Chapter Two

The Epistemological Break
A Study in the Possibility of Foucault
I. Introduction: Western Thought from Dichotomy to Tripartition

While there can be hardly any doubt about the dominant dichotomous nature of Western thought, where philosophy divides its allegiance between mind or matter, what I intend to show in this chapter is that right from within this dominantly binary structure there rises the possibility of a tripartition of modes of thought, with an inclusion of the body in the bipartite polemic. What is even more interesting is that this tendency towards tripartition does not merely take place in the temporal interstices between Realism-Nominalism, Rationalism-Empiricism, and Idealism-Materialism—i.e., in Medieval Scholastic Logic and Romanticism—but also from within the high binary Western thought. The purpose of this chapter is thus to study some of the canonical authors of post-Renaissance European philosophy, to see how their avowed perusal of either mind or matter gives way, within their apparently insulated 'schools' themselves, to attempts to bridge the gap between the two, and in the process leads on to the tripartite structure of materiality-mentality-physicality as the basis for knowledge.

To do this, I take up first two groups of philosophers, representing the two camps of mind and matter. On the side of 'mind', I analyse important texts and postulations of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer, to show how the total dominance of mind and reason in this school (Rationalism and Idealism put together) gives way to considerations of attempting to combine mind with matter. On the other hand, to deal with the thinkers of 'matter', I take up texts by Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and the Utilitarians, to show how their apparently total reliance on sensation and material reality looks forward to a possible blending with means of pure thought. Since within the diametrically opposite poles of binary Western thought itself, one can spot attempts to transcend the dichotomy, it can be expected that post-Renaissance Western philosophy leaves room for inclusion of the third category of 'body' within its precincts. This is what I probe next through an analysis of works of Spinoza, Rousseau, Comte and the philosophers of the Revolution. Western thought of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thus show, from within the embers of binary thought, a motion towards tripartition. What is even more interesting is that these three bodies of thought show a progressive concern for power and politics, thereby relating their tripartition to what I have identified in the preceding chapter as 'tri-hierarchization'. I carry forward this two-point finding—that of tripartition and consequent dabbling with hierarchies—further, through an analysis of Nietzsche, Feuerbach, and Marx's critique of Feuerbach. Finally, after studying the rise of possible tripartition of modes of thought and its association with systems of power, I turn, at the end of the chapter, to three authors of the late nineteenth century in whom this 'tri-hierarchist' thought takes its preliminary form—Marx (materiality), Darwin (physicality), and Freud (mentality). It is in them that I identify the 'epistemological break' that makes the principle of 'tri-hierarchization' in Foucault and beyond possible in our century.
II. Reason and Beyond: The Mind in post-Renaissance Western Philosophy

a. Descartes and Leibniz: Reason and its Problematics

René Descartes (1596-1650) shows a very interesting duality in the two types of subjects that he engages in. When he talks about the physical sciences, he acts much like a ‘materialist’ Renaissance scientist, so much, so that in his *Le Monde*, only fragments of which were published posthumously, he put forth ‘heretical’ notions like that the earth rotates and that the universe is infinite. It is in the same spirit that he talks about co-ordinate geometry in *Principia Philosophiae* (1644), and about optics in *Essais philosopphiques* (1637). When he talks about the human being, however, his deployment of Reason acts very much in a mystical direction, where he identifies the self as essentially non-corporeal. This strain stems from his scientific work on the human body itself, where he locates the ‘soul’ in the human pineal gland, which is superior to the rest of the body, as it can alter the direction of motion of vital spirits and bodily organs. The two important books of Descartes that talk about this side of his thought are *Discourse on Method* (1637) and *Meditations* (1642). The reliance on ‘soul’ in Cartesian metaphysics makes the difference between animals and human beings rest on the fact that humans do not depend on sensory perception alone, but use their ‘reason’ to ‘doubt’ the illusory perceptions that the senses present. The illusion that senses and material reality are makes rational thinking the only positivity in the world, and through his most famous expression, ‘*Cogito, ergo sum*’, Descartes sums up the ‘first principle’ of his philosophy:

> Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us, I was willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us... But immediately upon this I observed that, while I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, *I think, hence I am*, was so certain and of such evidence, that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search.¹

Thus, Descartes shows how human existence rests on the *cogito*, or subjective thought, alone, so that he claims that first, the self has no material basis, and secondly that the mind is thoroughly distinct from the body, with the self existing even without the body. He says,

> I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that “I”, that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is.²

It is with Descartes, therefore, that the notion of the ‘non-material’ self takes birth, and the premium that he puts on thinking roots a branch of Western knowledge in ‘mentality’ alone.


Born a generation after Descartes, Leibniz (1647-1716) takes the case of the soul and reason even further, but four very important modifications can be noticed in his work. The first two of these modifications, which involve the notion of multiplicity of souls and substances, and the concept of ‘free will’ are found in the texts which Leibniz published in his lifetime, like Monadology, Principles of Nature and of Grace, and Théodicée (1710). In these texts he shows that there are infinite number of substances, the ‘monads’, each monad being a ‘soul’, thus there being no reality to matter but only to this infinite family of souls. Secondly, he shows that monads do not have causal relation between them, they being ‘windowless’, with there only being a ‘pre-established harmony’ between changes in one monad and those in another. Finally, as Leibniz shows, everything happens through a ‘principle of sufficient reason’, thereby providing for the ‘free will’, through which and through whose action on the monads, the world is created and sustained. The other two modifications in Leibniz, those of the introduction of the notion of ‘war’ and the refutal of God as the supreme agency, are found in his posthumously published manuscripts, where he talks of the establishment of a generalized mathematics, or ‘Characteristica Universalis’, through which thinking can be replaced by mathematics. In this context, Leibniz shows that certain things exist and certain others do not, while they may be equally possible, because there is a ‘war in the Limbo’ between all essences seeking to exist, and many do not succeed because they may not be ‘compossible’, or possible simultaneously. For Leibniz, existence of things is thus determined by this rule of ‘compossibility’, which is an element of pure logic, and not by God. Therefore, though Leibniz sticks to the Cartesian categories of soul and reason, and for him disembodied thinking alone has reality, one notices how the categories of multiplicity, will, war, and the absence of God, categories of prime importance in the Foucauldian sort of thought, already raise their heads within Rationalism/Idealism.

The Rationalist thought of the Renaissance and thereabouts finds its next thorough fruition in Germany during the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Born a generation after Leibniz, and therefore separated by more than a century with Descartes, Kant formulates a new principle of ideationally conceiving the world, without necessarily regressing to the pure Cartesian Reason that precludes all experience. This soon takes the form of a massive movement, and by the mid-nineteenth century, this form of ‘Transcendental Idealism’ takes a hallowed form under the stewardship of the likes of Hegel and Schopenhauer. What is to be noted, however, is how quite opposed to a further strengthening of the insulated independence of ideas as above all material reality, that Descartes had initially suggested, the ‘school’ takes instead Leibniz’s line even further, trying to bridge the gap between perception and ideation and also introduce notions of power, politics and history into philosophy. It is with this view that I now proceed to analyse the main works of the three German Idealists mentioned above.
b. Kant and the Critique of Theoretical Reason

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), described by Bertrand Russell as 'the founder of German idealism', is important for having critiqued the Cartesian-Leibnizian category of theoretical reason, and replaced it with the category of 'synthetic a priori' as the basis for philosophy. While his early works are either scientific, as in Natural History and the Theory of the Heavens (1755), where he anticipates Laplace's nebular hypothesis, or mystical, like Dreams of a Ghost-seer, Illustrated by the Dreams of Metaphysics (1766) on Swedenborg, it is in Critique of Pure Reason (1781), that he finally lays out his theory, and I analyse this text to show what new turns post-Renaissance Western thought takes in the domain of mentality.

Kant begins his Critique by admitting, quite unlike Descartes or Leibniz, that all knowledge begins with experience, but he proceeds further to show that this in itself does not rule out the existence of a priori knowledge, or what is innate to the faculty of cognition:

...though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For...it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself... Knowledge of this kind is called a priori, in contradistinction to empirical knowledge, which has its sources a posteriori, that is, in experience.

Thus, Kant's problem is to see how empirical experiences and the a priori interact to form knowledge. To do this, in addition to the two types of propositions—the 'pure', or the a priori, and the 'empirical'—he classifies them into two more groups, the 'analytic' and the 'synthetic'. An 'empirical' proposition arises only out of perception, while a 'pure' proposition is exemplified by an a priori law. Kant says, 'Necessity and strict universality, therefore, are infallible tests for distinguishing pure from empirical knowledge.' Similarly, an 'analytic' proposition is one in which the predicate is part of the subject, for example, 'A naughty boy is a boy', while in a 'synthetic' proposition, the predicate can only be known through experience of the subject, for example, 'Tom is a naughty boy'. Kant says,

In all judgments wherein the relation of a subject to the predicate is cogitated (I mention affirmative judgments only here; the application to negative will be very easy), this relation is possible in two different ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as somewhat which is contained (though covertly) in the conception A; or the predicate B lies completely out of the conception A, although it stands in connection with it. In the first instance, I term the judgment analytical, in the second, synthetical. Analytical judgments (affirmative) are therefore those in which the connection of the predicate with the subject is cogitated through identity; those in which this connection is cogitated without identity are called synthetical judgments.

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5 Ibid., 425.
6 Ibid., 430.
Since the purpose of Kant is to see how experience and ‘pure’ knowledge are related, the text revolves around how synthetic propositions can also be \textit{a priori}, because ‘true’ knowledge can only be gained when experiential synthetic knowledge gains \textit{a priori} status. Talking about this bridging of the sensation-ideation gap, Kant says, ‘The proper problem of pure reason, then, is contained in the question, “How are synthetical judgments \textit{a priori} possible?”’

It should not however be assumed from Kant’s critique of Cartesian pure reason on grounds of its ignoring the role of experience, that he forms an empirical basis for knowledge. On the contrary, in spite of admitting the role of sensation in cognition, Kant shows that knowledge of things is had only as forms of ‘Anschauung’, or subjective ‘intuition’, where the mental apparatus orders objects of sensation in space and time in terms of twelve \textit{a priori} concepts or ‘categories’. These twelve ‘categories’ are classified in four sets of three: of quantity (unity, plurality, totality); of quality (reality, negation, limitation); of relation (substance-and-accident, causation, reciprocity); and of modality (possibility, existence, necessity). Kant introduces two very important terms—\textit{’noumenon’} and the \textit{’phenomenon’}—and shows that while sensations have as causes \textit{’noumena’}, or ‘things-in-themselves’, what appears to perception is a \textit{’phenomenon’}, which has two parts: that due to the object, or ‘sensation’, and that due to the subjective apparatus, or the \textit{a priori} ‘form’ of the phenomenon. Kant also shows how the application of the ‘categories’ to things that are not experienced, like God, Freedom, and Immortality, gives rise to ‘antinomies’, where mutually contradictory propositions can be simultaneously proved. Though such antinomies are formed through ‘pure reason’, their proof needs a ‘practical reason’, and this is why Kant writes later \textit{The Critique of Practical Reason} (1786). Finally, it should be noted how Kant stresses that his philosophy is not doctrinal but critical, comprising a ‘Transcendental Philosophy’:

Such a science must not be called a Doctrine, but only a Critique of pure Reason; and its use, in regard to speculation, would be only negative, not to enlarge the bounds of, but to purify our reason, and to shield it against error—which alone is no little gain. I apply the term \textit{transcendental} to all knowledge which is not so much occupied with objects as with the mode of our cognition of these objects, so far as this mode of cognition is possible \textit{a priori}. A system of such conceptions would be called \textit{Transcendental Philosophy}.

The notion of ‘freedom’ that emerges from within the Transcendental Philosophy leads one to Kantian ethics, which is outlined in his \textit{Metaphysic of Morals} (1785). He says that the essence of human morality can be derived not just from laws but from the ‘Will’. This will is propelled by what Kant calls the ‘imperative’, which can be of two types: the ‘hypothetical’ imperative, which has an end in mind, and the ‘categorical’ imperative, which is synthetic and \textit{a priori}, and makes an action objectively necessary without any end.
necessarily in view. Carrying this notion of the Will and its powers and compulsions further, Kant takes his ethics directly into the political domain in a later work *Perpetual Peace* (1795), where he talks of a federation of free States, with a mutual covenant forbidding war between them, because war is condemned by Reason. Thus, it can be noted how Kant brings major changes into the Cartesian-Leibnizian idealism by introducing into it notions of 'experience' as well as that of actual politics, leading therefore to the concept of history in philosophy.

While this inclusion of the empirical, the political, and the historical into Western Rationalist/Idealist thought makes Kant constitute a shift towards the type of thought Foucault represents, it becomes even clearer when Foucault himself talks about the same in a 1983 lecture. Here Foucault, who proclaimed himself, in his *Discipline and Punish* (1975), to be a writer of the 'history of the present' (see p. 363, below), finds an important precursor in Kant. Foucault shows, through an analysis of Kant's *What is Enlightenment (Was ist Aufklärung)*, how Kant, in discussing the phenomenon of Enlightenment that was contemporary to him, constructs a history of the present, with questions about the 'now' and 'here':

We find in Kant texts that pose a question of origin to history... It seems to me that the text on the *Aufklärung* is a rather different one... The question that seems to me to appear for the first time in this text by Kant is the question of the present, the question of what is happening now: What is happening today?... And what is this "now" within which all of us find ourselves; and who defines the moment at which I am writing?9

Foucault carries on his qualification of Kant further by showing how he was not just the founder of German Idealism, but also of the very opposite school of critical thought, which culminates, through Hegel, Nietzsche, and Weber, into the Frankfurt School and finally into the general framework within which Foucault himself works. He says,

Kant seems to me to have founded the two great critical traditions between which modern philosophy is divided. [One is the critical Idealist tradition, which talks of the analytics of Truth]... But there is also in modern and contemporary philosophy another type of question, another kind of critical interrogation: it is the one we see emerging precisely in the question of the *Aufklärung*... That other critical tradition poses the question: What is our present? What is the present field of possible experiences? This is not an analytics of truth; it will concern what might be called an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves, and it seems to me that the philosophical choice confronting us today is this: one may opt for a critical philosophy that will present itself as an analytic philosophy of truth in general, or one may opt for a critical thought that will take the form of philosophy that, from Hegel, through Nietzsche and Max Weber, to the Frankfurt School, has founded a form of reflection in which I have tried to work.10

It is with this conviction that, however paradoxical it might seem, the very founder of German Idealism is at the root of Foucauldian ‘tri-hierarchist’ thought, that I move on to Hegel next.

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c. Hegel: The Dialectic, the State, and History

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) symbolizes a major movement within Idealism towards 'tri-hierarchist' thought, through his notions of the dialectic and an extremely political conception of the State and history. Before I discuss the fundamental precept of dialectics, it might be necessary to see why Hegel feels obliged to supplement Aristotelian logic with this new category. In *Science of Logic* (1812-16), he says,

> If Logic has undergone no change since Aristotle—and in fact when one looks at modern compendiums of Logic the changes consist to a large extent merely in omissions—what is rather to be inferred from this is, that Logic is all the more in need of a thorough overhaul; for when the Spirit has worked on for two thousand years, it must have reached a better reflective consciousness of its own thought and its own unadulterated essence.\(^\text{11}\)

This 'thorough overhaul' of logic is achieved by Hegel through a revision of Reason itself with the introduction of the 'dialectic'. The dialectic is a procedure in which the predicate (thesis) leads to its own opposite (antithesis), and it is only through a blending of these two opposites (synthesis), that knowledge of the predicate can be attained. Dialectics is essentially negational and unifying, and it can be appreciated, not only because Marx uses Hegelian dialectic elaborately, that any dehierarchist thought essentially bases itself on some form of dialectics, to consider the others of dominant ideology and attempt to reduce their gaps with the dominant forms. Hegel explains the negative unificatory sides of dialectic thus:

> That by means of which the Concept forges ahead is the above-mentioned Negative which it carries within itself; it is this that constitutes the genuine dialectical procedure. Dialectic—which has been regarded as an isolated part of Logic, and which regards its purpose and standpoint has, one may aver, been entirely misunderstood—is thus put in quite a different position... It is in this Dialectic (as here understood) and in the comprehension of the Unity of Opposites, or of the Positive in the Negative, that *Speculative knowledge* consists.\(^\text{12}\)

It should be noted that though Hegelian dialectics can be appropriated in a resistant method, that is at least not what Hegel himself aims at. Instead, Hegel shows, and this is what constitutes his Idealism, that for him the dialectic blending of opposites is to lead, at the level of synthesis, to the notion of the 'Absolute', or the 'Spirit', that supreme Idea in which all contradictions merge. Accordingly, the Hegelian triad of knowledge is about the thesis of sense-perception, being countered by an antithetic opposition to it through human cognition, and a final synthesis of the two in the notion of the Absolute Idea. Hegelian logic has three branches: the thetical 'Logic of Essence', or the 'objective' mode of studying material sense-objects; the antithetical 'Logic of Being', or the 'subjective' mode of studying the psychophysiological means of cognition; and the synthetical 'Logic of the Notion', or the mental category of the Absolute Idea. Thus, in spite of leading to an absolutely spiritual conclusion, the Hegelian method shows the very tripartition of domains that I am on the lookout for.

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In spite of the reactionary forms that it takes in itself, that Hegelian dialectics can be applied to an understanding of politics and history is best proved by Hegel himself in his *Philosophical History* (1823-27), where he takes up a dialectical study of ‘World History’ and ends up proposing a quasi-divine Absolute State. In trying to frame his dialectical triad for this pursuit of ‘Universal History’, Hegel shows in the text that for this study, the thesis lies in ‘Spirit’, quite the opposite of knowledge, where the thesis lay in material sensations. He says, 

It must be observed at the outset, that the phenomenon we investigate—Universal History—belongs to the realm of Spirit. The term “World”, includes both physical and psychical Nature. Physical Nature also plays its part in the World’s History, and attention will have to be paid to the fundamental natural relations thus involved. But Spirit, and the course of its development, is our substantial object. Our task does not require us to contemplate Nature as ‘a Rational System in itself’—though in its own proper domain it proves itself such—but simply in its relation to *Spirit*.

Proceeding in a dialectical fashion from this basic assumption, Hegel shows how his study of a ‘Philosophical History’ of the world is to have three steps: understanding the thesis of ‘Spirit’ as the basis of history, looking into its antithesis in actual human passions and ‘Will’, and combining the two in the real synthetic of the ‘State’. Talking about the thesis of the Spirit first, Hegel shows how it is the category of “Freedom” that characterizes it:

The nature of Spirit may be understood by a glance at its direct opposite—*Matter*. As the essence of Matter is Gravity, so, on the other hand, we may affirm that the substance, the essence of Spirit is Freedom. Matter has its essence out of itself, Spirit is *self-contained existence* (Bei-sich-selbst-seyn). Now this is freedom exactly.

Since this thesis of the Spirit is abstract, it requires concrete means for its realization, and herein enters the antithetical means of human passions into history. Hegel shows how this ‘complex of human passions’ is symbolized by the Will, which in its synthetic blending with the abstract spirit of Freedom gives rise to the real historical category of the State:

...what we call *principle, aim, destiny*, or the nature and idea of Spirit, is something merely general and abstract... A second element must be introduced in order to produce actuality—viz. Actuation, realization; and whose motive power is the Will—the activity of man in the widest sense. It is only by this activity that that Idea as well as abstract characteristics generally, are realised, actualised; for of themselves they are powerless... Two elements, therefore, enter into the object of our investigation; the first the Idea, the second the complex of human passions... The concrete mean and union of the two is Liberty, under the conditions of morality in a State.

Hegel shows further how the State acts as the synthetic Absolute, where limitless freedom and will are reconciled in the laws of the state that represent a ‘common will’ of all its citizens.

The third point to be analysed is...the moral Whole, the State, which is that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom; but on the condition of his recognizing, believing in and willing that which is common to the Whole.

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14 Ibid., 414-15.

15 Ibid., 420-21.

16 Ibid., 437-38.
Just as the objective of dialectics is to move beyond the immediate Absolute to the final Absolute, Hegel’s theory of the State also moves from its temporal and corporeal immediacy to the domain of the Divine, with Hegel proclaiming that the State cannot but rest on religion, with freedom, its basic objective, being only attainable in a religious domain. He says,

In this aspect, religion stands in the closest connection with the political principle. Freedom can exist only where Individuality is recognized as having its positive and real existence in the Divine Being. The connection may be further explained thus:—Secular existence, as merely temporal—occupied with particular interests—is consequently only relative and unauthorized; and receives its validity only in as far as the universal soul that pervades it—its principle—receives absolute validity; which it cannot have unless it is recognized as the definite manifestation, the phenomenal existence of the Divine Essence. On this account it is that the State rests on Religion.17

Having laid down his dialectical understanding of history, Hegel defines it as distinguished from nature as, ‘History in general is therefore the development of Spirit in Time, as nature is the development of the Idea in Space.’18 Hegel shows how history, that is the temporal development of the Spirit, which operates on the basis of freedom, has manifested itself in three stages: that of the ‘Orientals’, in whose despotic regimes only one was free; the Graeco-Romans, under whose representational democratic set-ups some were free; and finally, the Germans, for whom there is the rule of ‘law’, and all are free. This also shows how the basic idea of progression in Hegelian dialectics is carried forward to his theory of history, as for him, human political forms necessarily ‘improve’ with time. It is, I suppose, quite obvious how Hegel can be related to the ‘tri-hierarchist’ thought in Foucault and beyond, in his stress on the triadic dialectic and his inclusion of history and politics to the domain of Idealist study.

d. **Schopenhauer: The ‘Will’ as Composite Cognition**

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) takes the synthetic project that lies within Idealism further by identifying the category in which perception and ideation can be unified. This category, which is still ideal for Schopenhauer, is the ‘Will’, and he strives to show, how Will is a noumenon, and is one and timeless, the pluralistic individuating categories of time and space belonging to the phenomenal world alone. He thus conceives of a cosmic Will pervading the whole universe, but instead of identifying this with a pantheistic god, he, being a pessimist, shows this Will to be the ‘wicked’ source of all suffering and something that needs to be avoided. Borrowing from Indian philosophy, Schopenhauer shows how one can free oneself of this sorrow by unveiling the mâyâ that Will is, and desist from exercising it to gain nîrvâna. Schopenhauer thus belongs to the tradition of ascetic mysticism, but instead of looking at his pessimistic mystic side, I would concentrate on his principal work, *The World as Will and Idea* (1818), to see how he arrives at the category of the Will.

Schopenhauer begins his thesis by stating that the primary Rationalist-Idealist precept that the world is nothing but subjective idea is ‘one-sided’. Such a view takes no account of the objective reality that is also a part of this world, and so for him it is only when the world is seen as a manifestation of ‘Will’ too—will being that subjective category through which the subject comes in relation with the object—that one can have a fuller picture of reality:

"The world is my idea":—this is a truth that holds good for everything that lives and knows... All that in any way belongs or can belong to the world is inevitably thus conditioned through the subject, and exists only for the subject... The inward reluctance with which any one accepts the world as merely his idea, warns him that this view of it, however true it may be, is nevertheless one-sided, adopted in consequence of some arbitrary abstraction... The truth, which must be very serious and impressive if not awful to every one, is that a man can also and must say, "the world is my will."  

The notion of Will therefore includes within it both the subject and the object, because Schopenhauer says that ‘no subject is thinkable without an object’. There is a perfectly dialectical relation between the two with each complementing the other through the Leibnizian category of ‘principle of sufficient reason’, and Schopenhauer says,

Thus we see, on the one hand, the existence of the whole world necessarily dependent upon the first conscious being, however undeveloped it may be; on the other hand, this conscious being as necessarily entirely dependent upon a long chain of causes and effects which have preceded it, and in which it itself appears as a small link.

However, Schopenhauer clearly shows that though knowledge is related to causality, the relationship between the subject and object is not one of cause and effect. In fact, he shows how the false assumption of a causal relationship between the two leads to the philosophical bipolarity in Western thought. Rejecting both materialism and idealism, he says,

It is needful to guard against the grave error of supposing that because perception arises through the knowledge of causality, the relation of subject and object is that of cause and effect... It is this false supposition that has given rise to the foolish controversy about the reality of the outer world... now as realism [i.e. materialism], now as idealism. Realism treats the object as cause, and the subject as its effect...idealism...reduces the object to the effect of the subject. Since, however...there is absolutely no relation according to the principle of sufficient reason between subject and object, neither of these views could be proved...

Thus, Schopenhauer looks beyond the dominant dichotomy of perception and ideation, in a third epistemological category, namely that of ‘Will’, and says, ‘The brute feels and perceives; man, in addition to this, thinks and knows: both will.' Thus, though there can be no doubt about the essential Idealism of this third category, one can see how in Schopenhauer the dual mode of knowledge paves the way for a possible tripartition. Now I would turn to the other pole, that of empiricism, to see how a similar bridging of the gap happens there too.

20 Ibid., 470.
21 Ibid., 467.
22 Ibid., 455-56.
23 Ibid., 474.
III. Sensation and Beyond: Matter in post-Renaissance Western Philosophy

a. Hobbes and the Foundation of Empiricism

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), a contemporary of Descartes, may be called the founder of modern materialism. Of the two points that I seek to locate in these thinkers—that they attempt to bridge the gap between matter and mind, and that they bring in the notion of politics in their works—the second is quite obvious for Hobbes, because most of his writings are in any case political. His major books—De Cive (1641, pub. 1647), Leviathan (1651), and Behemoth (1658)—are all on political subjects. It is from within this that Hobbes founds modern materialism, when in Leviathan, he shows how ‘reason’ is not innate but developed through ‘industry’, ‘will’ is not transcendental but a product of desire or aversion for objects, and concepts like ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’ have reality only in relation to concrete bodies:

...when the words “free” and “liberty” are applied to anything but bodies, they are abused; for that which is not subject to motion is not subject to impediment... So when we “speak freely”, it is not the liberty of voice or pronunciation, but of the man, whom no law hath obliged to speak otherwise than he did. Lastly, from the use of the word free-will, no liberty can be inferred of the will, desire, or inclination, but the liberty of the man; which consisteth in this, that he finds no stop, in doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do. 24

The material basis for existence leads, however, to the ideal notion of the sovereign, because the desire for self-preservation leading people to a perpetual war, it becomes necessary to form a mutual ‘covenant’ or social contract and submit to a preserving central authority. For Hobbes this takes the form of the Commonwealth, or what he calls the ‘Leviathan’:

This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man... This done, the multitude so unite in one person, is called a commonwealth, in Latin civitas. This is the generation of the great LEVIATHAN, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defense. 25

Thus, for Hobbes, despotism is more favourable to anarchy, and he severely criticises the simultaneous existence of both the King and Parliament as multiple centres of sovereignty. Moreover, among the two, he prefers monarchy because in it, the number of individuals at the centre of power is less, reducing the possibility of despotism and nepotism. Critiquing the possibility of a Commonwealth that relies on multiplicity of sources of power, he says,

To what disease in the natural body of man, I may exactly compare the irregularity of a commonwealth, I know not. But I have seen a man, that had another man growing out of his side, with a head, arms, breast, and stomach, of his own: if he had had another man growing out of his other side, the comparison might then have been exact. 26

This apparent disjunction between a materialistic philosophy and a centralist Royalist politics soon surfaces as empiricism, i.e., a blending of objective matter and subjective perception.

25 Ibid., 7.
26 Ibid., 50.
b. Locke: Empiricism and the 'Civil Government'

It is in John Locke (1632-1704) that the 'empiricism' which was hinted at through Hobbes’s materialism gains its full form. The chief texts of Locke are *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1687, pub. 1690), *Two Treatises on Civil Government* (1689), three letters on *Tolerance* (1689, 1690, 1692), and *Education* (1693). In the first of these texts, where Locke formulates his empiricism to the full, he shows how, opposed to 'enthusiasm', or the personal revelation of truth to a religious leader, where there can be multiple and inconsistent personal truths, truth needs to have a social character. Thus Locke begins with a materialistic premise, classifying qualities of matter into 'primary qualities', which are inseparable from the body, like solidity, extension, figure, motion and number; and 'secondary qualities', like colours, sounds, and smells. Moreover, he says that there are no innate ideas and principles, and it is only experience that gives rise to ideas, thereby talking of the celebrated *tabula rasa*, and formation of knowledge through sensory experience:

> Let us then suppose the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters, without any Ideas; How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless Fancy of Man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of Reason and Knowledge? To this I answer in one word, from Experience: in that all our Knowledge is founded, and that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employ'd either about external, sensible Objects; or about the internal Operations of our Minds, perceived and reflected on by our selves, is that, which supplies our Understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the Fountains of Knowledge, from whence all the Ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring.

Thus, not only does Locke connect the material and mental domains in his notion of empirical perception, but as the quote shows, he actually conceives of, in addition to the 'sensible Objects', an internal *a priori* mental operation as the bases for knowledge. He talks of 'experience' comprising two categories: an external 'sensation' or perception, and an 'internal sense', or 'reflection'. No wonder that in Book IV of the *Essay*, Locke actually moves into a tripartition of knowledge: the 'intuitive' physical knowledge of one's own existence, the 'demonstrative' ideal knowledge of God, and the 'sensitive' material knowledge of things present to the senses. What is even more interesting is that this theory of knowledge leads Locke to the idea of Power in two forms: 'Active Power' to act on and change things, and 'Passive Power' to be acted upon and be changed, and in relation to this power-play in cognition, Locke notices, much like the Utilitarian, who would come almost two centuries after him, that notions of 'Good' and 'Evil' rest on principles of 'Pleasure' and 'Pain':

> Things then are Good and Evil only in relation to pleasure or pain. That we call Good which is apt to cause or increase Pleasure, or diminish Pain in us... And on the contrary we name that Evil, which is apt to produce or increase any Pain, or diminish any Pleasure in us...\(^{28}\)

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While Locke introduces 'power' in the Essay itself, it is in his two Treatises, that he gives it a concrete political form. In the first Treatise, Locke rejects heredity as the basis for political power, and argues for true democracy. In the second, he takes the argument further and says that the ideal government corresponds to a 'state of nature', where only the 'natural law' is followed, and all are free and absolutely equal in terms of rights as well as property:

To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.

A state also of equality, herein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another... 29

Thus, the model of social interaction between individuals that Locke gives is, much like the later Utilitarianism or Scientific Communism, of a general altruism, as opposed to the Hobbesian war. Criticising the war-model of society as being counter-productive, he says,

The State of war is a state of enmity and destruction; and therefore declaring by word or action, not a passionate and hasty, but a sedate, settled design upon another man’s life, puts him in a state of war with him against whom he has declared such an intention, and so has exposed his life to the other’s power to be taken away by him, or anyone that joins with him in his defense and espouses his quarrel; it being reasonable and just that I should have a right to destroy that which threatens me with destruction. 30

Thus Lockean empiricism forebodes some of the subsequent resistant political ideologies, but what is even more startling is that Locke pre-empts the role of labour in economic production, which later Ricardo was to 'discover' and Marx was to utilize to formulate his most powerful political theory of debunking and demolishing hierarchies. Locke says,

'Tis labor, then, which puts the greatest part of value upon land, without which it would scarcely be worth anything; 'tis to that we owe the greatest parts of all its useful products, for all that the straw, bran, bread, of that acre of wheat is more worth than the product of an acre of as good land which lies waste, is all the effect of labor... Thus labor, in the beginning, gave a right of property, wherever anyone was pleased to employ it upon what was common... 31

The Lockean model also considers the problematic politics of race, and Locke questions, much in the way of our current resistant theories of race, the legitimacy of colonial power:

Those who have the supreme power of making laws in England, France, or Holland, are to an Indian but like the rest of the world—men without authority. And, therefore, if by the law of nature every man hath not a power to punish offences against it, as he soberly judges the case to require, I see not how the magistrates of any community can punish an alien of another country; since in reference to him they can have no more power than what every man naturally may have over another. 32

Thus it can be seen how the two points that I am trying to trace show their emergence within Empiricism/Materialism too, and I proceed to more authors to explore this even further.

31 Ibid., 81-82.
32 Ibid., 62.
c. Berkeley and the Empirical Denial of Matter

Among the empiricists, probably the most remarkable advance in the direction of bridging the gap between sensation and ideation is achieved by George Berkeley (1685-1763), who denies the very existence of matter, albeit from an empirical perspective, stating that material objects exist only through being perceived. His principal works are *A New Theory of Vision* (1709), *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), and *The Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous* (1713), in all of which he argues against the existence of matter. I will take up the second text mentioned here to show what his arguments are, and how he arrives at notions of the 'idea' and the 'self' from within empiricism itself.

The first argument of Berkeley is that, though all our knowledge is attained through perception, we do not perceive material things themselves, but only colours, sounds and like qualities, which are all 'mental' constructs, matter in itself having little contribution to make towards the formation of empirical knowledge, things being nothing more than a bundle of sensible qualities. The second argument is that though first impressions are based on particular instances of matter, knowledge consists in arriving at generalizations from these sensory impressions, and so knowledge exists in the domain of ideas. He says,

...the mind having observed that in the particular extensions perceived by sense there is something common and alike in all, and some other things peculiar, as this or that figure or magnitude, which distinguish them from one another; it considers apart or singles out by itself that which is common, making thereof a most abstract idea of extension, which is neither line, surface, nor solid, nor has any figure or magnitude, but is an idea entirely prescinded from all these. 33

All this means that though the empirical basis of knowledge cannot be doubted, this knowledge does not consist in matter, which is an 'inert', 'senseless' and contradictory substance, but in ideas formed out of objects through perception. For Berkeley,

By matter, therefore, we are to understand an inert, senseless substance, in which extension, figure, and motion do actually subsist. But it is evident from what we have already shown, that extension, figure, and motion are only ideas existing in the mind, and that an idea can be like nothing but another idea, and that consequently neither they nor their archetypes can exist in an unperceiving substance. Hence, it is plain that the very notion of what is called matter, or corporeal substance, involves a contradiction in it. 34

What is to be noted, however, is that Berkeley, unlike most empiricists, uses the word 'idea' and not 'thing' to denote this basic category of knowledge, and expectedly, he has to provide an explanation for this. Berkeley says that he uses the word 'idea' deliberately to distinguish the purely objective cognitive phenomenon from the subjective cognizing agent, which would also have been included in a blanket category like 'things'. He says,


If it be demanded why I make use of the word "idea", and do not rather in compliance with custom call them "thing”; I answer, I do it for two reasons:—first, because the term “thing” in contradiction to “idea”, is generally supposed to denote somewhat existing without the mind; secondly, because “thing” hath a more comprehensive signification than “idea”, including spirit and thinking things as well as ideas. What is remarkable here is how, in spite of privileging the idea and denying matter, Berkeley keeps this ideal knowledge rooted in sense-perception, so that he would not conflate the objective Idea with the subjective Spirit. This duality itself, however, shows the existence of the cognizing self as a category, albeit separate from idea, in Berkeley’s metaphysics.

Berkeley observes that apart from the profusion of ideas as ‘objects of knowledge’, there is also an equally important category of the cognizing subject or the ‘self’, which is quite distinct from the domain of ideas and deserves special mention. He says, ...besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, there is likewise something which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering, about them. This perceiving, active being is what I call mind, soul, or myself. By which words I do not denote any one of my ideas, but a thing entirely distinct from them wherein they exist, or, which is the same thing, whereby they are perceived; for the existence of an idea consists in being perceived.

Thus, it is clear that human knowledge has two categories—that of objective ‘ideas’, and subjective ‘spirits’—and Berkeley says, ‘From the principles we have laid down it follows human knowledge may naturally be reduced to two heads: that of ideas and that of spirits.’

He distinguishes this ‘spirit’, however, from any sort of mystical abstraction, showing that since abstract ideas are ‘incomprehensible’, the subjective ‘spirit’ is itself concrete. He says, Beside the external existence of the objects of perception, another great source of errors and difficulties with regard to ideal knowledge is the doctrine of abstract ideas... The plainest things in the world, those we are most intimately acquainted with and perfectly know, when they are considered in an abstract way, appear strangely difficult and incomprehensible.

Berkeley makes it very clear that he does not wish to supplant the subjective notion of the ‘soul’ with the objective category of ‘ideas’, but only show that the two are distinct: But it will be objected that, if there is no idea signified by the terms “soul”, “spirit”, and “substance”, they are wholly insignificant, or have no meaning in them. I answer, those words do mean or signify a real thing, which is neither an idea nor like an idea, but that which perceives ideas, and wills, and reasons about them. What I am myself, that which I denote by the term “I”, is the same with what is meant by “soul” or “spiritual substances”... It is therefore necessary, in order to prevent equivocation and confounding natures perfectly disagreeing and unlike, that we distinguish between spirit and idea.

Thus, it can be noticed how, from within empiricism itself, there can arise a doctrine that can bridge the gap between sensation and ideation and conceive of both the subject and the object.

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d. **Hume and the Combination of ‘Science’ and ‘Humanity’**

The synthetic project that I have already identified in Berkeley, takes an even fuller form in David Hume (1711-76), who shows how a material interest in humanity has to be combined with a more rational science to lead to a proper understanding of knowledge, and raises in the process a political scepticism about idealist constructions like God, the State, morality and liberty. The most important work of Hume is *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), an abridged form of his earlier *Treatise on Human Nature* (1734-37, Vol. 1-2 published 1739, Vol. 3 published 1740), and though he wrote other important texts like *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (published posthumously 1779), and *History of England* (1755), I would analyse this text to discuss Hume’s philosophy. Hume shows how both reason and the more empirical side of social human life fail to deliver the whole of knowledge, and what is required is a blending of the two in a ‘science’ that is ‘human’ too:

Man is a reasonable being; and as such, receives from science his proper food and nourishment: But so narrow are the bounds of human understanding, that little satisfaction can be hoped for this particular... Man is sociable, no less than a reasonable being: But neither can he always enjoy company agreeable and amusing, or preserve the proper relish for them. Man is also an active being; and from that disposition, as well as from the various necessities of human life, must submit to business and occupation: But the mind requires some relaxation, and cannot always support its bent to care and industry. It seems, then, that nature has pointed out a mixed kind of life as most suitable to the human race, and secretly admonished them to allow none of these biases to draw too much, so as to incapacitate them for other occupations and entertainments. Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society.40

It should not however assumed from this synthetic attempt that Hume treats sensation and ideation at par, because the empiricist within him says, ‘The most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation.’41 Accordingly, Hume distinguishes the ‘more lively’ sensual ‘impressions’ from ‘ideas’ comprising ‘memory’ and ‘imagination’. He says,

Here therefore we may divide all the perceptions of the mind into two classes or species, which are distinguished by their different degrees of force and vivacity. The less forcible and lively are commonly denominated *thoughts* or *ideas*. The other species want a name in our language, and in most others... Let us, therefore, use a little freedom, and call them *impressions*; employing that word in a sense somewhat different from the usual. By the term, *impression*, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will...all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.42

This leads Hume to distinguish between a ‘certain knowledge’, involving four of his seven philosophical relations: ‘resemblance’, ‘contrareity’, ‘degrees in quality’ and ‘proportions in quantity or number’, and an inferred ‘probable’ knowledge, involving the remaining three categories of ‘identity’, ‘relations of time and space’, and ‘causation’.

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41 Ibid., 351.
42 Ibid., 352.
Hume’s assertion that ‘causation’ is not formed from impressions, but from ‘belief’, leads to a scepticism, whereby he would debunk causality and teleology in philosophy, and posit something similar to the non-deterministic Foucauldian thought. This scepticism takes a concrete politically resistant ‘dehierarchist’ form when Hume critiques several Idealist notions concerning God and human history. He shows how one should harbour a ‘strong suspicion’ for the category of God, because it is ‘remote from common life and experience’:

It seems to me that this theory of the universal energy and operation of the Supreme Being is too bold ever to carry conviction with it to a man, sufficiently apprised of the weakness of human reason, and the narrow limits to which it is confined in all its operations. Though the chain of arguments which conduct to it were ever so logical, there must arise a strong suspicion, if not an absolute assurance, that it has carried us quite beyond the reach of our faculties, when it leads to conclusions so extraordinary, and so remote from common life and experience.

Similarly, Hume shows how categories like history, politics, morality, and criticism, which would be monopolized by Idealist philosophers like Hegel as belonging to absolute ideas, are based on concrete human experience, and their sciences can be studied only in relation to it:

What would become of history, had we not a dependence on the veracity of the historian according to the experience which we have had of mankind? How could politics be a science, if laws and forms of government had not a uniform influence upon society? Where would be the foundation of morals, if particular characters had no certain or determinate power to produce particular sentiments, and if these sentiments had no constant operation on actions? And with what pretense could we employ our criticism upon any poet or polite author, if we could not pronounce the conduct and sentiments of his actors either natural or unnatural to such characters, and in such circumstances? It seems almost impossible, therefore, to engage either in science or action of any kind without acknowledging the doctrine of necessity, and this inference from motive to voluntary actions, from characters to conduct.

Taking over a similar argument to the domain of liberty, Hume shows how it is also not a pure ideational concept, but one where the ideational will is determined in relation to a more material and physical power of motion and rest. He says, ‘By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may.’ Connecting two of these categories—God and morality—together Hume shows how the very absurdity that their connection entails, calls for a rejection of erstwhile monologic and mystical philosophy:

The ultimate author of all our volitions is the Creator of the world... Human actions, therefore, either can have no moral turpitude at all, as proceeding from so good a cause; or if they have any turpitude, they must involve our Creator in the same guilt, while he is acknowledged to be their ultimate cause and author... But as either of these positions is absurd and impious, it follows, that the doctrine from which they are deduced cannot possibly be true, as being liable to all the same objections.

This is how Hume bridges the gap between ideation and sensation while also talking of power and history and providing the possibility for a politics resistant to dominant idealist precepts.

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43 Ibid., 395.
44 Ibid., 409-10. 
45 Ibid., 413.
46 Ibid., 417-18.
e. The Utilitarians: Empiricism and Explicit Politics

It is in the Utilitarians that one sees a culmination of the developments I am seeking in post-Renaissance Western thought. Not only do they fuse the ideal principles of liberty and utility with the actualities of human pleasure and pain, they also lend a practical ethics to the same. This body of thought deserves special mention because both *laissez-faire* liberalism of bourgeois economy as well as the socialistic resistance to it may be traced to the Utilitarians. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), normally identified as the founder of Utilitarianism bases his philosophy on two principles: the 'association principle', or a deterministic account of mental occurrences, much like the later Pavlov's dog theory, and the 'greatest-happiness principle', or that the best possible state of affairs is that which involves the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. Bentham attributes this second principle to Priestley, but, as has been shown, it can be traced back to Locke. Bentham, like Epicurus, stresses on security rather than liberty, and he turned to Radicalism by 1808, with the claim that ascetic moralities serve the interests of the governing class, and a new morality, based on the principle of utility is possible only with an overthrow of the current system. Bentham's Radicalism revolves around two principles: that of 'equality', demanding abolition of monarchy and voting power for women, and 'rationality', which rejects God. Bentham's conversion to Radicalism was much under the influence of James Mill (1773-1836), who, however, advocates temperance in dispensing the Utilitarian principle of pleasures and thinks moderate pleasures to be the best.

Utilitarianism reaches its high point in James Mill's son John Stuart Mill (1808-1873). Mill says in his *Utilitarianism* (1863) that pleasure is the only desirable thing, but it is in his *On Liberty* (1859) that he formulates Utilitarianism to its full. Mill begins this text by showing how he is not bothered about the idealist notion of 'free will' and for him 'liberty' consists in material social liberty, as exercised by actual individuals. He says,

> The subject of this essay is not the so-called liberty of the will, so unfortunately opposed to the misnamed doctrine of philosophical necessity; but civil, or social liberty: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual.47

It is in this context of social liberty, that Mill defines his notion of utility, where a moderation of the pleasure principle is absolutely necessary for the social end of collective freedom:

> I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions; but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of a man as a progressive being. Those interests, I contend, authorized the subjection of individual spontaneity to external control, only in respect to those actions of each which concern the interest of other people.48

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While this view of liberty and ethics places the Utilitarians on the side of materialism, Mill shows how the ideal notion of 'discussion' has to be brought alongside concrete experience in Utilitarian practice. He shows how it is through the two that the human subject advances:

He is capable of rectifying his mistakes, by discussion and experience. Not by experience alone. There must be discussion, to show how experience is to be interpreted. Wrong opinions and practices gradually yield to fact and argument; but facts and arguments to produce any effect on the mind, must be brought before it.\(^{49}\)

This bridging the gap between matter and mind gets reflected in a duality in Mill. On the one hand, he would make such a radical statement as 'The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it'\(^{50}\), and also suggest that European ethics should go beyond Christian morality, into multicultural sources for a 'diversity of opinions':

I believe that other ethics than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources, must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind; and that the Christian system is no exception to the rule, that in an imperfect state of the human mind the interests of truth require a diversity of opinions.\(^{51}\)

On the other, he would also make relatively reactionary statements against the masses and in favour of 'exceptional individuals', thus comprising the doctrine of Individualism:

It does seem...that when the opinions of masses of merely average men are...the dominant power, the counterpoise and corrective to that tendency would be the more and more pronounced individuality of those who stand on the higher eminences of thought. It is in these circumstances most especially, that exceptional individuals, instead of being deterred, should be encouraged in acting differently from the mass.\(^{52}\)

This duality leads to a binary legacy of Utilitarianism in later political thought, where one would find both radical socialism and reactionary liberalism emerge. On the one hand, it is because of Utilitarianism that Ricardo could follow up Locke’s hypothesis and say in 1817 that the exchange value of a commodity is entirely due to the labour expended in producing it, Thomas Hodgskin could publish *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital* (1825), where it is argued for the first time that if all value is conferred by labour, all the reward should also go to the labour, Robert Owen could found 'Socialism', with his followers being called 'Socialist' for the first time in 1827, and Marx could write his treatise. On the other hand, the Darwinian doctrine of the survival of the fittest and Adam Smith’s liberalism are also direct fall-outs of Utilitarianism. What is of further importance is that just as the bridging of mind and matter within the Rationalist/Idealist thought culminates in Schopenhauer’s insistence on the individual will, the same bridging of duality gets articulated within the Empiricist/Materialist paradigm with the Utilitarian stress on the individual too. Both of these developments point towards the inclusion of the third paradigm of the individual human body within Western thought, leading to the tripartition that I was seeking to identify.

\(^{49}\) Ibid, 155.

\(^{50}\) Ibid, 258.

\(^{51}\) Ibid, 188.

\(^{52}\) Ibid, 205.
IV. The Emergence of the Body in Post-Renaissance Western Thought

a. Spinoza and the Insistence on Physical Enjoyment

Though he quite predates that period by which the internal contradictions of philosophies of mind and matter reach the threshold of producing the category of physicality, Spinoza (1634-77) is the one in whom one can locate, in the line of Bacon or Harvey, a composition of philosophy on the body. This against the grain stance of Spinoza could well have been because of his minority status—he was a Jew, and thus despised by Christians, while the Jews also excommunicated him. His chief works are the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), *Tractatus Politicus* (1677) and the *Ethics* (1672-77). In the first text, where he discusses religious theory, instead of talking about the ideational category of God, he talks about interpreting the text of *The Bible*. In the second text, dealing with political theory mostly derived from Hobbes, Spinoza talks about the benefits of monarchy, with the body of the monarch representing sovereign power in itself. The third text deals with three things: a metaphysics inspired by Descartes, a psychology of passions and the Will inspired by Hobbes, and an original ethics. Since I have already outlined Descartes’s and Hobbes’s views, and since Spinoza does not depart radically from them, I would concentrate only on the ethics of Spinoza, to show how he privileges the body as a category of knowledge and society.

Spinoza’s ethics is quite different from any Idealist moral code, because he shows that ‘good’ and ‘evil’ have a physiological basis, where the need for self-preservation determines what is profitable or ‘virtuous’ for the body and what is not. He says,

> According to the laws of his own nature each person necessarily desires that which he considers to be good, and avoids that which he considers to be evil.

> The more each person strives and is able to seek his own profit, that is to say, to preserve his being, the more virtue does he possess; on the other hand, in so far as each person neglects his own profit, that is to say, neglects to preserve his own being, is he impotent... The endeavor after self-preservation is the primary and only foundation of virtue. For prior to this principle no other can be conceived, and without it no virtue can be conceived. 53

Accordingly, Spinoza shows how ‘joy’ and ‘sorrow’ are also essentially related to the body and its motions, and that ‘joy’ is a positive emotion while ‘sorrow’ is not:

> Whatever is effective to preserve the proportion of motion and rest which the parts of the human body bear to each other is good, and, on the contrary, that is evil which causes the parts of the human body to have a different proportion of motion and rest to each other... Joy is an emotion by which the body’s power of action is increased or assisted. Sorrow, on the other hand, is an emotion by which the body’s power of action is lessened or restrained, and therefore joy is not directly evil, but good; sorrow, on the other hand, is directly evil. 54


The insistence that sorrow is evil, because it is against the interests of the body, already puts Spinoza against a lot of ascetic Western morality, which would preach of self-castigation and suffering as values. He also shows how, following this logic, some of the standard virtues, like hope, confidence, gladness, humility, repentance and pity, are nothing but vices:

The emotions of hope and fear cannot exist without sorrow; for fear is sorrow, and hope cannot exist without fear. Therefore these emotions cannot be good of themselves, but only in so far as they are able to restrain the excesses of joy... for the same reason, confidence, despair, gladness, and remorse are signs of weakness of mind. For although confidence and gladness are emotions of joy, they nevertheless suppose that sorrow has preceded them, namely, hope or fear... Humility is sorrow, which springs from this, that a man contemplates his own weakness... Repentance is not a virtue, that is to say, it does not spring from reason; on the contrary, the man who repents of what he has done is doubly wretched or impotent. For, in the first place, we allow ourselves to be overcome by a depraved desire, and, in the second place, by sorrow... Pity is sorrow, and therefore is in itself evil. 55

Spinoza, however, calls these standard moral categories as 'necessary evils', as in spite of being vicious they are often needed to restrict the excesses of pleasure. What Spinoza basically argues against is the ascetic tendency that would deny people physical enjoyment. Instead, he shows that as long as one does not overdo things, and as long as one does not hurt others, physical enjoyment is the virtue that every 'wise man' should pursue. For Spinoza,

Nothing but a gloomy and sad superstition forbids enjoyment... To make use of things, therefore, and to delight in them as much as possible (provided we do not disgust ourselves with them, which is not delighting in them), is the part of a wise man. It is the part of a wise man, I say, to refresh and invigorate himself with moderate and pleasant eating and drinking, with sweet scents and the beauty of green plants, with ornament, with music, with sports, with the theater, and with all things of this kind which one man can enjoy without hurting another. 56

The introduction of the figure of the 'wise man' into the discourse already pre-empts a possible relation between physical enjoyment and knowledge, and Spinoza shows how knowledge and reason rest in the self's knowing itself and its physical needs for preservation:

The primary foundation of virtue is the preservation of our being according to the guidance of reason. The man, therefore, who is ignorant of himself is ignorant of the foundation of all the virtues, and consequently is ignorant of all the virtues. 57

Having provided knowledge with a physical basis, Spinoza next shows how social formations also operate on the basis of the urge for self-preservation. He shows how it is for the biological need for preserving the species that human beings go into all sorts of social bonds, be they that of matrimony, where the species is propagated straightforwardly, or more complicated structures like the state or the community, where the individual needs are looked after in a better way. He says, 'Above all things is it profitable to men to form communities and to unite themselves to one another by bonds which may make all of them as one man' 58, and thus shows morality, knowledge and socio-political structures to be based on the body.

55 Ibid., 180-82.
56 Ibid., 179-80.
57 Ibid., 183.
58 Ibid., 189.
b. **Rousseau and the Notion of the ‘Body Politic’**

The ‘physical’ ethics of Spinoza is carried further forward by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). That he follows Spinoza’s ethic of a morality based on enjoyment is made clear by Rousseau in his autobiography, *Confessions* (1782-89), where he shows gleefully how he was a great sinner, and for his benefit often committed acts that would normally be considered morally wrong. In one of his earliest works, ‘Discourse on Inequality’ (1754), Rousseau reverses the Christian notions of original sin and salvation by proposing an alternate ‘physicalist’ thesis whereby the human being is ‘naturally good’ and corrupted only by institutions and civilization. For Rousseau, under the ‘natural law’ the only inequalities between people are physiological, and it is ‘civil society’ and ‘private property’ that leads to others forms of inequalities and hierarchies. He thus talks of abandoning civilization and going back to the primal physical nature. In another work, *Emile* (1762), Rousseau talks of education according to natural principles and also of a natural religion. His most important book is *The Social Contract* (1762), which I now take up for discussion to see how Rousseau credits the formation of socio-political structures and their hierarchies to ‘physicality’.

Rousseau starts his discussion with a much-quoted statement whereby he shows that conventions that emerge in social life imprison the human being who was naturally free:

> Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Many a one believes himself the master of others, and yet he is a greater slave than they. How has this change come about? I do not know. What can render it legitimate? I believe I can settle this question.

If I considered only force and the results that proceed from it, I should say that so long as a people is compelled to obey and does obey, it does well; but that, so soon as it can shake off the yoke and does shake it off, it does better... But the social order is a sacred right which serves as a foundation for all the others. This right however, does not come from nature. It is therefore based on conventions. 59

Having posed the distinction between what is natural, and corollarily free, and what is civilizational and constraining, Rousseau proceeds to show how the first social structure was that of the family, where the bonds of physicality between members, as well as its *raison d’être* in physical self-preservation, associate its naturality with a fundamental physicality:

> The earliest of all societies, and the only natural one, is the family; yet children remain attached to their father only as long as they have need of him for their own preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved... If they remain united, it is no longer naturally but voluntarily; and the family itself is kept together only by convention. 60

Rousseau further shows that the later formation of more complicated social structures was out of a physical motive, whereby the strongest enhanced the legitimacy of their power with structures of social obligation, which are therefore fundamentally ‘physical’ and not ‘moral’:

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The strongest man is never strong enough to be always master, unless he transforms his power into right, and obedience into duty... Force is a physical power; I do not see what morality can result from its effects... [but] might does not make right, and that we are bound to obey have but lawful authority. 61

This is how the immediacy of a natural physical power gets replaced with a ‘social contract’, whereby individuals give up some of their power to form a community, which is however dedicated to an even better administration of its members’ physical needs of preservation:

“To find a form of association which may defend and protect with the whole force of the community the person and property of every associate, and by means of which each, coalescing with all, may nevertheless obey only himself, and remain as free as before.”

Such is the fundamental problem of which the social contract furnished the solution. 62

Rousseau shows very clearly that this ‘social contract’ has a fundamentally physical function to perform, so that it substitutes physical inequalities with an equality in the domain of law:

...instead of destroying natural equality, the fundamental pact, on the contrary, substitutes a moral and lawful equality for the physical inequality which nature imposed upon men, so that although unequal in strength or intellect, they all become equal by convention or legal right. 63

The form that the social contract takes, that is the State, is thus a surrogate for the body itself, its purpose being to create, just like an individual body, a ‘common self’ and a ‘general will’ from out of its members. This is why for Rousseau, the State is like a body—a ‘body politic’:

Forthwith, instead of the individual personalities of all the contracting parties, this act of association produces a moral and collective body, which is composed of as many members as the assembly has voices, and which receives from this same act its unity, its common self (moi), its life, and its will. This public person, which is formed by the union of all the individual members, formerly took the name of city, and now takes that of republic or body politic, which is called by its members State when it is passive, sovereign when it is active, power when it is compared to similar bodies. 64

The State being a body politic, whose point of departure is the natural order of the body, whose purpose is to cover up the shortcomings of individual bodies, and whose end is in constituting a body for itself, its test also lies in the domain of physicality itself, so that for Rousseau the successful State is that under which ‘population’ increases the most:

What is the object of political association? It is the preservation and prosperity of its members. And what is the surest sign that they are preserved and prosperous? It is their number and population... All other things being equal, the government under which, without external aids, without naturalization, and without colonies, the citizens increase and multiply most, is infallibly the best. That under which a people diminishes and decays is the worst. 65

Having outlined the physicalist basis for the social contract and the State that emerges out of it, Rousseau proceeds next to analyse the different wings of power of this body politic. Rousseau identifies two such agencies of government: the legislative, which deals with the ‘force’ of the power, and the executive, which deals with its ‘will’ or execution. He says.

61 Ibid., 103.
62 Ibid., 109.
63 Ibid., 117.
64 Ibid., 110-11.
65 Ibid., 175-76.
The body politic...force and will are distinguished, the latter under the name of legislative power, the former under the name of executive power. Nothing is, or ought to be, done in it without their co-operation... Consequently, I give the name government or supreme administration to the legitimate exercise of the executive power and that of Prince or magistrate to the man or body charged with that administration.

These two agencies of power together comprise 'sovereign power', which, though 'inalienable' and 'indivisible', is not 'total', but restricted by the terms of the social contract:

Thus we see that the sovereign power, wholly absolute, wholly sacred, and wholly inviolable as it is, does not, and cannot, pass the limits of general conventions, and that every man can fully dispose of...his property and liberty by these conventions...

This leads Rousseau to the notion of 'liberty', which for him should not be renounced under any amount of coercion from the State, because freedom comprising the natural physical state of human existence, its renunciation signifies a removal from all morality too. He says,

To renounce one's liberty is to renounce one's quality as a man, the rights and also the duties of humanity. For him who renounces everything there is no possible compensation. Such a renunciation is incompatible with man's nature, for to take away all freedom from his will is to take away all morality from his actions.

Thus, for Rousseau the ultimate objects that a State can provide its citizens, and those for which every citizen should strive, are those of liberty and equality:

If we ask precisely wherein consists the greatest good of all, which ought to be the aim of every system of legislation, we shall find that it is summed up in two principal objects, liberty and equality,—liberty, because any individual dependence is so much force withdrawn from the body of the State; equality, because liberty cannot subsist without it.

However, this liberty is a qualified one, because Rousseau clearly prefers a strong totalitarian regime, which satisfies the needs of the body politic, to democracy. Rousseau lists three primary forms of government: democracy (i.e., total democracy as in the Greek city-states), aristocracy (i.e., representational democracy), and monarchy (i.e., hereditary rule or dictatorship), and for him, democracy is just an ideal that is too 'perfect' to be realizable. He says, 'If there were a nation of gods, it would be governed democratically. So perfect a government is unsuited to men.' This is why he argues for a totalitarian regime in emergency situations, to see to it that the State fulfils its physical function of preservation:

...if the danger is such that the formal process of law is an obstacle to our security, a supreme head is nominated, who may silence all the laws and suspend for a moment the sovereign authority. In such a case the general will is not doubtful, and it is clear that the primary intention of the people is that the State should not perish. In this way the suspension of the legislative power does not involve its abolition; the magistrate who silences it can make it speak...

The practical side of Rousseau's philosophy being best articulated in Romanticism and the French Revolution, I take up for discussion the thought of these two movements next.

Romanticism, a movement which drew its lifeblood from Rousseau though originally conceived by the German philosophers Fichte and Schelling, is characterized through a reliance on the body in all three of its philosophical departments. Epistemologically, it talks, much in the lines of Scholastic philosophy, of an 'embodied' imagination; ontologically, it talks about physical beauty as the prime category of this world; ethically, it talks about a return to the primal and physical 'nature' on the one hand, and a cultivation of isolationism of the body on the other. I discuss the tripartite nature of Romantic philosophy in greater detail in Chapter 11 of this thesis, and so I desist from pre-empting any of it here. Instead I mention here briefly, how this doctrine based on the body, and articulated primarily in literature and art, comes to gain an important place in European politics. The most obvious political articulation of Romanticism is of course the French Revolution, but one can see emerging from it quite a reverse politics too. This extremely problematic articulation of systems of power based on the notion of the body beautiful and powerful, is manifest on the one hand in the possibility of Romanticism providing the fuel for dictatorship, with its stress on isolationism and power of the isolated. Byron calls himself an 'aristocratic rebel', and idolizes in himself, and in Napoleon, the image of the Antichrist. Nietzsche would, later, in the same way, talk about the 'death of God' and a single Superman. On the other hand, an extrapolation of the principle of isolationism into nationalism leads political thought into concerns for race through anti-Semitism, and for the perfect body through eugenics. It is easy to identify that both these sides of Romantic political thought culminate in the likes of Hitler.

Coming to the thoughts that accompanied the French Revolution, one needs to mention two thinkers, Helvetius and Condorcet, who are usually considered the philosophers of the Revolution. Claude Adrien Helvetius (1715-71) believed that physical sensibility is the cause for all actions, thoughts, passions, and sociability, and connecting this essentially physical notion to the other two poles of materiality and mentality, he says that differences between individuals are due to differences in factors of upbringing like education, and not an ideal 'genius'. Because of his radical materialist-physicalist and anti-clerical views, his book De l'Esprit (1758) was condemned by the Sorbonne. Condorcet (1743-94) takes the notion of physicality in knowledge and social formation to theories of actual practice. On the one hand, though Bentham was to mention equal political rights for women, it is Condorcet who forcefully argues for equality of women, that class of 'physical' others for patriarchy. On the other, Condorcet first talks about what would later be known as Malthus's theory of 'population', along with an emphasis on the absolute necessity for birth control. It is thus in these thinkers that the category of the body gains a positivity in actual socio-political practice, and now I can examine how this positivity gets crystallized in the philosophy of 'positivism'. 
d. **Auguste Comte: Positivism and the Body**

The philosophy of the physical and the concrete takes its disciplined form in Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and his doctrine of Positivism. In his *The Positive Philosophy* (1896), in formulating the doctrine, Comte shows how knowledge passes through three successive phases: the 'Theological', the 'Metaphysical', and the 'Positive', with the 'fictitious' supernatural constructs of the first phase and the 'abstract' constructs of the second, finally giving way to 'Scientific' constructs based on physical actuality in the final 'positive' phase:

From the study of the development of human intelligence, in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of a great fundamental law, to which it is necessarily subject... The law is this:—that each of our leading conceptions,—each branch of our knowledge,—passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive... Hence arise three philosophies, or general systems of conceptions on the aggregate of phenomena, each of which excludes the others. The first is the necessary point of departure of the human understanding; and the third is its fixed and definitive state. The second is merely a state of transition.72

For Comte, the movement of knowledge from the supernatural and the abstract to the concrete is historical, so that in the most primitive societies, one would notice all knowledge to be dedicated to the finding of the ultimate supernatural cause behind everything: theology and astrology, while in the most modern societies, one would see a profusion of studies dedicated to the concrete physical world: physics, chemistry, biology, with intermediate stages showing different degrees of 'metaphysical' knowledge: speculative and analytical philosophy. Comte explains this historical movement of knowledge in the following way:

Thus, between the necessity of observing facts in order to form a theory, and having a theory in order to observe facts, the human mind would have been entangled in a vicious circle, but for the natural opening afforded by Theological conceptions. This is the fundamental reason for the theological character of the primitive philosophy... The human understanding, slow in its advance, could not step at once from the theological into the positive philosophy. The two are so radically opposed, that an intermediate system of conceptions has been necessary to render the transition possible. It is only in doing this, that Metaphysical conceptions have any utility whatsoever.73

For Comte, the study of knowledge in the Positive Philosophy is based purely on the physiological. Accordingly, he refers to M. de Blainville’s work on Comparative Anatomy, which classifies all human activity under two relations—the 'Statistical' and the 'Dynamical', with the first concerning the state of the individual, i.e., anatomy and physiology, and the second concerning the dynamics of intellectual activities that take place in the human mind, examined again from the perspective of physiological organicity. Comte shows how a psychology that does not take the physiological side of knowledge into consideration, is 'illusory', being merely 'theological' or 'metaphysical', and never 'positive' and scientific:


These being the only means of knowledge of intellectual phenomena, the illusory psychology, which is the last phase of theology, is excluded. It pretends to accomplish the discovery of the laws of the human mind by contemplating it in itself; that is, by separating it from causes and effects. Such an attempt, made in defiance of the physiological study of our intellectual organs, and of the observation of rational methods of procedure, cannot succeed at this time of day.\footnote{Ibid., 229-30.}

This insistence on knowledge being positively physiological makes Comte explain other phenomena also from a physicalist basis. However, in spite of having identified all social phenomena as physiological, Comte stresses, and herein lies the political concern in Comte, that social phenomena have to be treated separately. He claims that only when socio-political phenomena enter the sphere of positive sciences that philosophy would become complete:

Though involved with the physiological, Social phenomena demand a distinct classification, both on account of their importance and of their difficulty... This branch of science has not hitherto entered into the domain of Positive philosophy. Theological and metaphysical methods, exploded in other departments, are as yet exclusively applied, both in the way of inquiry and discussion, in all treatment of Social subjects, though the best minds are heartily weary about eternal disputes about divine right and the sovereignty of the people. This is the great, while it is evidently the only gap which has to be filled, to constitute, solid and entire, the Positive Philosophy.\footnote{Ibid., 225-26.}

The purpose of Comte’s Positivism is therefore to create a ‘total’ science that would be able to take into consideration all spheres of human activity from the ‘positive’ perspective of the physical, rather than what is religious and metaphysical. He realizes, however, that such an attempt might be misunderstood as unitary reductionism, an attempt to make everything subservient to one overwhelming law, and he proceeds to explain how the only unity he seeks is in ‘method’, while the doctrine need not be only ‘homogeneous’ and not necessarily one:

Because it is proposed to consolidate the whole of our acquired knowledge into one body of homogeneous doctrine, it must not be supposed that we are going to study this vast variety as proceeding from a single principle, and as subjected to a single law. There is something so chimerical in attempts at universal explanation by a single law, that it may be as well to secure this Work at once from any imputation of the kind... The only necessary unity is that of Method, which is already in great part established. As for the doctrine, it need not be \textit{one}; it is enough that it should be \textit{homogeneous}.\footnote{Ibid., 235-36.}

This duality in Comte, that he talks about a methodical unity and posits tropological unities, while aiming ontologically to deal with disunities, makes him akin to Foucault who, as I have mentioned in the earlier chapter and will explain further in the rest of the thesis, does exactly the same with his archaeological and genealogical method and ‘tri-hierarchist’ tropology. Having established how the spirit of ‘tri-hierarchization’ arises from within the apparently binary post-Renaissance Western philosophy itself, I now turn to two thinkers—Feuerbach and Nietzsche—in whom the blending of the bipolar epistemological categories and the introduction of the notion of power with the debunking of especially the theological hierarchy becomes further formalized, to lead to the possibility of tripartite dehierarchist theory.
V. Feuerbach and the End of Classical Western Philosophy

a. Introducing Feuerbachian Materialism

It has been observed in the preceding sub-sections of this chapter how, after the Renaissance, the primarily binary character of Western philosophy shows certain modulations towards bridging this gap, converting the dichotomy into a tripartition, and introducing the notion of politics (symbolized also by attacks on certain normative hierarchies like religion) into its postulations. These changes could, however, be located, as I have shown, rather disparately in three distinct bodies of philosophy, spanning over three centuries and a score of philosophers. If one is to look for one thinker in whom all these changes are symbolized, I suppose the first such person one would come across is Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872). Feuerbach is important because, apart from the reason I have already stated, he is one of the forerunners of continental Materialism/Empiricism (earlier, it was generally restricted to the British Isles alone), and it is in reaction and relation to him that a lot of later German materialist and politically radical philosophy, including Marxism and Critical Theory would be formulated. I therefore proceed to discuss the basic tenets of Feuerbachian materialism, mostly based on a reading of one of his most important texts, Thoughts on Death and Immortality (1830), and a few of his ‘Epigrams’.

The most obvious feature of Feuerbach’s philosophy would be what I have already stated—that he bridges the gap between the two poles of materialism and idealism in Western thought—and it is no wonder that the anonymous editor (later identified as Johann Adam Stein) of the 1830 text introduces Feuerbach to the reader with the following words:

Whereas previously materialism and subjective idealism were two poles toward which all examination of death and immortality inclined, in this work that which is immortal and everlasting turns out to be the reality, objectivity, and substantiality of Spirit, the spirit from which, in turn, the author deduces death itself.77

Feuerbach makes it clearer, when in an 1845 article, writing about himself in the third person, he claims that he is neither a materialist, nor an idealist, nor even a physicalist, but a person whose philosophical identity is defined only in relation to the community—a communist:

Hence F[eurbach] is not a materialist, nor an idealist, nor a philosopher of identity. What is he then? He is the same in his thought as actually, the same in the spirit as in the flesh, the same in his essence as in his senseimpressions—he is a man or, rather, since F. simply places the essence of man in the community, he is a communal man, a communist.78

77 Johann Adam Stein, ‘Editor’s Foreword’, Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach, Thoughts on Death and Immortality from the Papers of a Thinker, along with an Appendix of Theological-Satirical Epigrams, Edited by One of His Friends (ed. Johann Adam Stein, 1830), trans. James A. Massey, University of California Press, Berkeley: 1980, p. 3.

Marx and Engels were to critique this claim of Feuerbach very strongly, along with the insistence that he did not after all bridge the gap between mind and matter, his philosophy being one dealing only with objective existence. This objection is definitely valid, and I would show how Feuerbach, through his critique of both idealism and materialism, ends up with a new kind of materialism, which might be important in itself, but surely not a 'dialectical materialism'. This comes out very clearly in his 'Epigrams', where Feuerbach attacks not just Rationalists and Mystics but also 'Mediators' between the two, and argues in favour of the Naturalists. This geocentric Naturalism of Feuerbach is clear when he says,

The Plum on Earth is Sweeter
Than the Fig in Heaven
The pains of earth are worse than the sufferings of hell
And the earth yields joys that no heaven could give.79

That such a view can lead to a reductionist empiricism, is evident in the 1830 text when he says, 'The essence of experience appears most clearly and distinctly in sensible enjoyment'80, and I would now examine how Feuerbach forges his brand of materialism.

Feuerbach attacks reason very strongly, using a scatological imagery to describe Kantian philosophy, and shows how rationalism has no capacity for analysing this world:

The Reason of the Rationalists
What they call reason is only the vapor
Collected from the economical dung of Kantian philosophy.81

Correcting his position somewhat, Feuerbach says that while key idealists like Hegel might themselves be wise, current dogmatic Idealism has the role of a mere scavenger:

A Rectification
Why is this Dogmatics proudly called the Hegelian wisdom?
Like the hyena, it is satisfied with mere bones.82

However, discovering the possibility of liberation of knowledge lying within the Idealism that captivates it, Feuerbach shows how the Idealist inanity itself leads one to empiricism:

The Rationality of These Gentlemen
What they call reason is nothing but their own stupidity;
So if you believe their shrieks, you will certainly come to your senses.83

Feuerbach attacks the Mystics too (the diatribe is too obvious to be quoted), and shows that they are totally removed from reality as are the Rationalists:

A Rough Calculation of Their Distance from the Truly Human
Both are as divorced from real humanity as the stuffed bird is divorced from the live one84

80 Ludwig A. Feuerbach, Thoughts on Death and Immortality from the Papers of a Thinker, in Ibid., 51.
81 Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach, 'Epigrams', in 'Appendix' to Ibid., 192.
82 Ibid., 215.
83 Ibid., 182.
84 Ibid., 208.
Having critiqued both these schools, Feuerbach turns to the so-called ‘Mediators’ between them, showing how they are the ‘worst’ of the lot, having imbibed two ‘bad’ philosophies:

The Mediators between Rationalists and Mystics
Mediators are even worse than either one of them!
For bad consorts with bad and always has the worst as its product. 85

Accordingly, Feuerbach can easily turn to empiricism, and announce with sufficient pride:

Prefatory Admonitions and Rejoinders
I am only a surgeon, a totally empirical surgeon;
So do not take offense at the surgeon’s bite. 86

What now needs to be looked into is how Feuerbach constitutes his brand of Materialism.

b. Feuerbach on Death and Immortality

Feuerbach formulates his geocentric naturalist materialist theory taking up the notions of death and immortality (i.e., life after death) as his objects of study. For him, there are three main epochs in the development of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The first epoch is that of the Greeks and the Romans, who had no consciousness of immortality; the second period is the Catholic Christian period of the Middle Ages, when immortality gets introduced as a belief but is restricted only to the divine; it is only in the ‘modern age’ ushered in by Protestantism that human individuals have started conceiving an immortality and life after death for themselves. For Feuerbach, this current belief in a life hereafter has a material basis in the utter ‘nothingness’ that the world has to offer individuals:

Standing on the ruins of the present life, in which he sees nothingness, all at once there awaken in the individual the feeling and consciousness of his own inner nothingness; and in the feeling of this double nothingness there flow from him as from a Scipio on the ruins of Carthage, the compassionate teardrops and soap bubbles of the world of the future. Over the gap that lies between the present life as it really is and his perception and representation of it, over the pores and gaps in his own soul, the individual erects the fools’ bridge of the future life. 87

Clarifying his position further, Feuerbach shows how notions of the hereafter arise from misinterpretation of and lack of fulfilment in the real material world, so that idealist precepts tend to preach a fantastical future world while negating the real world as ephemeral:

For the hereafter is nothing but the mistaken, misconceived, and misinterpreted real world. The subject knows only the shadow, the superficial external appearance of this real world, because he is only shallow and hollow in himself. He mistakes the shadow of the world for the world itself; and his idea of the really true world must be only a shadow, the illusion and fantastical dream of the future world. 88

Feuerbach shows how this illusory wish-fulfilment does not help, because its attempt to fill in the ‘gaps’ in life, fails to bridge the ultimate gap, that of death, after which there is nothing:

85 Ibid., 211.
86 Ibid., 175.
87 Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach, Thoughts on Death and Immortality from the Papers of a Thinker, along with an Appendix of Theological-Satirical Epigrams, Edited by One of His Friends (ed. Johann Adam Stein, 1830), trans. James A. Massey, University of California Press, Berkeley: 1980, p. 15.
88 Ibid., 15.
While you imagine that creation can be made perfect and complete only by your filling out those empty spaces, while being swept away by the steam engine of your eccentric brain, you overlook a lack, a gap on earth that has not been filled. And this gap, which cries out to heaven, this most dreadful of all lacks, this empty space, which should have been a stumbling block for you before you cried out against the desolation of heaven, this great rent in creation, is the end, the limit, the negation of life itself, is death. For there is no life in death; it is the purest desolation, the most dreadful gap in life.  

Feuerbach proves that there cannot be a life after death not just from a materialist conviction, but also because as he shows, such a concept will be utterly incongruous with the real life one has in this world. He says, 'For if there is life after death, there cannot be life before death; one excludes the other; the present life cancels the future life, the future life cancels the present life.' Accordingly, Feuerbach demolishes all possibility of a 'second life' saying,

You can exist only once;
Submit your will to this.
All truth, Spirit, nature
Exist only once.
Life is life only
Because there cannot be a second life.

Feuerbach carries his argument further into the domain of religion to show how the belief in life after death can only be afforded by 'cowardly clerics', while for individuals like him, who have nothing to do with religion (as will be shown soon), it is only the actuality of this life that matters and not the religious promise of resurrection or heavenly bliss. He says,

Let cowardly clerics
Fall in love with the hereafter!
Only my pain is left to me,
Only my loving burning heart.

Having already criticised an important Christian precept, Feuerbach turns next to another, that of Genesis, to show how though the world may have been created by a Spirit, the current state of nature is completely at disjunction with it. For Feuerbach, it is not the ideal dream of redemption but the definiteness of death that is the real finality for human life:

To be sure, Spirit engendered the world;
But death alone enlightens nature.
Being first becomes clear in death,
So being exists entirely in death.

While on the one hand, this argument on death and immortality clearly shows Feuerbach's materialism, where he privileges what is concrete and palpable over the imaginary, on the other, it has a serious implication. The purpose of conceiving a futuristic dream, be it life hereafter or the dream of political liberation, is individuation. The moment Feuerbach rejects its possibility, and conceives of the being only in relation to nothingness, he rejects the 'self' itself. Accordingly, I will examine now how he negates the category of the 'self'.

89 Ibid., 80.
90 Ibid., 133.
91 Ibid., 143.
92 Ibid., 146.
93 Ibid., 156.
c. **Feuerbach and the Negation of the ‘Self’**

The assertion in Feuerbach of the transitory nature of the human being makes him deny human subjectivity, whereby he rejects ‘self-consciousness’ as subjective knowledge, and proposes a societal and altruistic collective consciousness articulated through ‘love’:

Do you know self-consciousness only in its driest, emptiest, and most limited determination? Are there not degrees of personhood? Is self-consciousness present only when the person knows only himself, when nothing but the person exists in the person? Is not love self-consciousness, and is it not also profound enjoyment, the greatest of all self-feeling? But is the self that you feel in love the juridical, excluding, distinguishing self, a self that is only self-contained and self-knowing?  

It can be understood that Feuerbach does not deny existence *per se* to the human, but only rejects the possibility of an individual being a ‘pure’ transcendental subject. For him, the human being is a particular object. He says, ‘The human is not nothing, but he is also not pure being; he is this distinct being or something.’ To establish this objective non-ideational status of the individual, Feuerbach shows how the human is spatially bound and empirically perceivable, quite unlike ‘nonspatial’ ideational constructs like reason and thought:

Individuals must be spatially external to one another and thus must exist spatially. Thinking, reason, consciousness are nonspatial, but these are not individuals; nonspatiality excludes individuality... That which the concept, the thought, does not distinguish, the essence does not distinguish; but only the senses distinguish individuals.

Having established how the individual is bound to space, Feuerbach shows how he or she is temporally bound too, with the ‘being’ existing only in the ‘momentary present’:

Your being is always restricted to the momentary present. You exist only as long as you are present during the moment. The past, even if it lives in your recollection, is no longer being. Being is only present of the moment, which disappears together with its being.

This makes the difference between the individual and the Spirit complete in Feuerbachian philosophy, because being spatio-temporally bound, the individual can only have a corporeal existence, quite disjunct from the ideational existence of a disembodied Spirit:

Spirit exists without body and beyond body, for its existence is thinking, knowledge, and will. But the individual, who is not Spirit, but lives only by participation in Spirit, does not exist without a body. Rather, as a temporally and spatially determined being, the individual of necessity is a corporeally living or a live corporeal being; the individual is an individual only in this, his corporeal life.

In fact, for Feuerbach, the insistence on the transcendental self and the notion of the individual being imbued with Spirit stems from a fantastical covering up of a basic lack:

In fact, you have a presentiment of the real body in your representations of the transcendent body, but only in dreams, only in fantastical pictures, and thus you fill out your lack of knowledge by means of your imaginings.

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95 *Ibid.*, 42.
What is most interesting in this denial of subjectivity to the individual is that Feuerbach does not reject the concept of 'soul', i.e., of one fundamental origin to all phenomena, but only shifts it from the 'self' to the 'earth'. Instead of conceiving the human being as having an agency, he credits the earth and its natural material laws as the 'purpose' of the universe:

...since it is absolutely certain that several humans do not live in one human, that there is only one soul in a body, so it is absolutely certain that, in all of creation, there exists but one animated and ensouled point, and that this point is the earth, which is the soul and the purpose of the great cosmos.100

This points towards the Feuerbachian brand of materialism, which I have characterized as a geocentric naturalism, and as I will show soon, his rejection of human subjectivity and giving substance an autonomy becomes a most important point in the Marxian critique of Feuerbach.

d. Feuerbach and the Rejection of Religion

It has already been shown how Feuerbach attacks certain Christian precepts like resurrection, redemption, and Genesis, but now I will give some concrete instances of how he rejects the institution of religion itself, and sets up his materialistic doctrine in its place. The fundamental question that Feuerbach raises with regard to religion is that since humanity has evolved a lot from the days of Christ, whether people should still bother about religion:

A Question
Has not humanity become older since the birth of Christ,
And, with years, come further along in understanding?
Should humans still suck at the scriptural pacifier
And, having fully matured, imbibe only watered-down pap?101

Carrying on with his image of suckling, Feuerbach shows further, how Christianity and its holy book have dried up and died as sources of human knowledge and ethics:

A Dismal Outcome
For centuries they have sucked at the udder of the Bible
So that it is now empty once and for all—even the cow died!102

Having established the inutility and the anachronistic nature of religious doctrines, Feuerbach proceeds next to attack two fundamental notions of Christianity: faith and sin. Talking of faith first, he shows how this category can only aggravate problems and not solve them:

The Power of Faith
"Faith moves mountains!" Certainly! Faith does not solve
Difficult problems; it only pushes them aside.103

Talking about sin next, Feuerbach shows how the Fall actually aided the theologians as they could make a living out of the notion of sin, and make the Christian regime rule:

100 Ibid., 62.
102 Ibid., 178.
103 Ibid., 189.
Subverting the notion of the original sin even further, Feuerbach shows how Eve did the right thing by tempting Adam into sinning, because her act introduced the prudish and unnecessarily moralistic Adam to the actual needs of reality. He says,

**Examples of the Most Glorious and Noble Deeds of Women**

(1) The Fall

"Eve led Adam astray." I certainly am not upset by the fact

That she finally pulled the night cap off the head of the pious fool.  

Such a statement has three major implications. First, it critiques the concept of sin as Christianity understands it and thereby attacks religion itself. Secondly, it preaches the doctrine of a relative situational morality, instead of a fixed set of personal codes, much like what Rousseau or Shaw talk about. Finally, Feuerbach here attacks another hierarchy, that of gender, much in the lines of Bentham or Condorcet, debunking both the stereotypes of woman as either passive or an evil enchantress. What all these points indicate is the substitution of Christianity with a new doctrine, that of corporeal materiality. Feuerbach says,

**A Modest Wish**

Should we be Christians? It would be better to be healthy;

Only medicine and chemistry can still give us health.

This is finally the status that Feuerbach would like to give his philosophy, but after having discussed its postulates, I would now turn to the Marxian critique of the same.

e. The Marxian Critique of Feuerbach

Engels sums up Feuerbach most succinctly in his 1845 text on him, where he shows how Feuerbach errs on three grounds: philosophically, by making the human being totally subservient to substance; anthropologically, by proposing a repetitive physiology and a falsely altruistic psychology; and morally, by suggesting a fluid ‘humane’ morality. He says,

The entire philosophy of Feuerbach amounts to 1. Philosophy of nature—passive adoration of nature and enraptured kneeling down before its splendour and omnipotence. 2. Anthropology, namely a) physiology, where nothing new is added to what the materialists have already said about the unity of body and soul, but it is said less mechanically and with rather more exuberance, b) psychology, which amounts to dithyrambs glorifying love, analogous to the cult of nature, apart from that nothing new. 3. Morality, the demand to live up to the concept of “man”, *impuissance mise en action."

Marx, in his 1845 theses on Feuerbach, shows how he relies wholly on the object and leaves out the notion of active human cognition, thereby precluding from his thought any possibility of resistant human action through ‘revolutionary’ or ‘critical’ practice. Marx says,

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104 Ibid., 189.
105 Ibid., 250.
106 Ibid., 231.
The chief defect of all previous materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that things [Gegenstand], reality, sensuousness are conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively... Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinct from conceptual objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as objective activity... Hence he does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary", of "practical-critical", activity.108

In The German Ideology (1845-46), Marx and Engels show further that Feuerbach's materialist conception of the human being is ahistorical, and therefore unreal and immaterial:

...in reality and for the practical materialist, i.e., the Communist, it is a question of revolutionising the existing world of practically coming to grips with and changing the things found in existence. When occasionally we find such views with Feuerbach, they are never more than isolated surmises and have much too little influence on his general outlook... Feuerbach's "conception" of the sensuous world is confined on the one hand to mere contemplation of it, and on the other to mere feeling; he posits "Man" instead of "real historical man".109

Feuerbach comes under Marxian critique on a dual ground concerning the status of the human subject. On the one hand, he fails to give the human being any active subjectivity; on the other, he essentializes the human being as a physicalist unit, without taking into consideration the socio-political and historical factors that go into his or her framing. For Marx and Engels,

Certainly Feuerbach has a great advantage over the "pure" materialists since he realises that man too is an "object of the senses", not as "sensuous activity", because he still remains in the realm of theory and conceives of men not in their given social connection, not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are, he never arrives at the actually existing, active men, but stops at the abstraction "man", and gets no further than recognising "the actual, individual, corporeal man" emotionally... As far as Feuerbach is a materialist he does not deal with history, and as far as he considers history he is not a materialist. With him materialism and history diverge completely...110

This lack of history resists Feuerbachian materialism from graduating into historical materialism, just as the lack of human activity stops it from being dialectical materialism. The result is status-quoism, where one cannot conceive of class struggle and revolutionary ethics.

Feuerbach's whole deduction with regard to the relation of men to one another is only aimed at proving that men need and always have needed each other. He wants to establish consciousness of this fact, that is to say, that is to say, like the other theorists, he merely wants to produce a correct consciousness about an existing fact; whereas for the real communist it is a question of overthrowing the existing state of things.111

I can end this discussion of Feuerbach with Marx's last thesis on him, which sums up the difference between Feuerbachian materialism and that which is required to really unmask hierarchies: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."112 I will move on next to the other figure in contention—Nietzsche.

109 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The German Ideology (1845-46), Progress Publishers, Moscow: 1976, p. 44.
110 Ibid., 46-47.
111 Ibid., 65.
VI. Nietzsche: Substituting the ‘Philosophy’ of Truth with a ‘Theory’ of Power

a. Nietzsche and the Beginning of a New Mode of Thought

Feuerbach represents the end of Classical Western philosophy, but it is with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) that the vacuum thus created is finally filled up. The space left vacant by the abandonment of philosophy and its search for ‘truth’ is filled by Nietzsche with his new mode of thought—that of ‘power’—thereby laying the foundation of what would be called ‘theory’ in the future. Though the twentieth-century theoreticians of power would reject many of Nietzsche’s reactionary hypotheses, it is no doubt Nietzsche who first starts the sort of analysis that they would take up. No wonder, Foucault was so strongly influenced by Nietzsche (see Chapter 7, section II, p.308 ff.), and he says in the last interview of his life, in 1984, that he is a Nietzschean, even when he differs from Nietzsche:

I am simply Nietzschean, and I try to see, on a number of points, and to the extent that it is possible, with the aid of Nietzsche’s texts—but also with anti-Nietzschean theses (which are nevertheless Nietzschean!)—what can be done in this or that domain. I’m not looking for anything else but I am really searching for that.113

The first movement towards this new mode of thought in Nietzsche comes in the way that I have already identified as symptomatic of post-Renaissance Western thought, i.e., a denial of both Idealism and Materialism, and setting up the third category of ‘Physicalism’. Nietzsche says in his autobiographical Ecce Homo (1890, pub. 1908) that he always kept himself away from German Idealism, which pursues problematic ‘ideal goals’ instead of reality:

Only the utter worthlessness of our German culture—its “idealism”—can to some extent explain how it was that precisely in this matter I was so backward that my ignorance was almost saintly. For this “culture” from first to last teaches one to lose sight of realities and instead to hunt after thoroughly problematic, so-called ideal goals…114

In Beyond Good and Evil (1886), Nietzsche moves beyond Germany to Platonism as well as Vedanta philosophy to show how all Idealism is dogmatic and a ‘caricature’ of reality:

It seems that in order to inscribe themselves upon the heart of humanity with everlasting claims, all great things have first to wander about the earth as enormous and awe-inspiring caricatures: dogmatic philosophy has been a caricature of this kind—for instance, the Vedanta doctrine in Asia, and Platonism in Europe. Let us not be ungrateful to it, although it must certainly be confessed that the worst, most tiresome, and the most dangerous of errors hitherto has been a dogmatist error—namely Plato’s invention of the Pure Spirit and the Good in Itself.115

Returning to German Idealism, Nietzsche shows how the Kantian insistence on the transcendental human faculty and Schelling’s category of ‘intellectual intuition’ are quite comical, and the fundamental Idealist question has to be replaced with a questioning of itself:


115 Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (Jenseits Gut und Böse, 1886), trans. Helen Zimmern, in Ibid., 378.
Kant was first and foremost proud of his *Table of Categories*. He was proud of having discovered a new faculty in man, the faculty of synthetic judgment *a priori*. “How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?” Kant asks himself—and what is really his answer? “By means of a means (faculty)”... Kant further discovered a moral faculty in man. Above all a faculty for the “transcendental”; Schelling christened it, intellectual intuition... But such replies belong to the realm of comedy, and it is high time to replace the Kantian question, “How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?” by another question, “Why is belief in such judgments necessary?”

Having rejected the Kantian and Hegelian sort of Idealism, Nietzsche provides in *The Will to Power* (1901) the ‘Dionysian’ alternative philosophy based on iconoclastic sensuality:

> We shall not allow ourselves to be deceived either in Kant’s or Hegel’s way:— We no longer believe, as they did, in morality, and therefore have no philosophies to found with the vies of justifying morality. Criticism and history have no charm for us in this respect: what is their charm, then?... My first solution to the problem: Dionysian wisdom. The joy in the destruction of the most noble thing.

Similarly, Nietzsche rejects ‘atomistic’ Materialism too in his *Beyond Good and Evil*, saying,

> As regards materialistic atomism, it is one of the best refuted theories that have been advanced, and in Europe now there is perhaps no one in the learned world so unscholarly as to attach serious signification to it, except for convenient everyday use... thanks chiefly to the Pole Boscovich: he and the Pole Copernicus have hitherto been the greatest and most successful opponents of ocular evidence...one must also above all give the finishing stroke to that other and most portentous atomism which Christianity has taught best and longest, the soul-atomism.

Having rejected both Idealism and Materialism, Nietzsche turns predictably to the third option of ‘Physicalism’, and shows in *Ecce Homo* how food, nutrition and health are constitutive of human knowledge. He takes the argument further in his *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85), showing how the belief in ‘soul’ is childish, and it is the ‘body’ that is the only human reality:

> “Body am I, and soul”—so saith the child. And why should one speak like children? But the awakened one, the knowing one saith: “Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body.”...

> An instrument of thy body is also thy little sagacity, my brothers, which thou callest “spirit”—a little instrument and plaything of thy big sagacity. “Ego”, sayest thou, and art proud of that word. But the greater thing—in which thou art unwilling to believe is thy body with its big sagacity; it saith not “ego”, but doeth it.

Accordingly, one of the ‘remedies of modernity’ that Nietzsche offers in *The Will to Power* is ‘The predominance of physiology over theology, morality, economics, and politics.’

Nietzsche sums up his physicalist thesis with the following statement in the text: ‘The belief

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116 Ibid., 391-92.
119 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None (Also Sprach Zarathustra: ein Buch für Alle und keinen*, 1883-85), trans. Thomas Common, in Ibid., 32.
in the body is more fundamental than the belief in the soul: the latter arose from the unscientific observation of the agonies of the body.\textsuperscript{121} Beyond this obvious change in bridging the gap between mind and matter and providing for the third category of body, the new mode of thought in Nietzsche shows certain other features, also constitutive of the Foucauldian sort of thinking. The first feature is that of plurality, and he says in the same text,

> The assumption of single subject is perhaps not necessary. It may be equally permissible to assume a plurality of subjects, whose interaction and struggle lie at the bottom of our thought and our consciousness in general... My hypothesis: The subject as a plurality.\textsuperscript{122}

The second feature is that of debunking the Idealist notion of causality and Nietzsche says, ‘There is no such thing as a cause or an effect...the interpretation of causality is an illusion... There is no such thing as a sense of causality, as Kant would have us believe.’\textsuperscript{123} Accordingly, the thrust of Nietzschean philosophy is, much like what would be in Foucault, what he describes in the same text as ‘To combat determinism and teleology.’\textsuperscript{124}

Thus, it is clear how Nietzsche introduces a new mode of thought that was clearly influential for the type of thought this thesis deals with. Interestingly, Nietzsche himself recognizes his devastating potential and his value for posterity when he says in Ecce Homo,

> I know my destiny. Some day my name will be bound up with the recollection of something terrific—of a crisis, quite unprecedented, of the most profound clash of consciences, and the decisive condemnation of all that therefore had been believed, required, hallowed. I am not a man, I am a dynamite.\textsuperscript{125}

In The Will to Power, Nietzsche observes how his philosophy holds the key to the future:

> My philosophy reveals the triumphant thought through which all other systems of thought must ultimately perish. It is the great disciplinary thought: those races that cannot bear it are doomed; those which regard it as the greatest blessing are destined to rule.\textsuperscript{126}

What really constitutes this change brought about by Nietzsche is his insistence on ‘Will to Power’ as the fundamental category of this world. In his text on the subject, he says,

> A solution to all your riddles? Do ye want a light, ye most concealed, strongest, and most unwanted men of the blackest midnight?—This world is the will to Power—and nothing else! And even ye yourselves are this will to power—and nothing besides!\textsuperscript{127}

Therefore, it is this Nietzschean category of ‘Will to Power’ that I take up next for discussion.


\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 18.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 57.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 58.


\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 432.
b. *The 'Will to Truth' and the 'Will to Power'*

In analysing his fundamental category of the 'Will to Power', Nietzsche first looks at the concept of 'Will' as understood in traditional philosophy. In this context, he critiques, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, the Schopenhauerian concept of the apodictic subjective Will:

There are still harmless self-observers who believe that there are "immediate certainties"; for instance, "I think", or as the superstition of Schopenhauer puts it, "I will"; as though cognition here got hold of its object purely and simply as "the thing in itself", without any falsification taking place either on the part of the subject or the object.\(^{128}\)

For Nietzsche, such a simplistic unified notion of the Will as completely knowable is definitely inadequate and he shows in the same text how the Will is much more complicated:

Philosophers are accustomed to speak of the will as though it were the best-known thing in the world; indeed, Schopenhauer has given us to understand that the will alone is really known to us, absolutely and completely known, without deduction or addition. But it again and again seems to me that in this case Schopenhauer also only did what philosophers are in the habit of doing—he seems to have adopted a popular prejudice and exaggerated it. Willing—seems to me to be above all something complicated, something that is a unity only in name—and it is precisely in a name that popular prejudice links, which has got the mastery over the inadequate precautions of philosophers in all ages.\(^{129}\)

Nietzsche deduces from this that the Idealist notion of absolute freedom of the will is not something that is unconditional and universal but something that is bound to a play of power, or that the very notion of 'free will' engenders a social game of commanding and obeying:

That which is termed "freedom of the will" is essentially the emotion of supremacy in respect to him who must obey: "I am free, 'he' must obey"—this consciousness is inherent in every will... A man who *wills* commands something within himself which renders obedience, or which he believes renders obedience... In all willing it is absolutely a question of commanding and obeying, on the basis, as already said, of a social structure composed of many "souls"; on which account a philosopher should claim the right to include willing-as-such within the sphere of morals—regarded as the doctrine of the relations of supremacy under which the phenomenon of "life" manifests itself.\(^{130}\)

Thus, for Nietzsche, the act of willing cannot be understood as an *a priori*, and one cannot conceive of an absolute freedom for the Will. For Nietzsche, the Will is essentially bound to power and as he says, 'in real life it is only a question of strong and weak wills.'\(^{131}\)

To establish the act of willing as basically an act in the exercise of power, Nietzsche first compares the 'Will to Power' to the more traditionally conceived 'Will to Truth'. Traditional philosophy points out that the human being is possessed by an insatiable will to know the truth and this is how knowledge proceeds. For Nietzsche, however, this is an unsatisfactory explanation, because it fails to account for why people would crave for the truth and not the 'untruth'. What Nietzsche suggests in *Beyond Good and Evil* is that this is so because systems of knowledge, which are linked to power, privilege the one over the other:

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\(^{129}\) Ibid., 399.

\(^{130}\) Ibid., 400-01.

\(^{131}\) Ibid., 404.
The Will to Truth, which is to tempt us to a many a hazardous enterprise, the famous Truthfulness of which all philosophers have hitherto spoken with respect, what questions has this Will to Truth not laid before us!... Who is it really that puts questions to us here? What really is this "Will to Truth" in us? In fact we made a long halt at the question as to the origin of this Will—until at last, we came to an absolute standstill before a yet more fundamental question. We inquired about the value of this Will. Granted that we want the truth: why not rather untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance? Nietzsche comes to the conclusion that instead of an impersonal and subjective 'impulse to knowledge', which might work only for the exact sciences, what produces more and more knowledge in philosophy is a 'confession', either under duress or in the act to exercise power:

It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of—namely the confession of its originator... Accordingly, I do not believe that an "impulse to knowledge" is the father of philosophy; but that another impulse, here as elsewhere, has only made use of knowledge (and mistaken knowledge!) as an instrument... To be sure...in the case of really scientific men...there may really be such a thing as an "impulse to knowledge"... In the philosopher, on the contrary, there is absolutely nothing impersonal...

For Nietzsche, therefore, what is at the bottom of the production of knowledge, social formations and representations, and human comportment is not the neutral and benign 'Will to Truth', but a violent 'Will to Power'. He says, rather poetically, in Thus Spake Zarathustra,

"Will to Truth" do ye call it...that which impelleth you and maketh you ardent? Will for the thinkableness of all being: thus do I call your will!...That is your entire will, ye wisest ones, as a Will to Power...

Your will and your valuations have ye put on the river of becoming; it betrayeth unto me an old Will to Power, what is believed by the people as good and evil.

Onward the river now carrieth your boat: it must carry it. A smaller matter if the rough wave foameth and angrily resisteth its keel!

It is not the river that is your danger and the end of your good and evil, ye wisest ones: but that Will itself, the Will to Power—the unexhausted, procreating life-will.

Having identified his fundamental category, Nietzsche shows in The Will to Power, a text dedicated to its study, how an understanding of the creation and sustenance of this world can only be 'complete' when this concept is considered akin to the concept of 'energy' in physics:

The triumphant concept "energy", with which our physicists created God and the world, needs yet to be completed: it must be given an inner will which I characterise as the "Will to Power"—that is to say as an insatiable desire to manifest power: or the application and exercise of power as a creative instinct, etc.

Aiming to study this 'Will to Power' next, Nietzsche shows how it cannot be done in relation to 'morals', because the exercise of power often precludes morality, and this can be seen in the works of those who preach morals themselves. He suggests instead that this Will needs to be studied as a psychological phenomenon, in the economy of pleasure that it produces:

132 Ibid., 381.
133 Ibid., 386-87.
The "Will to Truth" would have to be examined psychologically: it is not a moral power, but a form of the Will to Power. This would have to be proved by the fact that it avails itself of every immoral means there is: above all, those of the metaphysicians.\(^\text{136}\)

To connect this psychological quest and the Will to Power being productive of knowledge, Nietzsche talks of 'interpretation', about which he says, 'In sooth, all interpretation is but a means in itself to become a master of something.'\(^\text{137}\) Nietzsche shows in the text how this working principle of the Will to Power is exemplified in science, nature, society and art.

Knowledge thus becomes intrinsically connected to an exercise of power, and Nietzsche shows in *Beyond Good and Evil*, how, as opposed to the Kantian-Hegelian type dabbling with 'truth' and 'values', the 'real philosophers' are 'commanders and law-givers':

The philosophical workers, after the excellent pattern of Kant and Hegel, have to fix and formalise some great existing body of valuations—that is to say, former determinations of value, creations of value, which have become prevalent, and are for a time called "truths"—whether in the domain of the logical, the political (moral), or the artistic... *The real philosophers, however, are commanders and law-givers... Their "knowing" is creating, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is—Will to Power.*\(^\text{138}\)

This makes Nietzsche forward a very important and striking thesis: 'Almost everything that we call "higher culture" is based upon the spiritualising and intensifying of *cruelty*—this is my thesis.'\(^\text{139}\) Making the violent game of power his fundamental ethical category, Nietzsche gives a call in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* to pursue 'war' rather than 'work and 'peace':

Your enemy shall ye seek; your war shall ye wage, and for the sake of your thoughts!
And if your thoughts succumb, your uprightness shall still shout triumph thereby!
Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars—and the short peace more than the long.
You I advise not to work, but to fight. You I advise not to peace, but to victory. Let your work be a fight, let your peace be a victory!\(^\text{140}\)

I have mentioned the connection of power to the economy of desire. Nietzsche explains this in *The Will to Power* saying, 'Man has one terrible and fundamental wish: he desires power.'\(^\text{141}\)

Connecting this desire to pleasure, he says, 'Pleasure appears with the feeling of power. *Happiness* means that power and triumph has entered into our consciousness.'\(^\text{142}\) This connects knowledge to happiness, founding what Nietzsche would call the 'Gay Science'.

\(^{136}\) *Ibid.*, 84.


\(^{139}\) *Ibid.*, 535.


c. Knowledge and Happiness: the ‘Gay Science’

In postulating on how knowledge originated, Nietzsche points out in *The Will to Power* that the ‘origin’ of thought cannot be traced. He however insists that this does not mean that knowledge is primordial and absolute, and it can be found *in situ* in life itself:

The *origin* of thought, like that of feelings, cannot be traced: but that is no proof of its primordiality or absoluteness! It simply shows that we cannot get *behind it*, because we have nothing else save thought and feeling. ¹⁴³

This insistence on knowledge being articulated in corporeal life itself, and the earlier insistence on knowledge resting in a Will to Power that entails pleasure, are coupled together in the Nietzschean category of ‘Gay Science’, or what the translators call ‘joyful wisdom’, and as Nietzsche shows in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), this gaiety is the price the human subject is willing to exact to let itself and its knowledge be taken seriously:

1...think that there are no subjects which *pay* better for being taken seriously; part of this payment is, that perhaps eventually they admit being taken *gaily*. This gaiety, indeed, or, to use my own language, this *joyful wisdom*, is a payment: a payment for a protracted, brave, laborious and burrowing seriousness... ¹⁴⁴

Nietzsche writes a separate volume, *The Joyful Wisdom* (1882) on the subject, in which he shows how in spite of the basis of knowledge being joyful, knowledge has always been considered sombre and renunciatory because of a paucity of ‘genius’ in the philosophers:

To laugh at oneself as one would have to laugh in order to laugh *out the veriest truth*,—to do this the best have not hitherto had enough of the sense of truth, and the most endowed have had far too little genius! ¹⁴⁵

This association of knowledge with pleasure does not mean, however, that Nietzsche takes the beaten track of the Utilitarians, proposing that the purpose of ‘science’ is to maximize pleasure and minimize pains for the human race. He says instead that the ‘pleasure’ of knowledge is connected to a possibly simultaneous enunciation of pain and sorrow:

*The Goal of Science*—What? The ultimate goal of science is to create the most pleasure possible to man, and the least possible pain? But what if pleasure and pain should be so closely connected that he who *wants* the greatest possible amount of the one *must* also have the greatest possible amount of the other,—that he who wants to experience the “heavenly high jubilation”, must also be ready to be “sorrowful unto death”? ¹⁴⁶

This is so because for Nietzsche, pleasure is not an extraneous teleology for knowledge, but one that arises from within the power play that knowledge is, and like any exercise of power, knowledge entails sorrow within its dispensation of joy. This is how Nietzsche connects the whole system of pleasure and pain, ‘good’ and ‘evil’ to a system of exercise of power:


The Theory of the Sense of Power.—We exercise our power over others by doing them good or by doing them ill—that is all we care for! Doing ill on those on whom we have to make our power felt... Doing good and being kind to those who are in any way already dependent on us... we want to increase their power, because we thus increase our own; or we want to show them the advantage there is in being in our power,—they thus become more contented with their position, and more hostile to the enemies of our power and readier to contend with them.¹⁴⁷

Nietzsche tries to analyse the ‘origin’ of knowledge from this perspective, and shows how current knowledge is nothing but a game of power, where there is a constant attempt on the part of the thinker to use rational doubt, and disprove ‘errors’ of philosophical findings of the past, the resultant ‘Will to Truth’ being articulated only in a battle between propositions:

Origin of Knowledge.—Throughout immense stretches of time the intellect has produced nothing but errors; some of them proved to be useful and preservative of the species... Those erroneous articles of faith which were successively transmitted by inheritance, and have finally become almost the property and stock of the human species... It was only very late that the deniers and doubters of such propositions came forward... From that moment, not only belief and conviction, but also examination, denial distrust and contradiction became forces, all “evil” instincts were subordinated to knowledge, were placed in its service... Knowledge, thus became a portion of life itself, and as life it became a continually growing power... The thinker is now the being in whom the impulse to truth and those life-preserving errors wage their first conflict, now that the impulse to truth has also proved itself to be a life-preserving power.¹⁴⁸

This view of knowledge being a site of bitter struggles disproves Spinoza’s claim of knowing being a pure intellectual act, which involves no derision, no lamentation, no hatred for other propositions. Nietzsche shows how knowledge involves precisely these three acts, it being the site for a violent battle between views, and impulses of power accepting or rejecting the same:

What does Knowing Mean?—Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere! says Spinoza, so simply and sublimely, as is his wont. Nevertheless, what else is this intelligere ultimately, but just the form in which the three other things become perceptible to us all at once? A result of the diverging and opposite impulses of desiring to deride, lament and execrate?...[intelligere] is only a certain relation of the impulses to one another.¹⁴⁹

It is in keeping this view of knowledge as originating from a play of power in mind that Nietzsche says that knowledge is aimed at ‘joy’. For him, the unfamiliar always poses a threat to the human being, a ‘fear’, and knowledge is nothing but an attempt to know the unknown, and get the joyful satisfaction of having quietened the anxiety raised by the unfamiliar:

The Origin of our Conception of “Knowledge”... What do the people really understand by knowledge? what do they want when they seek “knowledge”? Nothing more than that what is strange is to be traced back to something known. And we philosophers—have we really understood anything more by knowledge?...is our need of knowing not just this need of the known? The will to discover in everything strange, unusual, or questionable, something which no longer disquiets us? Is it not possible that it should be the instinct of fear which enjoins upon us to know?¹⁵⁰

Having discussed Nietzsche’s notion of knowledge as originating from power and producing ‘joy’, I would now turn to Nietzsche’s views on morality and standard religious practice.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 49-50.
¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 153-56.
¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 257.
¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 308.
d. *The Nietzschean Notion of Morality and Religion*

It has already been mentioned how the Nietzschean notion of knowledge poses itself against morality, and the established notions of assuming the 'good' to be necessarily desirable, and the 'evil' despicable. Nietzsche preaches, on the contrary, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, how 'evil' is the 'best force' of human beings, saying, "Man is evil"—so said to me for consolation, all the wisest ones. Ah, if only it be still true today! For the evil is man's best force. "Man must become better and eviler"—so do I teach.151 He shows, in the same text, how there should be no frozen categorization of the good and bad, so that 'immoral' categories like voluptuousness, passion for power and selfishness might be situationally good:

Voluptuousness, passion for power, and selfishness: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute—these three things will I weigh...

Voluptuousness: only to the withered a sweet poison; to the lion-willed, however, the great cordial, and the reverently saved wine of wines...

Passion for power: but who would call it passion, when the height longeth to stoop for power! Verily, nothing sick or diseased is there in such longing and descending!

And then it happened also,—and verily, it happened for the first time!—that his word blessed selfishness, the wholesome, healthy selfishness, that springeth from the powerful soul...to which the high body appertaineth, the handsome, triumphing, refreshing body, around which everything becometh a mirror...152

Accordingly, he shows in *The Genealogy of Morals* how morality is not pre-ordained and decided upon once and for all by God, but a system that is situationally 'invented' by human beings, and he attempts to study the conditions under which this morality gets invented:

Indeed, at the boyish age of thirteen the problem of the origin of Evil already haunted me: at an age "when games and God divide one's heart", I devoted to that problem my first childish attempt at the literary game, my first philosophic essay—and as regards my infantile solution to the problem, well, I gave quite properly the honour to God, and made him the father of evil... Fortunately, I soon learned to separate theological from moral prejudices, and I gave up looking for a supernatural origin of evil... [I] succeeded in transforming almost immediately my original problem into the following one:—Under what conditions did man invent for himself those judgments of values, "Good" and "Evil"? *And what intrinsic value do they possess in themselves?*153

Therefore, Nietzsche proposes in his 'genealogy' of morality to 'critique' moral values, trace their conditions of origin, and also possibly invert the very categories of 'good' and 'evil':

Let us speak out this new demand: we need a critique of moral values...and for this purpose a knowledge is necessary of the condition and circumstances out of which these values grew, and under which they experience their evolution and their distortion... No one has, up to the present, exhibited the faintest doubt or hesitation in judging the "good man" to be of a higher value than the "evil man", of a higher value with regard specifically to human progress, utility and prosperity generally... Suppose the converse were the truth!... So that morality would really be saddled with the guilt... So that really morality would be the danger of dangers?154


Nietzsche shows, in *The Will to Power*, that some values get regarded as morality and people come to have ‘faith’ in it because of a system of dominance dictated by the Will to Power:

*Fundamental problem:* whence comes this almighty power of *Faith*? Whence this faith in morality?... What is the actual worth of our valuations and tables of moral laws? *What is the outcome of their dominion?* For whom? In relation to what?—answer: for Life. But what is Life? A new and more definite concept of what “Life” is, becomes necessary here. My formula of this concept is: Life is Will to Power.¹⁵⁵

In analysing how the Will to Power dispenses with morality, Nietzsche identifies in the same text four grounds for it—the economic, the aesthetic, the political, and the psychological:

Morality may be thus justified:—

*Economically,*—as aiming at the greatest possible use of all individual power, with the view of preventing the waste of exceptional natures.

*Æsthetically,*—as the formation of fixed types, and the pleasure in one’s own.

*Politically,*—as the art of bearing with the severe divergences of the degrees of power in society.

*Psychologically,*—as the imaginary preference for the bungled and the mediocrite, in order to preserve the weak.¹⁵⁶

While he identifies the domains through which power acts on human life to create morality, what remains to be seen is what the design of this power is, and Nietzsche shows how the design of morality is to impose the ethics of the mediocre and the weak over the exceptional:

What is the meaning of this *will to power on the part of moral values*, which has played such a part in the world’s prodigious evolutions?

*Answer:*—Three powers lie concealed behind it: (1) The instinct of the herd as opposed to the strong and the independent; (2) the instinct of all sufferers and all abortions opposed to the happy and well-constituted; (3) the instinct of the mediocre opposed to the exceptions.¹⁵⁷

Such a view has a major outcome: it is clearly against the Christian doctrine of privileging the weak, and I take up how Nietzsche attacks religion forthwith.

The connection between religion and morality being obvious, the very fact that Nietzsche demolishes morality also makes him demolish traditional Christianity, and he says in his *Ecce Homo* that his greatest achievement is having ‘unmasked’ Christian morality:

What defines me, what places me apart from the rest of humanity, is the fact that I *unmasked* Christian morality... Christian morality is the most pernicious form of the will to falsehood, the real Circe of humanity, that has corrupted it.¹⁵⁸

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Nietzsche shows in *The Will to Power* how as opposed to a God having created human beings, it is human beings who out of their ignorance provide for religions and gods:

*The origin of religion.*—Just as the illiterate man of to-day believes that his wrath is the cause of his being angry, that his mind is the cause of his thinking, that his soul is the cause of his feeling...so, in a still more primitive age, the same phenomena were interpreted by man by means of personal entities. Those conditions of his soul which seemed strange, overwhelming, and rapturous, he regarded as obsessions and bewitching influences emanating from the power of some personality.159

This is why its insistence on being primordial makes religion and its institutions and beliefs, what Nietzsche calls, ‘the holy lie’, and Nietzsche shows how religious practices are perpetrated to establish the supremacy of a particular class through its Will to Power:

We find a class of men, the *sacerdotal class*, who consider themselves the standard pattern, the highest example and most perfect expression of the type man. The notion of “improving” mankind, to this class of men, means to make mankind like themselves. They believe in their own superiority, they will to be superior in practice: the cause of the holy lie is *The Will to Power*...160

Nietzsche shows how though Christianity originated as a resistant attempt to end the rule of the pagan clergy, it has currently come to possess an oppressive regime of power of its own:

Christianity...sprung from the very heart of the resenting masses...but transformed by *Paul* into a mysterious pagan cult, which was ultimately able to accord with the whole of *State organisation*...and which carries on war, condemns, tortures, conjures and hates... The attempt made on the life of *priests and theologians* culminated, thanks to *Paul*, in a new priesthood and theology—a *ruling caste* and a *church*.161

Nietzsche has problems with some ‘positive’ sides of Christianity too, so that its professed egalitarianism appears to him as the abolition of necessary structures like the state, castes and social hierarchies and siding with the weak, which he likens to Socialism and criticises:

Christianity is the *abolition of the State*; it prohibits oaths, military service, courts of justice, self-defence or defence of a community, and denies the difference between fellow-countrymen and strangers, as also the *order of castes*... Christianity also means the *abolition of society*, it prizes everything that society despises, its very growth takes place among the outcasts, the condemned, and the leprous of all kinds, as also among “publicans”, “sinners”, prostitutes, and the most foolish of men... Thus Christianity is no more that the *typical teaching of Socialists*.162

This view points towards a very reactionary Fascistic Nietzsche, whom I discuss later in the chapter, but for the time being, one can observe how he urges people to attack religion:

I regard Christianity as the most fatal and seductive lie that has ever yet existed—as the greatest and most injurious lie: I can discern the last branches and sprouts of its ideal beneath every form of disguise, I decline to enter into any compromise or false position in reference to it—I urge people to declare open war with it.163

Thus, Nietzsche rejects religion and the category of God, and I will now analyse how he fills in this Nihilistic gap created by the ‘Death of God’ with a new category of the ‘Superman’.  


e. The 'Death of God' and Birth of the 'Superman'

I have stated how Nietzsche's rejection of religion, morality and many other precepts of Western thought leave a void of nothingness. Nietzsche says, in his *The Will to Power*, that this change is absolutely necessary, and claims Nihilism to be the philosophy of the future:

What I am now going to relate is the history of the next two centuries. I shall describe what will happen, what must necessarily happen: *the triumph of Nihilism*. This history can be written already; for necessity itself is at work in bringing it about. This future is already proclaimed by a hundred different omens; as a destiny it announces its advent everywhere; for this music of to-morrow all ears are already pricked.\(^{164}\)

It is usual to associate Nihilism with pessimism and decline, and so Nietzsche makes sure to distinguish between two types of Nihilism—'passive' and 'active'—with the latter being the one which Nietzsche espouses and with which humanity can advance towards the future:

Nihilism. It may be *two things*:

A. Nihilism as a sign of *enhanced spiritual strength*: active Nihilism.
B. Nihilism as the sign of the *collapse and decline* of spiritual strength: passive Nihilism.\(^{165}\)

Nietzsche characterizes this active Nihilism as: "Nihilism" viewed as the ideal of the *highest spiritual power*, of the over-rich life, partly destructive, partly ironical."\(^{166}\) It follows that, if Nihilism has to be positive, it cannot stop at simply demolishing existing categories; it also has to create some alternative in their place, through which the advancement is to take place.

This is why when Nietzsche thoroughly demolishes religion and causes the 'Death of God', he substitutes this absence with the concept of the 'Superman'. He says in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 'Dead are all the Gods: now do we desire the Superman to live'.\(^{167}\) This Superman is to bring an end to existing systems and take the world to the future. He explains, in the same text, how the Superman is a much more feasible category than God, because while God is just a 'conjecture', the Superman can actually be 'created' and 'conceived':

Once did people say God, when they looked out upon distant seas; now, however, have I taught you to say Superman.

God is a conjecture: but I do not wish your conjecturing to reach beyond your creating will.

Could ye create God?—Then, I pray you, be silent about all gods! But ye could well create the Superman...

God is a conjecture: but I should like your conjecturing restricted to the conceivable.

Could ye conceive a God?—But let this mean Will to Truth unto you, that everything be transformed into the humanly conceivable, the humanly visible, the humanly sensible! Your own discernment shall ye follow out to the end!\(^{168}\)


\(^{165}\) Ibid., 21.

\(^{166}\) Ibid., 16.


\(^{168}\) Ibid., 90-91.
Nietzsche describes the Superman as an entity beyond ordinary human beings, something that 'surpasses' the pettiness and weaknesses of humankind. For Nietzsche, it is in the Superman that all 'meaning' in this world would finally articulate itself. His Zarathustra says,

_I teach you the Superman._ Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?

All beings have hitherto created something beyond themselves and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?

What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame...

Lo, I teach you the Superman!

The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman _shall be_ the meaning of the earth!\(^{169}\)

That the Superman is beyond ordinary human beings, makes Nietzsche's philosophy geared less to human problems, than to superhuman means to transcend them. He says in _The Will to Power_ that for him, 'Not “mankind”, but Superman is the goal.'\(^{170}\) He shows in the same text how the 'higher man', who has the potential of being the Superman has the monstrous in him:

> Man is a combination of the beast [Unthier] and the super-beast [Oberthier]; higher man is a combination of the monster [Unmensch] and the superman [Obermensch]: these opposites belong to each other.\(^{171}\)

The Superman is a futuristic concept, so that as things stand now, even the greatest of men is nowhere close to it. He shows in _Thus Spake Zarathustra_, how currently, the greatest and the smallest men are on an equal footing, both being 'all too human', a concept he would discuss in detail in his _Human All-Too-Human_ (Menschliches Allzu Menschliches, 1878):

> Naked had I once seen both of them, the greatest man and the smallest man: all too like one another—all too human, even the greatest man!

> All too small, even the greatest man!—that was my disgust at man! And the eternal return also of the smallest man!—that was my disgust at all existence!\(^{172}\)

This is why Nietzsche's Zarathustra can qualify our current times as a transitory phase in the development of the human from a bestial level to that of the Superman, and can prophesy the new dawn, when the Superman would be born to deliver humankind to the future. He says,

> And it is the great noontide, when man is in the middle of his course between animal and Superman, and celebrates his advance to the evening as his highest hope: for it is the advance to a new morning.\(^{173}\)

The notion of the Superman indicates a reactionary strain in Nietzsche, whereby he credits a singular quasi-divine agency with all the force for social change. This, combined with the reactionary findings I traced earlier, forces me to discuss the reactionary side to Nietzsche too.

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\(^{169}\) Ibid., 6.


\(^{171}\) Ibid., 405.


\(^{173}\) Ibid., 83.
f. *The Reactionary Side to Nietzsche*

I have already shown in my discussion of the Nietzschean notions of morality, religion, and the Superman, that Nietzsche is against the equality of human beings, and against all doctrines that favour such equality. Now I can show how he has extremely problematic positions regarding all the three hierarchies of gender, race and class. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he prescribes how a man should treat a woman: ‘Thou goest to women? Do not forget thy whip!’ In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he talks against education for women: ‘When a woman has scholarly inclinations there is generally something wrong with her sexual nature.’ In the same text, he shows how treating women with respect is a big problem:

> The weaker sex has in no previous age been treated with so much respect by men as at present—this belongs to the tendency and fundamental taste of democracy, in the same way as disrespectfulness to old age…

He has similar notions about race too, so that he says in the same text, ‘The Jews—a people “born for slavery”’, and opines that the races should be kept distinct, because any intercourse, mental or sexual, between them is bound to lead to weak generations:

> The man of an age of dissolution which mixes the races with one another, who has the inheritance of a diversified descent in his body—that is to say contrary, and often not only contrary, instincts and standards of value, which struggle with one another and are seldom at peace—such a man of late culture and broken lights, will, on an average, be a weak man.

About class, it has already been noticed how Nietzsche is opposed to any attempt at egalitarianism, and now it might be stated how he attacks socialism in *The Will to Power*:

> Socialism—or the tyranny of the meast and most brainless,—that is to say, the superficial, the envious, and the mummers, brought to its zenith,—is, as a matter of fact, the logical conclusion of “modern ideas” and their latent anarchy.

Nietzsche makes the rationale behind his reactionary views in the same text, when he says, that it is with domination of others that one exercises the Will to Power and gains ‘freedom’:

> In short, what we require is to dominate the persons and not to weaken or to extirpate them!—The greater the dominating power of the will, the greater the freedom that may be given to the passions.

While Nietzsche does take extremely reactionary positions, it should be appreciated that it is his iconoclastic notion of power that makes the later tripartite dehierarchist theories possible.

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VII. The Tripartition of Systems of Power in Darwin, Marx, and Freud

a. Finally, ‘Tri-Hierarchization’

From what has been discussed so far, it is clear how during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western thought undergoes a two-way transformation. On the one hand, the rigid and watertight dichotomy of matter and mind gives way to a more synthetic approach in both the Rationalist-Idealist and Empiricist-Materialist schools, where, through a bridging of the gap between the two, thinkers would finally posit the third ontological category of the ‘body’, leading to what I have called ‘Physicalism’, and corollarily to a tripartition of modes of knowledge based on mentality, materiality and physicality. On the other hand, I have shown how Western thought of the period gets increasingly concerned with ‘power’, so that the tripartition of categories already established gets articulated only in terms of hierarchies, leading to what I have called ‘tri-hierarchization’. After having identified this, I studied two authors—Feuerbach and Nietzsche—in greater detail to see how they, while providing for tripartition, also bring into question notions of power and debunk in the process some normative hierarchies. What I intend to show now is that the crystallization of the tri-hierarchist process of leading to a triad of categories and tracing in them the articulation of power takes place in the second half of the nineteenth century through three thinkers—Charles Darwin (1809-1882), Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

The first thing to be noted in these three thinkers is how they deal with the three separate domains I have been talking about: Darwin with the domain of physicality, Marx with the domain of materiality, and Freud with the domain of mentality. The second point to be noted is that these three thinkers bring in the notion of power as the basic operative phenomenon in these three domains, so that Darwin would suggest that the physical world of living bodies originates and is arranged on the basis of a ‘struggle’ for existence, Marx would suggest that the material world of political economy and history operates on the basis of class ‘struggle’, and Freud would suggest that the mental world of human cognition takes place through a ‘struggle’ between instincts and conditioning. The two factors of tripartition and the introduction of power bring in the process of what I have called tri-hierarchization, and the three thinkers might be conceived to have effected that radical break in Western thought through which this process of understanding formations and representations becomes finally the norm. Though all three of these thinkers may be charged with problematic theoretical stances—the progressive and deterministic teleology of Darwin, the reductionism and determinism in Marx, and the metaphysical and normative postulates of Freud—which thinkers like Foucault would demolish to establish tri-hierarchization to its fullest, there can be no doubt as to the importance of these thinkers in framing the future dehierarchist thought, studying which is the objective of this thesis.
b. *Darwin, and ‘Power’ in the Domain of Physicality*

The importance of Darwin is noted by Foucault, when he says in a 1977 interview that it is with Darwin that the appearance of the ‘specific’ intellectual, the category he identifies himself as belonging to (see p.336), became possible. For Foucault,

No doubt it’s with Darwin or rather with the post-Darwinian evolutionists that this figure [that of the ‘specific’ intellectual] begins to appear clearly. The stormy relationship between evolutionism and socialists, as well as the highly ambiguous effects of evolutionism (on sociology, criminology, psychiatry and eugenics, for example) mark the important moment when the savant begins to intervene in contemporary political struggles in the name of a ‘local’ scientific truth... Historically, Darwin represents this point of inflection in the history of the Western intellectual.

Bertrand Russell also notices how Darwin transfers the economic doctrines of the philosophical radicals, i.e., the Utilitarians, to the domain of biological studies, thereby establishing the possibility of the introduction of power into the domain of physicality:

> From the historical point of view, what is interesting is Darwin’s extension to the whole of life of the economics that characterized the philosophical radicals. The motive force of evolution, according to him, is a kind of biological economics in a world of free competition. It was Malthus’s doctrine of population, extended to the world of animals and plants, that suggested to Darwin the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest as the source of evolution.

It is with these points in mind that I will now study the basic postulations of Darwin.

Posing himself directly in opposition to the idealistic notion of creation and perfection only being possible through the supreme category of human reason, Darwin shows, in his *The Origin of Species* (1859) that what is at the root of life is the physicalist basis of organs itself, and the operating category of power—a ‘struggle for existence’:

> Nothing at first can appear more difficult to believe than that the more complex organs and instincts have been perfected, not by means superior to, though analogous with, human reason, but by the accumulation of innumerable slight variations, each good for the individual possessor. Nevertheless, this difficulty, though appearing to our imagination insuperably great, cannot be considered real if we admit the following propositions, namely, that all parts of the organization and instincts offer, at least, individual differences—that there is a struggle for existence leading to the preservation of profitable deviations of structure or instinct—and, lastly, that gradations in the state of perfection of each organ may have existed, each good of its kind.

Darwin describes this notion of ‘Struggle for Existence’ as a transference of Malthus’s theory of population to the animal and plant world, or that the rate of reproduction being much more than what the world can sustain, organisms have to enter a struggle to ensure their survival:

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I should premise that I use the term Struggle for Existence in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny... In these several senses, which pass into each other, I used for convenience sake the general term of struggle for existence... as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life. It is the doctrine of Malthus applied with manifold force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms...

Darwin shows, in the same text, how the struggle for existence makes organisms undergo ‘variations’, and what creates and preserves species is the preservation of the favourable ones of these variations, through a process of what Darwin calls ‘Natural Selection’:

Owing to this struggle for life, any variation, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if it be in any degree profitable to an individual of any species, in its infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to external nature, will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring... I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term of Natural Selection...

It is from here that Darwin formulates his third category, that of ‘survival of the fittest’, or that out of the different variations nature selects only the very best, and only the organisms that have adapted the best, and are therefore the fittest, survive. Darwin says,

If then, animals and plants do vary, let it be ever so slightly and slowly, why should not variations or individual differences, which are in any way beneficial, be preserved and accumulated through natural selection, or the survival of the fittest?...
I can see no limit to this power, in slowly and beautifully adapting each form to the most complex relations of life.

Finally, Darwin arrives from this third notion to his most celebrated notion of ‘evolution’, or that the creation of ‘higher animals’ happens through processes of natural selection and survival of the fittest. He says, ‘Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows.'

It is this four-point theory that Darwin provides to explain the origin of species as opposed to idealistic notions about the same. For Darwin,

It is so easy to hide our ignorance under such expressions as the “plan of creation”, “unity of design”, &c., and to think that we give an explanation when we only re-state a fact. Any one whose disposition leads him to attach more weight to unexplained difficulties than to the explanation of a certain number of facts will certainly reject the theory.

In spite of the problematic philosophical and political import of the teleology involved in the theory of evolution and the Darwinian insistence on survival only of the fittest, in terms of scientficity, this physicalist schema of the ‘origin’ has not yet been convincingly challenged.

185 Ibid., 88-89.
187 Ibid., 271.
188 Ibid., 263-64.
Having framed his theory that even the highest form of animals, i.e., the human being, is created through elemental forms through the struggle for existence, Darwin shows in his *The Descent of Man* (1871) how cultural categories are also created through the physical imperative and not through a transcendent reason. Talking first about the development of knowledge, Darwin shows how learning proceeds primarily from the need for survival:

...the simple fact...that after a time no animal can be caught in the same place by the same sort of trap, shews that animals learn by experience, and imitate each other’s caution. Now, if some one man in a tribe, more sagacious than the others, invented a new snare or a weapon, or other means of attack or defence, the plainest self-interest, without the assistance of much reasoning power, would prompt the other members to imitate him; and all would thus profit. The habitual practice of each new art must likewise in some slight degree strengthen the intellect.189

Turning next to the formation of social groups, and moral qualities like love and camaraderie, Darwin shows how these are also evolved, not from any peculiarly human faculty, but from the basic physiological necessity to live in a group to fare better in the struggle for existence:

Turning now to the social and moral faculties. In order that primeval men, or the ape-like progenitors of man, should have become social, they must have acquired the same instinctive feelings which impel other animals to live in a body; and they no doubt exhibited the same general disposition...Such social qualities, the paramount importance of which to the lower animals is disputed by no one, were no doubt acquired by the progenitors of man in a similar manner, namely, through natural selection, aided by inherited habit.190

For Darwin, even more complex bodies of knowledge and social practice are evolved through the mediation of experience and reason from self-interest and the basic urge to survive:

With increased experience and reason, man perceives the more remote consequences of his actions, and the self-regarding virtues, such as temperance, chastity, &c., which during early times are, as we have before seen, utterly disregarded, come to be highly esteemed or even sacred... Ultimately a highly complex sentiment, having its first origin in the social instincts, largely guided by the approbation of our fellow-men, ruled by reason, self-interest, and in later times by deep religious feelings, confirmed by instruction and habit, all combined, constitute our moral sense or conscience.191

Similarly, talking about another cultural category—beauty—Darwin shows in *The Origin of Species*, how this is the outcome of 'sexual selection' whereby in order to get the best mate and also to ensure procreation, organisms adapt all sorts of attractive techniques. For Darwin,

We can to a certain extent understand how it is that there is so much beauty throughout nature; for this may be largely attributed to the agency of selection... Sexual selection has given the most brilliant colours, elegant patterns, and other ornaments to the males, and sometimes to both sexes of many birds, butterflies, and other animals. With birds it has often rendered the voice of the male musical to the female, as well as to our ears. Flowers and fruits have been rendered conspicuous by brilliant colours in contrast with the green foliage, in order that the flowers may be readily seen, visited and fertilised by insects, and the seeds disseminated by birds.192

Thus, the origin of life and culture is through the play of power in the domain of physicality.

190 Ibid., 182.
191 Ibid., 185.
b. *Marx, and 'Power' in the Domain of Materiality*

The importance of Marx in current dehierarchist theory and practice is undeniable, and it might be worth noting how Foucault says in a 1976 interview that it is not possible to talk about history and the systems of hierarchies operating in it without being a 'Marxist':

> It is impossible at the present time to write history without using a whole range of concepts directly or indirectly linked to Marx's thought and situating oneself within a horizon of thought which has been defined and described by Marx. One might even wonder what difference there could ultimately be between being a historian and being a Marxist.\(^\text{193}\)

It is, however, normally held, and I show it in my thesis too, that the Foucauldian train of thought is quite at divergence with Marx. I can help reconcile the inconsistency between this view and the statement just quoted with a reference to a 1977 conversation, where Foucault says that the so-called 'Marxists' misinterpret Marx's notion of 'struggle' in assuming it to be binary instead of the polymorphous form that Marx himself suggests. Foucault says,

> What I find striking in the majority—if not of Marx's texts then those of the Marxists (except perhaps Trotsky)—is the way they pass over in silence what is understood by struggle when one talks of class struggle... This is just a hypothesis, but I would say it's all against all. There aren't immediately given subjects of the struggle, one the proletariat, the other the bourgeoisie... We all fight each other.\(^\text{194}\)

Since the thrust of this section of the chapter is to show Marx as a philosopher of non-binary power, I suppose, I can proceed to analyse his views with this consideration in mind.

The first point in understanding Marxian philosophy should be that of 'Dialectical Materialism', or that it is only with a combination of dialectics and materialism—that the 'self' and matter—that one can understand the formation of knowledge and society. This point has very much to do with the general 'bridging' that I have been showing in this chapter, and it has been referred to in Marx's critique of Feuerbach. In *The Holy Family* (1844), Marx and Engels state that the empirical world and the subjective 'human' world have to be reconciled:

> If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc., from the world of senses and the experience gained in it, then what has to be done is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as man... If man is shaped by environment, his environment must be made human.\(^\text{195}\)


Marx and Engels show, however, in *The German Ideology* (1845-46) that this recognition of the subjective does not necessarily entail a regression into pure consciousness, because the subjectivity that marks humans as unique itself has a material basis in 'production', the means through which the 'self' and matter come to have a relationship with each other:

The first premise of all history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature... Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their material life... Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production.\(^{196}\)

This is the dialectical materialistic notion of the individual, where individuality is retained, but not as absolute Spirit, but as a historically and materially determined category:

Individuals have always proceeded from themselves, but of course from themselves within their given historical conditions and relations, not from the "pure" individual in the sense of the ideologists.\(^{197}\)

Having shown how Marx achieves the first of the two steps that I have identified as characteristic of these two centuries of Western philosophy (i.e., bridging the gap between mind and matter), I now proceed to show how he achieves the second, i.e., introducing power.

Marx shows in *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), how the relations under which the labourer is thrust are based on the model of power as exercised in actual warfare:

Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself.\(^{198}\)

Since it is this power that robs the labourer of individuality, it converting him or her into a 'machine', Marx and Engels show in *The German Ideology* that the only way through which the labourer can regain individuality, and thereby fulfil one of the requisites of dialectical materialism, is by overthrowing the current system of power. They say,

...the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, have to abolish the hitherto prevailing condition of their existence (which has, moreover, been that of all society upto then), namely, labour. Thus they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves collective expression, that is, the state; in order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the state.\(^{199}\)

Having discussed the main precepts of Dialectical Materialism, showing how it bridges the gap between matter and mind and talks of power, I will now turn to 'Historical Materialism'.


\(^{197}\) Ibid., 87.


If Dialectical Materialism comprises the epistemology of Marxian thought, it is Historical Materialism, or the viewing of human history as a history of material production, that constitutes its ontology. Marx and Engels say in *The German Ideology*,

History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which uses the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity... From this it follows that this transformation of history into world history is by no means a mere abstract act on the part of "self-consciousness"... but a quite material, empirically verifiable act, an act the proof of which every individual furnishes as he comes and goes, eats, drinks and clothes himself.200

Accordingly, Marx shows how the history of the world is a movement from ‘tribal economy’ to contemporary ‘capitalism’, through ‘city-state economy’ with slavery as the mode of production, the ‘estate economy’ of feudalism, and the ‘guild economy’ of mercantilism. The mode of economic production can itself be studied under two heads: the ‘forces’ of production, comprising the means of production and labour, and the ‘relations’ of production, comprising chiefly the mode of circulation. Marx shows in *Capital* (1867) how a means of production gets established only when the forces and relations are perfectly in tandem:

The starting point of commodities is the starting-point of capital. The production of commodities, their circulation, and that more developed form of their circulation called commerce, these form the historical ground-work from which it rises. The modern history of capital dates from the creation in the 16th century of a world-embracing commerce and a world-embracing market... money...[the] final product of the circulation of commodities is the first form in which capital appears... The first distinction we notice between money that is money only, and money that is capital, is nothing more than a difference in their form of circulation.201

Conversely, contradictions between forces and relations lead to the ‘revolution’ that replaces a certain mode of production by another. Marx and Engels say in *The German Ideology*,

The contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse... necessarily on each occasion burst out in a revolution, taking on at the same time various subsidiary forms, such as all-embracing collisions, collisions of various classes, contradictions of consciousness, battle of ideas, political struggle, etc... Thus all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse.202

Marx also observes a second type of collision, that of ‘class struggle’, whereby labour, which is ‘alienated’ from its individuality as well as from ‘surplus value’, is continually at war with the class that owns and controls the means of production. History proceeds, according to Historical Materialism, through this struggle, and Marx says in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, ‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles’.203

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200 Ibid., 58-59.
A second point in Marxian ontology is that of the base-superstructure relation, or that mental and physical productions like language, culture, as also race and gender, are based on the means of material production. Marx and Engels say in *The German Ideology*,

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men...the language of the politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc...as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these...204

This is so because the ideas of the class that owns and controls the means of material production in an epoch, becomes the dominant ideology of the age, and conversely, it is with these ideas that the dominant class perpetrates its dominance. Marx and Engels say,

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production... The ruling ideas are nothing more that the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.205

While this has been rightly criticised as being reductionist, and it is clearly in opposition to ‘tri-hierarchization’, which would place equal importance on all the three poles, it should be appreciated how the Marxian paradigm provides, for the first time, a critique of gender and race from an overall political perspective. Talking of how under communism the exploitation of women is to be done away with, Marx says in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*,

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that [under Communism] the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women... [while] the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.206

Similarly, Marx attacks race and nationalism, showing how the proletariat has no country:

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.207

This leads Marxian thought to internationalism, whereby different races and nations come to have the same ‘world-historical’ positivity. Marx and Engels say in *The German Ideology*,

The proletariat can thus only exist *world-historically*, just as communism, its activity can have a “world-historical” existence. World-historical existence of individuals, i.e., existence of individuals which is directly linked up with world history.208

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205 Ibid., 67.
207 Ibid., 124.
The final point that I would raise is about Marxian ethics, which concerns the revolutionary need to usher in Communism. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels show how communism is not doctrinal but a 'real' movement that arises out of the current situation:

Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise.\(^{209}\)

The absolute certainty of the communistic revolution stems from the fact, as Marx shows in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, that the bourgeois regime has itself warranted it by 'revolutionising' the means of production, rather than conserving it from any radical change:

The bourgeois cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the means of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was . . . the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones.\(^{210}\)

Thus, the bourgeoisie has prepared itself the weapons for its fall, not only through a radicalization of the conditions of production, but also through the creation of the potentially radical proletarianized working class. Talking about the imminent revolution, Marx says,

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.\(^{211}\)

Prior to 'Scientific Communism', where the hierarchic structures of state and class are to 'wither away', Marxian thought provides for an intermediate phase of 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', in which the groundwork for a communistic distribution would be done. Marx and Engels show in *The German Ideology* how this is possible because the proletariat is 'shut off from all self-activity' and not interested in appropriating the surplus value:

Only the proletarians of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in a position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity, which consists in the appropriation of a totality of productive forces and in the development of a totality of capacities entailed by this.\(^{212}\)

This leads Marx to give the oft-quoted call for a global revolution at the end of his *Manifesto*:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!\(^{213}\)


\(^{211}\) *Ibid.*, 114.


d. Freud, and 'Power' in the Domain of Mentality

The position of Freud in Foucauldian thought is a little more ambiguous than that of Darwin or Marx. Foucault, himself a trained psychologist, is not all that generous to Freudian postulates when he treats the questions of psychology, madness, and sexuality in his works. In a 1977 conversation, Foucault shows how Freud does not represent a 'radical break' in philosophy, though he might have made important contributions to contemporary thought:

'It seems to me that the mere fact that I've adopted this course undoubtedly excludes for me the possibility of Freud figuring as a radical break, on the basis of which everything else has to be re-thought. I may well attempt to show how around the eighteenth century there is installed, for economic reasons, historical reasons, and so forth, a general apparatus in which Freud will come to have his place.\textsuperscript{214}

However, Foucault shows in the same conversation, how Freud's originality lies in giving the psychology of sexuality a new turn through the method of 'interpretation of dreams':

'I meant that Freud's great originality wasn't discovering the sexuality hidden beneath neurosis. The sexuality was already there, Charcot was already talking about it. Freud's originality was taking all that literally, and then erecting on its basis the \textit{Interpretation of Dreams}, which is something other than a sexual aetiology of neuroses. If I were to be very pretentious, I would say that I am doing something very similar to that.\textsuperscript{215}

It is especially with the last part of this statement in mind, that I would now examine how Freud conceives of the play of power in the psychological domain of mentality, through his construction of theories of psychic activity as well as the method for interpretation of dreams.

Freud offers four different models as to how the mind functions. One can notice how in all these models, the notions of power and struggle operate on the psyche. The first is the \textit{dynamic model}, whereby human psychic activity is understood as the dynamic result of a continuous tussle between the individual's 'Trieb', or 'drives'—mostly sexual—and his or her social conditioning. The second is the \textit{economic model}, also known as the 'affect-trauma model', whereby certain wishes of the individual are repressed through a balanced economy of pleasure and pain, leading to 'trauma', and a possible discharge of repressed 'affected' emotions through neurosis and hysteria. The third is the \textit{topographical model}, which talks of a tripartition of the psyche into the 'unconscious', made up of basic libidinal desires, the 'pre-conscious', comprising repressed desires and forbidden wishes, and the 'conscious', the logical externally manifest 'self'. The final model, the \textit{structural model}, provides another tripartition of the psyche, where 'id' represents the domain of desires, 'super-ego' that of social conditioning, and 'ego' that of the manifest self balancing the power equation between


\textsuperscript{215} \textit{Ibid.}, 218.
the two other categories. The four models together represent Freudian psychology, where a power play between repressive and liberating strategies determines all of human mental actions. Freud also shows how these strategies unfold right from an individual’s childhood through three stages: the ‘oral stage’, involving weaning; the ‘anal stage’, involving potty training; and the ‘genital stage’ involving the Oedipus complex and the Electra complex.

For Freud, repressed desires gain articulation through four modes: neurosis, Freudian slips, certain idiosyncratic habits, and dreams. Since the first is considered pathological, and the next two are limited, Freud concentrates more on the fourth mode to study the working of the psyche, through his celebrated method for interpreting dreams. Reacting against the view that dreams are meaningless, and too complex to be methodically interpreted, Freud says in his *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), ‘I have, however, come to think differently... I must insist that a dream does possess a meaning, and that a scientific method of dream interpretation is possible. He shows how the purpose of a dream is to articulate ideas that are repressed and not allowed to be ‘desired’ in the conscious state. He says, in the same text,

On falling asleep the “undesired ideas” emerge, owing to the slackening of a certain arbitrary (and, of course, also critical) action, which is allowed to influence the trend of our ideas...the emerging undesired ideas are changed into visual and auditory images... “Undesired ideas” are thus changed into “desired” ones.

Dreams are thus not absurd acts for which the dreamer has no responsibility. On the contrary, for Freud, dreams are like other psychic phenomena, and they lead to a ‘wish-fulfilment’:

The dream is not comparable to the irregular sounds of a musical instrument, which, instead of being played by the hand of a musician, is struck by some external force; the dream is not meaningless, not absurd, does not presuppose that one part of our store of ideas is dormant while another part begins to awake. It is a perfectly valid psychic phenomenon, actually a wish-fulfilment...

Having argued that dreams have a coherent psychic method, Freud shows how this ‘dream formation’ takes place through four stages: ‘condensation’, where many repressed desires are brought together; ‘displacement’, where the possible concrete means of articulating these desires are sufficiently ‘displaced’ to lead to symbolic oneiric categories; ‘conditions of representability’, whereby, out of the different symbolic modes thus arrived at, only the ones representable in dreams are chosen; and ‘secondary revision’, where the dream thus formed is ‘revised’ to arrive at a coherent oneiric narrative. The interpretation of dreams involves a reverse working of this fourfold ‘dream-work’ to decode the symbolic content of these oneiric narratives and arrive at the actual game of power that the mind must have been undergoing.


VIII. Conclusion: The Epistemological Break towards ‘Tri-Hierarchization’

In the first chapter, I mentioned the direction that the current chapter would take up, namely the identification of the ‘epistemological break’ that must have been caused in Western thought by the end of the nineteenth century, to make it possible for the likes of Foucault formulate, in the succeeding era, what I have termed ‘tri-hierarchization’. I also mentioned that, given the dominantly dichotomous nature of Western thought, where modes of structuration are torn between the two poles of mind and matter, and given the general disinterest of dominant Western philosophy in the role of power in knowledge, this epistemic change could only be possible if we notice in the period earmarked for this chapter, i.e., the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a change towards inducing two specific effects. Thus, the purpose of this chapter was to see whether eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European philosophy prepared the ground for the possibility of a principle of ‘tri-hierarchization’, first through a breaking away from the dominantly bipolar mould towards a tripartition of modes of structuration, and secondly, through an introduction of power to thought.

This being the purpose of the chapter, what was discovered during its course it strikingly significant. It was observed how in both the poles of dominant Western thought—in the Rationalist-Idealist ‘schools’ of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer, as well as the Empiricist-Rationalist ‘schools’ of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and the Utilitarians—there arises in the period a progressive concern to bridge the gap between ‘mind’ and ‘matter’ and provide for a third category of the ‘body’. This already provides for a tripartition in Western philosophy, with the domain of physicality being introduced alongside the mental and material domains. I took up next this third ‘school’ of thought, which I have termed ‘Physicalism’, and saw how it works itself out in Spinoza, Rousseau, theRomantics, the philosophers of the Revolution, and Comte. What further emerged from my study of these three ‘schools’ was their progressive insistence of ‘power’ being at the basis of formation of knowledge and social structures. The two features of tri-hierarchization—tripartition of modes of structuration, and their ‘hierarchization’—being thus arrived at, I turned next to two philosophers, Feuerbach and Nietzsche, who in spite of some problematic stances, stabilize the position of tri-hierarchization in Western philosophy, and from whom I could move on to Darwin, Marx, and Freud, in whose radical conceptions of the workings of power in the three domains of physicality, materiality and mentality, respectively, tri-hierarchization finally gets a crystallized form in Western thought. Thus, the chapter does discover, in the period it set for itself, the intellectual movement it sought to identify, and having thereby established the ‘epistemological break’ I was looking for, I would study in the next chapter the ‘episteme’ of twentieth-century thought thus formed, wherein the ‘tri-hierarchist’ and ‘dehierarchist’ thought of the likes of Foucault could be formulated.