human history so far, involves a tremendously dangerous generalization which should invoke a second thought before taken at its face value.

One more thing before I leave this section. The existence of classes for Marx is simultaneously an expression as well as a determinant factor of the individual's alienation in society. The dualization of the personality of the alienated individual finds a corresponding division of society into two opposite struggling classes. One thing I find doubtful in this picture is the neat division that Marx has made of society, into a ruling and ruled class, into bourgeoisie as opposed to proletariat. There are few societies, if any, in which one can depict such a clearest distinction; societies have always consisted, I should think, of more than two classes. If what I say is correct, then the parallel that

Marx sees between the dualization of the personality of the alienated man, and the dual separation of society breaks down. If societies have consisted of more than two classes, and if the division of society finds a corresponding division in the personality of the alienated individual, then Marx's description of the alienated man as having a dual personality will be, on Marx's own grounds, false.

This brings me to something I have to say about Marx's view of the proletariat as the agent of the Revolution. Marx's hopes for a world act that could do away with all alienation is centered around the existence of an agent that possessed the right attributes that would ensure the right act. In other words, that this agent actualizes the ambition of communist existence, it must, as was indicated, possess a universal character. Yet at the same time, that the Revolution be something actual and not a mere wish, the agent, Marx thought, must consist of empirically real individuals who exist at a certain time and place, and who appear at a certain stage of the historical process. There seems to be a paradox in this picture. Marx's demand is for individuals that are particular and empirical, but at the same time that

claim a universality and aspire to perform a universal mission. Unless these individuals existed, Marx would have no justification to his idea that history at a point in its development actually reveals an opportunity for alienation to be definitely and universally suppressed. The question is this, do we really have or have we ever had a group of individuals - the proletariat in the capitalist system - that conform to Marx's description of it? Does there exist, or will there ever exist, a group of men who are actually economically exploited and do possess the characteristic of 'universal negativity'? (See Chapter III, p.124). It seems to me that the only actual universal negation that one can think of is death. Marx could describe the proletariat as 'dying to save humanity,' - he actually does that. But this is only an analogical description. If death actually reaches the proletariat, then obviously, to think of the Revolution would be absurd. But this seems to be what Marx is actually asking for: his a priori definition of the proletariat as 'universally negative' (something I have said before) cannot possibly find an actual correspondence in the empirical world without the idea of the Revolution becoming an absurdity. Either the

proletarians are universally negative beings, i.e., dead and therefore cannot perform any function, or empirically existent beings i.e., not universally negative, and therefore cannot perform the function that Marx ascribes to them.

It is interesting to note, however, that some contemporary writers like José Ortega Y Gasset, who, though a liberal in ideological outlook, nevertheless describes contemporary man in general as 'the mass man' meaning by it that he is totally disinherited rootless, feels no sense of identity with his culture or civilization.¹ This, I think, is an interesting parallel to Marx's description of the proletariat. Coming from a liberal intellectual who has lived in the twentieth century, it invites a second thought before one decides to reject Marx's position.

After one has read Marx, especially his theory of praxis, he feels a kind of self-deception when he tries to present Marx's ideas in isolation from how they have actually been practised in the world. Something I have done in this essay. It is academically interesting and fruitful to study

1. J. Ortega Y. Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses.

the original ideas of Marx. But to judge or evaluate original Marxism, in terms of internal consistency, in terms of philosophical merit without resort to see how these ideas have actually come to be lived by, involves, upon Marx's own premise, a betrayal of Marx. The test for the truth or falsity of Marx's doctrines resides in whether these were actually applied or were capable of being successfully applied in the world or not. To judge at this stage of our history, whether Marxism as a whole, especially with regard to its goal - has been shown false is of course to make a hasty and unfair indictment. This is still to be seen. However, there are those aspects of original Marxism that have not been applied or that have not worked out in application. Within Marxian context, they can only be understood as either practically meaningless or false. In the case where a doctrine has not been applied at all, it remained in the realm of theory, and to that extent it is practically meaningless. In the case of those that have been applied but failed to work out, one could only describe as false. That there was no spontaneous revolt of the masses proves that there was something wrong with Marx's understanding of

the masses; that the Revolution was not universal shows an imprecision in his conception of the Revolution; that the capitalist system has not yet broken down reveals a fallacy in his analysis of political economy. These amongst many other failures of Marx's ideas, invited later Marxian theoreticians, as it is well known, to a reconsideration of the original doctrine.

Anybody with some knowledge of the doctrines of Marxism - Leninism - Stalinism, would have noticed the tremendous degree of revisionism to which the ideas of the master had been subjected. To mention but a few; Marx's basic respect for the individual is completely lost in the later version of communism where the individual has become a means to other ambitions; the state, something condemned by Marx, has acquired for living communism, an omnipotent and sanctified character; their views of morality differ, as I have already referred to; one emphasizes, as its goal, humanity in possession of itself, the other, so far, stresses abundance of material goods, etc...

A close look, however, into Marx's basic principles would reveal that the tendency towards revisionism stems from

the very heart of Marx's philosophy. The principle of praxis necessitates revisionism whenever some idea appears obsolete or ceases to be capable of successful application, within a new situation. This is not to imply, I hope, that whatever revisions made to original Marxism, had to be made because circumstance required them. This is far from being the truth. What I wish to stress, however, is that to revise the original ideas of Marx is not, as has been thought by some, a heresy. Revisionism finds support within Marx's thought itself. We may feel like blaming those who introduced changes we do not approve of. But the justification we can give can be on moral or human grounds, not on grounds of intellectual dishonesty or opportunism. Within his principles, Marx has provided room for his own ideas to be perverted. Though his stand is far from dogmatism, yet it provides no check to being altered into a rigidly dogmatic system.

My final remarks are about Communism.

Marx's views of communism follows, I believe, from his conception of human nature. He saw man as a social being who can actualize his individuality only in society, in

community with fellow men, with his species. He also saw man as primarily self-creative who finds in labour the means of humanising nature, satisfying his human needs and actualizing his potentiality as a generic human being. He further saw man in class society failing to fulfill these aspects of his being, feeling strange in it when he should be at one with society. Labour becomes for him something compulsive while in fact it is what develops his being. We have seen why this is so, and that communism represents for Marx, the union of man with himself, as he ought to be.

An obvious objection to this position is this: If one rejected Marx's view of human nature, the appeal and promises that Marx sees in communism would fail to impress him. If communism appeared to Marx as ultimate salvation, it was because he saw in it the condition for satisfying what in his view are human potentialities, and human freedom. In other words, he did not conceive of the fully actualized human nature in terms of certain non-actual social relations which he hoped to bring about but rather the inverse. He defined the prospective social relations in terms of what he had conceived of human nature to be. Hence, unless one agreed

to Marx's view of human nature, he would not see in communism anything more than a fantastic creation. But, one may object, why should we reject Marx's view of human nature? On what grounds can we do that? On the same grounds perhaps that Marx himself justifies his theory: on a priori grounds. There are several senses of the term 'a priori'. I am using it here to mean 'non-empirical.' Like many philosophical investigations into human nature, Marx's view was arrived at a priori. Whether labour is essential to human nature, whether freedom is part of its essence, whether it is necessarily communal, are I think, questions which Marx did not arrive at empirically. They were at Marx's time metaphysical questions which could not be verified empirically, but neither could they be thus falsified. I am not here concerned with championing the empirical method in philosophical investigations. All I am saying is that Marx's view of communism as the ultimate reconciliation of man's conflicts, could be accepted or rejected depending on whether one accepts or rejects his basic conception of human nature and which, in my opinion, Marx did not reach empirically.

There is one more difficulty that seems to arise in Marx's conception of communism. Personally I find it very

difficult and very strangely ambitious to imagine a human situation where all man's conflicts are resolved, where society is under his perfect control, where man in his struggle with nature, always finds himself in unity with it and with the objects of his creation; where his full individuality is fulfilled. What exactly is a full fledged individual. To be consistent, Marx cannot describe a full fledged individual except by definition. He has never encountered one, and neither has anybody. So far human beings have always been subjected to some kind of class conflict and have been victims of some degree of alienation. 'Primitive communism' cannot provide an arena for investigation because there, man was lacking part of the richness - cultural, artistic, etc.. - that the new man will possess, having gained them with time.

More difficult still is to imagine a society without conflict. Will car accidents, that may generate feuds among people, be eradicated? Will not the lover who has been turned down by the girl he loves and her family, feel a certain disharmony with a part of society at least? Will the mother who loses her only child because of some disease feel harmony with nature? I do not mean to be pedantic, nor irrelevant. There is no evidence that Marx meant by

"conflict" only class conflict. In fact he thought that with the resolution of class conflicts all human conflicts will be resolved. The questions I have posed refer to some kind of conflicts and are liable to be asked by anybody; but primarily, I should think, by members of that class which embodies Marx's hopes for the future. Engrossed in the more intellectually impressive questions of human essence, alienation, objectification, Marx overlooked the 'simpler' questions of our day to day existence.

What is a social conflict? What is an all round individual? Do we have definite answers to such questions? Do they not involve certain value judgments on the parts of different individuals? I think they do. Terms like 'conflict' 'full individual', do not, I think, have a precise denotation. In contemporary philosophical language, they have a 'marginal indeterminacy.' It is true, perhaps, that all language is subject to 'open texture.' But there is, of course, the question of degree. There isn't as much disagreement about the term 'horse' as there is about 'mature' or 'lazy.' Thus the terms we are considering do not signify a definite particular entity about which there is no dispute or even little dispute. The meaning that

Marx can give to them could only be of an arbitrary nature; by definition, in other words. And to this there need not be universal agreement. This is from one aspect.

From another, to assume that society is perfectly within the control of man, is to assume, it seems, that man will never make mistakes; and to assume that man is in conformity with nature is to assume that all disturbing questions about the universe are explainable. An interesting incident is told by Arthur Koestler in The Yogi and the Commissar. At a communist writers' congress, and after hours of speeches about the 'new world', André Malraux asked the following question: 'What about the man who is run over by a tram-car?' The question was met with a blank stare at first, and then stupidly answered, 'In a perfect socialist transport system there would be no accident.'¹

Stupidly enough, I also thought the question silly until I gave it further consideration. The absurd, it was once said, is that which though could be intelligibly and

1. A. Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar, (London: 1945), p. 126.

rationally explained, would still make no sense. An accident like this could very well be explained as being due to negligence on the part of the tram driver, or negligence on the part of the victim, or as being due to some mechanical failure. But neither of these, nor all of them may be enough as explanations. Why this man in particular? Why at this particular moment when perhaps his wife is giving birth to his first and only child? Why the accident at all? Trivial questions perhaps, but to some people they reveal a certain absurdity about the world, which cannot be wiped away. The catholic may have an answer to this question somewhere in the scheme of creation. The Hindu may have one. But how can Marx explain such a thing happening in a society where man, who is the creator of himself, is in complete harmony with his human situation, with nature and with the world? It is not a satisfactory answer to say that a question like that is intentionally created by bourgeois society and unconsciously adopted by its intellectuals. It is derived from facts that occur daily in front of our eyes, and for someone who is going to abandon religion and philosophy, such a question must be answered first.

We can, perhaps, use Marx's utopianism as an ideal limit toward which to make asymptotic approach. But this is certainly not how Marx thought it was to be conceived.

My elementary remarks are certainly far from constituting a threat to Marx's philosophy. I am sure a better understanding of it than mine will discover in it answers to the questions I have raised. However, as the reader might have noticed, my criticisms of Marx were, in general, impregnated with the idea of showing that his philosophy, despite what he and his followers claim, is not scientific in character. It lacks one very important element of the scientific method, and that is the empirical method of investigation. This in itself though, should not be conceived to undermine it as a philosophy, regardless of what its followers may think. In the tradition of great humanistic philosophies it is based on a fundamental intuition of the human situation, and in the tradition of great religious and social movements it is inspired by a will to change this situation into a better and ideal one. The 'must' that accompanies scientific predictions, and that Marx, in his later works thought will the Revolution, is basically an 'ought'. The Revolution, I believe, was primarily conceived

by Marx as morally and humanly necessary.

The Marxist is not someone who sees in his philosophy an objective and logical explanation of the world. He is one who has seen a basic wrong in the human condition, but who hasn't lost hope in man's fundamental goodness. He sees in his philosophy a will to change it. André Malraux expresses this idea in Man's Fate. One conversation records "Marxism has ceased to live in me. In Kyo's eyes, it was a will... In mine it is fatality..."¹

Marxism is primarily a protest, I think, based on faith; faith in the future, in man - his potentialities, his possible achievements, his capacity to act and to love. When Marx ruthlessly denounced the capitalist it was to replace him with humanity as a whole; when he wrecklessly destroyed what he thought was a decadent world, it was to build an everlastingly new one. In the fury of his criticism, in the passion of his attacks, in the height

1. A. Malraux, Man's Fate, (New York: 1934), p. 355. The speaker is Gisor, a retired sociology professor and opium addict, Kyo, the hero of the novel - a communist activist - is his son.

of his hate for the Bourgeoisie, one of his phrases as Camus says "forever denies his triumphant disciples the greatness and the humanity which once were his: "An end which requires unjust means is not a just end."¹

1. A. Camus, op,cit., p. 177.

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