CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
The historical ancestry of socialism in its modern connotation can be traced back to some of the greatest figures in the 18th century philosophical, cultural and political life of Europe. It seems to have grown out of a radical interpretation of Christianity, the genesis of which is traceable to the movement which was initiated by Martin Luther¹ and pushed forward by such historical figures as Calvin and others. The moral basis of socialism, it can conveniently be argued, issued out of the mainsprings of protestant Christian ethics.²

As a serious movement of social criticism and reform, socialism is barely a century and a half old, but whether spelt as socialism or not, any movement towards political and social reform from mid 18th century

¹See Karl Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies, pp. 387 ff.


onwards seems to have had a strong ethical base and appeal. Whether it is Rousseau who led the democratic assault on privileges and autocracy or Bentham or Mill; the system of ideas that activated late 18th and 19th century thought seems to have been impregnated with the ideal image of an ethical man. It is not without reason that the ethical philosophy of Kant and Hegel had such a strong hold not only on later manifestations of the French Revolution but also on 19th century utilitarianism, positivism and the other systems of socio-political thought.

Historically, Marx and his system of moral philosophy can be understood best when one looks at them against this backdrop of history. Marxian socialistic thought is one of the most dominating influences on the intellectual, moral and political life of our age. One is tempted to ask as to why it is so. It seems to be nearer the truth to say that it is due to the basic moral nature and character of Marxian system itself which explains the unprecedented force of its appeal outside of the sphere of religions. In the pages that follow, an attempt is made to elaborate this point of view.

In an attempt to understand Marxism as a system of moral philosophy, one has to take a look at the
various influences which went into the shaping and forming of Marx's thought. The first task, therefore, is to find out to what extent Marxian thought draws on the efforts and thoughts of the preceding thinkers and in what manner he gives it a creative rendering so as to formulate and present a new system of thought.

It is in place to call attention to the significance of certain biographical factors which cannot be underestimated since a philosopher's biography, particularly that of a social philosopher, does stand in significant relationship to the content of his thought.¹ As such a quick glance over some important aspects of his life may be in place before venturing upon the detailed treatment of those who have contributed to the making of what we know as Marxian thought.

In the history of western intellectual tradition, 5th of May, 1818 has been marked as the day inaugurating the beginning of 'Marxian era' as Leopold Schwarzschild has rightly named the age in which we live.² It was on this day that Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a Rabbinic


Jewish tradition. In 1824, they baptised themselves into Christian faith by renouncing Judaism. This event is significant because it secured them entrance into the community of European Culture and into the mainstream of German liberal and intellectual tradition. As such the young Marx was more or less immune from the Jewish heritage. He grew into the maturity of his thought as a German and in the enlightened and rational climate of his surroundings, deliberately leaving behind the Jewish tradition in order to participate fully in and to meet the challenges of the cultural and intellectual life of his times.

Europe of those times was passing through a period of powerful rationalistic tradition. What was called in France the enlightenment was known in Germany as Aufklärung. Emerging in Germany as the rationalism of Leibniz and developed by Wolf, it culminated in the philosophies of Kant and Fichte. In France the philosophy of Locke became the foundation of French enlightenment as represented by Helvetius, Holbach, Didrot and Voltaire, culminating in the socio-political thought of Rousseau. These tendencies carried the germs of revolution which sprang to life in the Great French Revolution of 1789.

These powerful movements were certainly a dominant influence on the cultural circle of those who influenced
the formative years of Marx. Amongst others, two important influences were those of Marx's father who knew whole of Voltaire and Rousseau by heart and of Marx's father-in-law — who was responsible for initiating Marx to the study of Dante, Shakespeare, Homer and Greek thought, etc. In the face of authoritarian government and political and social backwardness, Germany passed through a period of intense creative, poetical and literary activity as well as rigorous philosophical thinking, contributing thus a great deal to the enrichment of philosophical thought in modern Europe.

It was this philosophical heritage of Kant and Fichte that first influenced young Marx before he turned to Hegel. It had undermined faith in religious authority and theology and tended to demolish all those aspects of social order which embodied or symbolized the feudal tradition. It developed the 'active side of knowing' as Marx puts it, even though it was an abstract manner of doing it as Marx says "Of course idealism does not know real sensuous activity as such". Materialists including

\[1\text{See Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach IN Marx Engels, The German Ideology (Moscow, Progress Pub., 1964), p. 651.}\]

\[2\text{Ibid.}\]
Feuerbach had considered the human mind as passive, simply reflecting the external world. And as such there was no adequate recognition of the part which men played in reacting upon, altering and transforming their environment. This left man impotent to change the course of things. Marx had realised the significance of the "active side" of knowing as "developed by idealism" and on the basis of it he proceeded to explain how in man knowledge and action go together.

The significance of action had been made clear to him by the philosophy of Fichte who also had exerted powerful influence upon him. He had gone beyond Kant in asserting that man does not merely comprehend things with the essential activity of mind but realizes himself in willing and action. It is the faculty which lies in the very structure of the ego and which in the process of self-actualization creates an objective world over against itself which has to be resisted and overcome. The realization of freedom implies the overcoming of the limitations. This theme of man's self-realization has also been applied to the history of human race. Marx owes his theory of activism and the fundamental idea of self-realization of man through a radical change of

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social reality, to Fichte.

In 1835 Marx entered the University of Bonn. There was in him a faustian spirit of endless search for knowledge and truth and a promethean defiance of the gods, which inspired him to explore the philosophical truths. A year later his father sent him to the University of Berlin to continue his study of law, but he instead read more of philosophy, particularly that of Hegel, which in its earliest formulations was only a response to the challenge of the French Revolution to reorganize the state and society on a rational basis so that social and political institutions might accord with the freedom and interests of the individual. Hegel related the concept of reason to the revolution finding in it an assertion of the ultimate power of reason over reality.¹

Those who drew radical conclusions from Hegel's philosophy of religion, law and society were known as young Hegelians. Marx was profoundly influenced by them, although he came to differ from them subsequently, yet one can argue with certainty that Marx's intellectual development would not have taken the direction that it did, had it not been for the philosophical arguments

with the group of young Hegelians consisting of Bruno Bauer, David Strauss, Arnold Ruge and Moses Hess in addition to Feuerbach.

They all agreed that the idea of progress was of utmost significance. If the rational was the real as Hegel had said, then society as they saw it was far from being rational. The realization of the rational was to be accomplished by removing the illusions of mind and above all by a criticism of religions. It was not until Feuerbach and Marx arrived on the scene that they realized that the criticism of religion could only find its completion in a radical social criticism. Consequently they poured all their contempt on the church, the state and the bourgeoisie.

In the year 1841, Marx completed his doctoral dissertation on "The Differences Between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and the Natural Philosophy of Epicurus". In his intellectual wanderings in the realm of Greek thought, he was exposed to newer and wider horizons of the human thought, going much beyond the intellectual limitations of Hellenism and the social limitations of the age of slavery. He found in the later Greek philosophy a kind of awakening of the will in which the cherished dream of his youth came true i.e., he found in it the completion of thought and the realization of philosophy itself.
Marx thus changed the character of philosophy itself by transporting it into the realm of action. As subjective consciousness it now revolts against the prevalent social reality and assumes a practical attitude vindicating the freedom of man. One can clearly perceive Fichte's theme of will, action, and self-realization, inspiring Marx to a Promethean defiance. It was this theme of self-determination which Marx read in the atomic materialism of Democritus from the standpoint of Epicureanism. It was a vindication of man's power to assert his freedom through united effort to change the existing reality.

In 1842, Marx took over the editorship of a new liberal journal the Rheinische Zeitung published in Cologne — thus embarking on his intellectual mission of ultimately giving a death blow to medieval religion and politics, in a bid to reconstruct the socio-political system. But his understanding of social and economic realities was not yet sufficient to be able to critically examine the wider aspects of social reform. During this period Hess, the revolutionary poet, wrote articles describing the English industrial development, poverty, unemployment, political unrest amongst workers and on French socialistic and communistic movements in Paris. Marx read these brilliant articles and was profusely impressed.
A year later, the suppression of Rheinische Zeitung made Marx retire to the seclusion of his studies -- giving him back his freedom from the servitude of censor which he found morally incompatible with the essence of law and personal responsibility. After 1832, when Hegel and Goethe had already passed out of the scene, a radical change took place in the climate of Europe. Along with this change, the intellectual development of young Marx also seems to have taken a new turn. From idealism which he equated with Kantian and Fichtean idealism, he went searching for the idea in reality itself. The new watchword was emancipation moral, intellectual and political. Marx started off on his further explorations in the intellectual realm this time in the sphere of history, particularly that of England and France. He also studied with keen interest and sharp insight the French Revolution and the thought of Rousseau. The impact of French Revolution and Rousseau's thought was, indeed, very great on the development of Marx's thought.

Like Marx, Rousseau had also sought to criticize the existing structure of society. The problem for both

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was to reform and reconstruct society in order to defend and protect the natural rights of individuals. Only in such a society, the individual and social interests could be reconciled. During this period Marx also studied Montesquieu and Machiavelli. The former gave him the insight that there was no absolute law controlling man's social activity and that all law is relative to particular conditions. Montesquieu had refuted the notion that the source of authority is transcendental in character; rather he sought to establish the fact that the state was a natural growth subject to the law of change and development.

From Machiavelli, Marx learnt that the only criterion of action is within society, which determines the human good at a particular historical moment by a correct evaluation of the necessary social forces. And what is more, there is no general principle of morality over-riding the good of society. Those ideas alone


See also James McAdam, "Rousseau and the Friends of Despotism", Ethics, LXXIV, 1 (Oct., 1953), p. 38.


which flow from the needs and demands of society\(^1\) could stand the test of relentless logic in the face of the stern necessity. It was a clear formulation of realism and had been systematically applied to political matters.

Marx gave a serious consideration to social and political structures and this led him to believe that property relations constitute the foundations of socio-political framework.\(^2\) He had also studied Hamilton's argument on the danger of revolution arising from the universal sufferage during the course of his study of the development of democracy in the United States. Hamilton was primarily concerned with the rights of property owners against the majority of those with no property. He was for the government by the elite and was dead set against the "mob rule" which meant "anarchy or tyranny or both".\(^3\) As we know Marx's own system of thought was a direct antithesis to Hamilton's.

In 1843 Marx arrived in Paris where he continued his studies in French socialist literature and economics. He pointed out that this system of acquisition, possession

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 51.


and exploitation of mankind was leading to a breakdown within the society. He sought to awaken an understanding for the growth of the future on the basis of the past and present reality in contradistinction to the utopian tradition of French Socialism.

In order to understand the implications of socialism, Marx worked critically through the legacy of Hegel, the materialism of Feuerbach, and concentrated on the study of French Revolution as well as on the works of the French liberal historians of that period, namely, Guizot and Thierry. In their work he found a new insight into the driving force of historical development which provided a base to his system and which, perhaps, he had not understood before. They spoke in favour of the Revolution of 1789. Thierry argued in his

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Marx writes in this context: "A book that has interested me very much is Thierry's History of the Formation and Progress of the Third Estate, 1853 — the father of the "class struggle" in French historiography—waxes in his preface at the "new people" who now see an antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and who claim to detect traces of this antagonism even in the history of the Third Estate, before 1789...". See Marx to Engels, July 27th, 1854, Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow: Foreign Lang., 1953), p. 105.


essay on The French Revolution, that political revolutions are the consequences of the struggles of the classes fighting for their positive economic interests. As such property relations according to them are the basic causes of political movements.

Amongst others who influenced the Paris studies of young Marx were Helvetius and Holbach who had carried materialism into social life by making natural equality of human intellects the essential basis of the human progress. They had upheld the natural goodness of humanity as a significant part of their system. Marx for this reason had called their teaching as real humanism even as he had so called Feuerbach's philosophy. It may be pointed out that the philosophy of materialism was used as a powerful weapon by the third estate in its struggle against the ruling classes in the eighteenth century. Hence Marx devoted his whole-hearted attention to the study of materialism in Paris.

It was in Paris that young Marx became a marxist. To be sure, the intellectual arena which Marx entered in Paris was full of bewitching richness of ideas pregnant with the germs of socialism. It seemed to be the heart

\[1\text{Isaiah Berlin, op. cit., p. 16.}\]
of revolutionary movement. The common characteristic of all the socialistic tendencies was that they reckoned on the goodwill and reasonableness of the possessing classes for the realization of the necessity of social reform. Saint Simon, the founder of French socialism, had conceived the whole course of history as the progress of mankind and had represented the principle of authority. Francois Fourier had stressed the importance of individual freedom and advocated a tempting but impracticable decentralised utopian community with cooperative output. The abundance of machines, he maintained, led only to increasing poverty of the working class in which he did not see any possibility of revolution. In England this form of utopian socialism was represented by Robert Owen.

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1 Engels wrote about Paris: "France alone contains Paris, the city where civilization has attained its highest expression, where all the strands of European history converge, and from which time to time, electrical discharges emanate and shake the world. This city whose population combines in itself, as no other people, a passion for enjoyment and historical initiative; the city whose inhabitants know how to live like the most refined Epicureans of Athens, and to die like the most intrepid Spartans". Engels, "Journey from Paris to Berne", cited in Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx, p. 47.


3 Ibid., pp. 35 ff.

4 Ibid., pp. 38 ff.
whose great contribution to socialist thought was the realisation that factory system must be the root of the social revolution.

Communism as preached by Cabet, Dezamy and Weitling, Marx regarded as dogmatic abstraction. He thus differed from other great ideologists of his generation by making his appeal to reason, to the understanding of actual socio-historical conditions, for the solution of social problems could not be excogitated apriori.1

Marx had studied socialism and now also began to study the conditions of the working classes for we know from a letter written by Ruge in July, 1844 to a friend that Marx had plunged into German Communism socially. He had already thrown himself headlong into the intellectual controversies of his day, when an unprecedented battle of intellects was already raging such as could be found nowhere else in Europe. The various tendencies only helped to pave the way for a unification of socialism and the working class movement. To attain this unification Marx had to depend on a critical knowledge of the historical movement which would itself produce the material conditions of emancipation. To look for the light, Marx turned to an intensive study of the French

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1Cf. Marx to J.B. Schweitzer, Jan. 24, 1865, Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 188.
Revolution. The deeper he penetrated into the historical significance of it the easier it became for him to arrive at a clear view of the struggles and promptings of his age.

One can trace the impact of Feuerbach on Marx in his formulation of the concept of real philosophy which according to Marx must be in harmony with 'life and humanity'. And such a philosophy can only be of Gallo-Germanic origin. The heart must be French and the head German, the head must reform and the heart must revolutionize. Marx emphasized the factors of feeling and action in the revolutionary struggle, whereas the intellectual life of German people he found as mainly confined to abstract ideational thought.

The implications of the Gallo-Germanic principle indicate the significance of two major influences on the development of Marx's thought, first, the French history and thought in general and French Revolution in particular and, second, the impact of the German philosophy i.e. of Hegel and Feuerbach in particular. But equally important

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See also John Lewis, The Life and Teachings of Karl Marx, pp. 62-63.

2 Marx-Engels, The German Ideology, p. 29.
is the impact of the classical economists particularly Adam Smith, and Ricardo who provided the basis for Marx's empirical analysis of the contemporary social reality which alone could yield the historico-social truth. He seems to have read the works of Jean Baptiste Say, Frederic Skarbek, Destutt de Tracy, Boisguilbert in addition to the works of James Mill, MacCulloch, Adam Smith and Ricardo. From their teachings, Marx derived the idea of the decisive role of labour, that commodities and their value are only crystallized human labour, man's objectification of his own creative powers. Marx became conscious of a regime dominated by private ownership of means of production and division of labour. He could see that private property arises from the alienation of labour.

It seems to me that all these influences only nourished the original make up of Marx's mind which had been set at a very early age. The first flash of it showed in the mind of young Marx when he wrote a German composition on the subject of "The Reflections of a Youth before Choosing a Profession". In which he had maintained that we could not always take up the professions for which we felt ourselves suited. Our relations in

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1Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, pp. 8-14, 123.
society, according to him, begin to crystallise more or less before we are in a position to determine them.\textsuperscript{1} It was the concretization, development and completion of this idea which was destined historically to become a dominant ideology subsequently and in which Marx found the light that would show the world according to him what reality is and what they are to do if they really wanted to break the chains that bound them.

A new feeling of passionate indignation and sympathy for the struggle of the dispossessed was deepening in Marx and inspiring a spirit of revolt in him. He says in this context, "... the brotherhood of man is no mere phrase with them, but a fact of life, and the nobility of man shines upon us from their work-hardened bodies".\textsuperscript{2} And thereafter he fiercely struggled for the freedom and equality of men in the name of social justice. All his subsequent writings and efforts are a sure proof of the unique firmness of his purpose.

This, in brief is the account of the intellectual development of young Marx during his formative years. What merits our attention now is a discussion of the

\textsuperscript{1}Franz-Mehring, \textit{Karl Marx}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{2}Marx, \textit{Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844} (Moscow: Foreign Lang., 1951), pp. 124-125.
impact of French Revolution and the thought of Hegel and Feuerbach as they constitute the essential scaffoldings which hold the entire structure of Marxian thought.

**THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

In the history of modern Europe, French Revolution of 1789 was the greatest attempt to secure liberty, equality and fraternity for the people. It symbolized an endeavour to embody a wholly revolutionary ideology in concrete institutions by a violent and successful seizure of power. It was an attempt to assert the reality of freedom. Hegel conceived in it the assertion of the idea of Right whereby the old fabric of injustice broke down. Hegel described it as the most glorious sunrise ever since the Sun stood in its firmament.

"... This was accordingly a glorious mental dawn. All thinking beings shared in the jubilation of this epoch. Emotions of a lofty character stirred men's minds at that time; a spiritual enthusiasm thrilled through the world, as if the reconciliation between the divine and secular was now first accomplished."¹

It was considered as a landmark in the struggle for social justice.²


²George Lefebre and his followers gave a marxist interpretation to revolution and described it as a class war between the privileged feudal class and the bourgeoisie middle class.
Edward Gans, a disciple of Hegel, a liberal and a very much liked teacher of Marx who incidentally had also influenced Marx profoundly, initiated a series of lectures on the history of French Revolution after the death of Hegel. In 1837, when young Marx was attending these, Gans spoke about unmistakable presence of slavery amongst the ill-fed destitute men and women, sacrificing their pleasures of life for the profit of one man in exchange for a meagre pittance.

"Is it not pure slavery when man is exploited like a beast when he is left with nothing but the liberty to die of hunger?... Is it not possible to awaken in these proletarians their moral consciousness and lead them to take part in the work they now carry out like machines?"¹ (Italics mine).

In Berlin, thus under the influence of Gans, Marx experienced in a somewhat uncrystallized manner the pangs of a world in the process of dying and the contradictions of a world in the process of being born. The youth of Marx like that of all men of his times bore the stamp of the great epic of French Revolution. It was hailed as the sunrise in the life of young Marx and he himself considered his philosophy as a response to the call of history.²

¹Cited by Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx, p. 16.
²Cf. Isaiah Berlin, Karl Marx, p. 6.
The study of French history and French Revolution secured enough evidence for Marx to prove that class consciousness and class struggles were a part of a very complex set of social realities, which existed in France even before 1789. And that social reality was clearly not a kind of homogeneous mass composed of identical individuals but that France of the old regime had been definitely divided into feudal nobility and clergy as the privileged classes and bourgeoisie, the peasantry and other working classes as the unprivileged classes.

Engels has given reasons for Marx's particular preference for French history of which French Revolution is a significant part. He says in this context -

"France is the land where more than anywhere else the historical struggles were each time fought out to a decision, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they were and in which their results are summarized have been stamped in the sharpest outlines.... France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the unalloyed rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity, unequalled by any other European land."

It was in France only that the struggle of the upward striving proletariats against the ruling bourgeoisie also appeared in an acute form unknown elsewhere.

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The Great French Revolution provided Marx with an eminently suitable frame of reference for an understanding of the law according to which class struggles become the motivating force of historical development. The existence of social classes and the antagonism between them is conditioned by the degree of economic development and the mode of their production. The whole course of history could be understood only in the light of this materialistic conception of history which dawned upon Marx as a result of his study of French history and French Revolution; laying bare the fabric of "inner causal connections in the course of development." This alone could put events in proper historical perspective and made the issues and conflicts of the age intelligible.

French Revolution is symbolic of the major sources and causes of all that ensued in the 19th century. Marx could get an insight into the age old moral and social evils which the revolution sought to overthrow. For certainly the aim of revolution was basically moral when it tried to demolish the degenerate and outmoded traditions and institutions responsible for the dehumanized existence of man. Marx's aim also was to abolish the social and moral evils which sapped the very roots of human existence.

Marx appreciated the meaningfulness of the revolution

for demolishing the political institutions which had prevailed for centuries amongst most European people. It entirely destroyed everything which in the old society arose from feudal and aristocratic institutions. Thence his statement "all that exists deserves to perish." It called for a new order, for a new kind of equality and emphasized the delegation of authority as well as the responsibility of officials which had been denied earlier.

As such it becomes clear, as Alexis de Tocqueville also maintained, that the French revolution was inspired by the belief that what was wanted was the replacement of the complex traditional customs governing the social order of the day by simple principles derived from the exercise of human reason and natural law. Lord Acton wrote in his manuscript Notes about French Revolution "Never till then had men sought liberty, knowing what they sought." It was symbolic of the expression of the subjectivity of the freeman championing the cause of humanity and of the unification of his own country. It was a symbol of unification of mankind as a whole in a spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity which was the ideology of the rising bourgeoisie and the banner of the age.

\[1\text{Ibid., p. 23.}\]
\[3\text{E.H. Carr, op. cit., p. 135.}\]
\[4\text{Fischer, The Necessity of Art (Penguin, 1963), p. 51.}\]
Yet another effect of the French Revolution was that it overthrew the absolute despotism giving rise to a more humane society which was rather susceptible to human progress and welfare as well as more conducive to the pursuits of higher values. Rescuing a decadent society from the tyranny of absolute despotism was indeed a big break-through. In fact it is for this very reason that we consider the period from 1750-1789 as historically very significant, being a phase of evolution of Europe from feudalism to parliamentary democracy. It was a period of intellectual revolution which held out a new metaphysics of human progress. There was a strong tendency for the deification of reason and exaltation of human dignity giving a new meaning to the concept of humanism. The French Revolution was born in the wake of enlightenment which laid exceptional emphasis upon the natural rights of the individual to attain the ultimate perfection. It has been argued that these blessings of the enlightened humanitarianism were given a practical shape and a definite articulation by

\[1\text{See (a) Leo Gershoy, From Despotism to Revolution 1763-1789 (New York: Harper, 1944), pp. 48-52, 103-106.}
the advent of the French Revolution. 1

Marx also realized that the historical significance of this revolution was not confined to France alone but its spirit had penetrated deep into the whole of Europe, 2 though in Germany the disturbance was largely ideological due mostly to Fichte's revolutionary thought which had an immense impact on the contemporary situation.

It was observed that there were a series of revolutions in different countries during this period. The reports of the historians are that in Ireland, Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Hungary and Greece there were obvious signs of revolutionary movement. 3

The revolutionary aims and sympathies were

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1See (a) Leo Gershoy, From Despotism to Revolution, 1763-1789, pp. 197-235.

(b) C.J.H. Hayes, A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe, pp. 511-12.


3To be more specific — in Ireland the revolution broke out in 1798. The Dutch historians speak of revolution in Netherlands, Swiss were revolutionized in Helvetic Republic of 1798. Italians speak of the revolution of Milan in 1796, at Rome in 1797, at Naples in 1798, in Poland, a revolution broke out in 1794. In Hungary in the same year, 75 members of a Republican Conspiracy were arrested. In Greece around 1797, delegates from Athens, Crete, Macedonia and other parts of the Greek world met secretly to plan conspiracies of all Greeks against the Ottoman Empire.
prevalent all over Europe reflecting conditions that were common to the whole western world. The whole era from 1760 to 1800 turned out to be an incubation period for the coming of this unprecedented event which had something universal in it. As Burke had said that there had been nothing like it since the Protestant Reformation which had thrown all Europe into commotion that overran all political boundaries. And as Alexis de Tocqueville also described the impact of revolution as effacing in a way all older frontiers. It created a common intellectual and moral world above all the particular nationalities.

In the recent decades there has been a sharp controversy over the relationship of French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. There are two viewpoints, one associating and the other dissociating the two. What had happened in the decade of 1790 in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity was sought to be repeated in 1917. Obviously the attempt of 1789 had not brought complete fulfilment of the moral ideals

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(b) Morse Stephens, Revolutionary Europe 1789-1815 (London: Rivingtons, 1948), pp. 42-82.
sought to be realized — hence the story of the revolt of masses arising out of the felt indignity, degradation and suppression for realizing a more egalitarian society was repeated with a renewed moral fervour.

As such it seems that apart from superficial similarities such as the reign of terror, attack upon the churches, seizure of power, etc., there is an essential similarity and ethical relationship between the two. It can be argued emphatically that the French Revolution symbolized the aspirations for certain moral values of the humanistic character. It arose out of a kind of indignation at the existing state of human existence. It reflected a growth of values within the culture itself, a strong inclination towards their attainment. In other words it had a definite ethical orientation and a moral content which characterized and gave rise to the Revolution of 1917 in Russia, too.

The moral judgment must ultimately be pronounced in terms of the actual welfare of human beings, for that constitutes the essential basis upon which the revolutions are fought on such large scales. The aims and ethical content of the two revolutions being similar, the French Revolution can be seen as a source, a definite

cause and a distant prefigurement of the Russian Revolution, which had insisted upon 'Jacobinism' being the communism of the 18th century. Trotsky, Lenin and some modern soviet scholars also conceived Russian Revolution as being continuous with and presenting a more advanced stage of the French Revolution in the same linear process. This view is also shared by anti-Soviet and anti-Communistic writers like Prof. Talmon, who traces the origin of totalitarian democracy or the Soviet Communism back to the French Revolution and its heroes like Robespierre and Rousseau.¹

This only supports the claim that the French Revolution had a very deep influence upon those who in the ultimate analysis are responsible for the Russian Revolution. In other words the Marxist thought and communistic movement would never have come into being, had it not been due to the prior occurrence of the French Revolution.² And the documents of the French Revolution bear a direct testimony to the fact that Marx drew heavily upon the French Revolution. In fact Marx only gave a new idiom to the ideas and implications of the

¹This viewpoint has been enunciated in J.L. Talmon, The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952).
The demands made by the French Revolution and Marxist ideology are basically the same i.e. liberty, equality and fraternity though they differ in detailed definitions and manifestations. While the propounders of the French Revolution demanded these rights for the bourgeoisie also, in addition to the nobility and the clergy, Marx sought them for the whole humanity irrespective of any class or creed. Just as there was the demand to get rid of the tyrannical despotism of the upper classes in the French Revolution, so it was in Marx, a protest against the oppressive exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie. However, in both it was a rebellion on moral grounds against the increasing deprivation, degradation and dehumanization.

The French Revolution changed the face of Europe, but its purpose, the establishment of human freedom, equality and fraternity in their wider perspectives remained as remote from realization as ever. It was this problem of the realization of these ideals which challenged Marx. He wanted to know why mankind was unable to improve its lot in spite of such a great effort as it made in the French Revolution. What were the causes of its failure etc.
Marx, as a sincere humanist and with the conscience of a moralist could no longer affirm a world in which the victory of the bourgeoisie meant the triumph of humanity. For him it was a profound sense of disillusionment. Thus the consequences of the French bourgeois democratic revolution of 1789 propelled Marx to think seriously about the problem of social reality with all its intricate social relations in the hope that an empirical study would show the way for the salvation of humanity. The problem of social freedom, therefore, remained quite naturally the central subject of all Marx's early writings. And to provide an answer to this problem of liberty, he struggled passionately. The first beams of light that came from the sunrise of the French Revolution were followed by a dash of light from the philosophy of Hegel, which provided him with a key to understand further the inevitable character of historical process.

GEORGE WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL

For Marx as for all youthful Hegelians, Hegel's philosophy was the promise of the fulfilment of the Faustian dream of divine wisdom. The intellectual life in the circle of young Hegelians opened up the secrets of Hegelian philosophy to Marx. He had already read and mastered enough but gradually it became more and more
evident to him that "the one firm pole in the ceaseless flow of things was the philosophy of Hegel".\textsuperscript{1} Thereafter Marx began his philosophical career as a Hegelian,\textsuperscript{2} though later on he gradually developed and ultimately changed his views in a materialistic direction.

Engels brings out the significance of the German heritage for Marxism thus, "If the German philosophy, particularly that of Hegel had not previously existed, scientific socialism would never have existed".\textsuperscript{3} He affirms the significance of the same in his Ludwig Feuerbach.\textsuperscript{4}

To be sure, the Idealistic tradition prevailing hitherto found its most complete and perfect expression in the system of Hegel, which sought to explain freedom and reason in terms of thought. He gave a historical as well as philosophical expression to all his concepts.

It seems that Marx's thought is primarily

\textsuperscript{1}Franz Mehring, \textit{Karl Marx}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{2}Leopold Schwarzchild, \textit{The Red Prussian}, p. 34.
associated with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*,\(^1\) in which he sets forth his philosophy of history. But the point of departure for Marx's formulation of his own system of ideas, seems to be located in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*\(^2\) in which he has dealt with problems of moral, social and political nature. And the mature Marxism itself purports to be above all a theory of society,\(^3\) grounded ultimately in socio-economic relations and their ethical implications. Marx finds in Hegel's *Phenomenology* a key to the science of society. But whereas Hegel presents the cause of social change as an activity of the pure thought, reflecting itself in history, Marx, on the other hand, reconstructs this theory in terms of the origin and development of capitalistic society, substituting social history in place of pure thought.

Hegel conceives the process of self-realization of the Absolute, manifesting itself in historical reality, exhibiting a dialectical form and rhythm. In fact, the


Absolute is the major premise and the central concept in the philosophy of Hegel from which he deduces his entire system of thought. The truth expresses itself in Hegel's definition of the supreme reality as "The Absolute is Spirit" (Geist).\textsuperscript{1} It is the inner being of the world which essentially is, and assumes objective, determinate form and enters into relations with itself. Yet in this determination and in its otherness, it is one with itself. It has a unity in itself and as such is self-complete.\textsuperscript{2}

Nature is the otherness of mind and is gradually realizing itself in the development of man's self-consciousness in history.\textsuperscript{3} Spirit, Hegel is never tired of saying, is the irreducible basis of everything. It is the self-sacrificing soul of goodness. In its ideally implicit form it is \textit{ansich} and in its self-identity and self-action it is \textit{fürsichseyn}. Spirit is the absolutely ultimate being i.e. \textit{wesen}.\textsuperscript{4} Hegel identifies this spiritual being (\textit{wesen}) with the ethical substance —

2. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 86.
"spirit, however", says Hegel "is concrete ethical actuality i.e. Wirklichkeit". ¹

Marx retained Hegel's dialectical historical approach but in place of the Absolute he substituted human society as the reality. Hegel explains all imminent progress and development through the category of dialectics. "The concept's moving principle which alike engenders and dissolves the particularizations of the universal, I call dialectic".² It is this concept of dialectic the supreme importance of which for Marx's thought is altogether unquestionable. But, Marx did give it a new dimension by a different kind of application. He liberated it from its idealistic and mystifying aspects. His criticism of Hegel's idealistic conception of dialectics is contained in an essay entitled 'Critique of Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a whole'.³

The insight into Marx's critique of Hegelian Philosophy may be gleaned from his statement:

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¹Ibid., p. 458.


³Cf. Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, p. 142.
"My dialectic method is not only different from Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which under the name of "the idea", he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only external, phenomenal form of "the idea". With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought."

But in the same breath Marx acknowledges his debt to Hegel:

"The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner."2

The principle of contradiction is the core of dialectics which is also the mainspring of the process of inevitable change and development. It is precisely this internal opposition which sets things in motion. Hegel's concrete universal dissolves the dichotomy between the spirit and matter, between is and ought, and between individual and society. Kantian dualism of man and God and of nature and man is transcended in Hegelian system in which finite self of man is equal to the infinite power of God, for, Hegelian thought is characterized by a kind of faith and pride in the self of man. Morality

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2 Ibid., p. 20.
for Hegel is man made divine. This provide a precious insight into the nature and character of Hegelian humanism.

Having raised the self to the absolute i.e. to God, Hegel identifies God with the totality of all being. While nature is God manifested in space, history is God manifested in time, it is the march of the Absolute on earth, Hegel shows history as the development of freedom which in his view is identical with moral reason in man. It is a cosmic process in which the world comes to realize itself "in self consciousness."¹

The principle of right, morality and ethical life is rational and meaningful only when self-consciousness apprehends itself as essentially human.² It is through thought that an individual man knows his essence, his infinity and his freedom. A banishment of thought in rational terms is what robs mankind of all truth, worth and dignity.

But the rational whole in which Hegel believed, was for Marx not the truth. The existing world for Marx was not one in which man could come to experience himself as a Godlike being as Hegel had declared it. Besides,

²Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, p. 29.
according to Hegel the philosopher's task was to understand the world not to intervene in it, whereas for Marx the task of philosopher is to change the world rather than just to interpret it. All the same Hegel's historical outlook influenced Marx very much. The credit of introducing Marx to the social aspects of morality goes to Hegel. Morality for Hegel, let us remind ourselves, is first and foremost a social institution, performing a social role. Morality and law both are devices for checking personal greed for the benefit of common interest.¹

However, while Hegel emphasized social aspect of man² and morality, he identified the social whole with the state or the nation (das Volk). It is the state or the nation which constitutes the ultimate unity which must be presupposed if the actions, including moral actions are to be made intelligible. For men are fundamentally social beings, and the nation or state is the true social whole, the actuality of the ethical idea.³

Marx agreed with Hegel about the social aspect of man's nature and his morality but identified his concept of

²See, Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, pp. 114, 120.
³W.H. Walsh, Hegelian Ethics, p. 45.
social whole not with the state but with the whole of humanity.

One significant observation which can be made here is that while demonstrating that the system of civil society was not and could not be self contained, Hegel pointed out that bourgeois economic life can be a going concern only if it is complemented by institutions which operate on a principle different from that of private profit. Another very significant contribution of Hegel to the thought of Marx is his assertion that considered simply as an economic system, bourgeois society contains the seeds of its own destruction. The pursuit of profit leads to vast increase, not only in population and industry but also in specialization of economic function. And this in turn results in the appearance on the scene of a class tied to a limited kind of work and therefore unable "to feel and enjoy the broader freedoms and especially the intellectual benefits of civil society."\(^1\) This gives rise to excessive poverty and creates a penurious rabble.

According to Marx, Hegel's conception of a self-alienated God is really a portrait of man as an economic

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 43.
producer. Since labour as the self-productive act of man\(^1\) is no more than an expression of the thought itself, Marx says that Hegel has only discovered the abstract, logical and speculative expression for the movement of history but not yet the real history of man. Marx proceeded to analyse the hidden secrets of this real history of man in the sequence of events in actual economic and social development. He takes Hegel's theory of alienation, strips it of its mystical and purely rational form and then makes it a model for his own philosophy of history. Paradoxically enough, he questions the authenticity of any philosophical system which does not derive itself from Hegelian thought seeking at the same time a materialistic basis for his own theory of alienation and history. He says:

"I was led by my studies to the conclusion that legal relations as well as forms of state could neither be understood by themselves, nor explained by the so called general progress of the human mind, but that they are rooted in material conditions of life.\(^2\)

This explains why he felt a pull in the direction of Feuerbach's materialistic humanism.

\(^1\)Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, pp. 77-79.

LUDWIG FEUERBACH

While Hegel provides the key to the understanding of entire philosophical and intellectual development of nineteenth century, Feuerbach is altogether indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of Marxist materialism and humanism. In fact, Feuerbach forms the intermediate link between the two, i.e. between Hegelian philosophy and that of Marx. Engels acknowledges the influence which Feuerbach, more than any other post-Hegelian philosopher, had upon Marx and himself.¹

Feuerbach attacked Hegel's concept of "universal" and its relation to sense experience. He argued that Hegel weighs the case from the outset in favour of a universal creative reason and begins "not with the reality other than thought but with the thought of the reality other than thought. Here, thought is naturally assured in advance of victory over its counterpart."² He is concerned not with the thing in its own concrete and individual mode of being but with the generalized notions, constructed by our reason.

¹Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 8.
Feuerbach thus established in the first place, in opposition to Hegel, the incompatibility of philosophy and religion and of reason and faith. He denounced Hegel's unity of mind and matter, of man and the world. In this context he says:

"The path I followed up to now by speculative philosophy — from the abstract to the concrete, from the ideal to the real — is the path that leads to misunderstanding. Being, with which philosophy begins, is not being that is separated from consciousness nor consciousness that is separated from being."¹

Feuerbach thus reversed the Hegelian system. Nature for him existed independently of consciousness. Beyond nature and man, there are only imaginary and illusory representations. Where Hegel says spirit is real Feuerbach says matter is real. Where Hegel says 'God', Feuerbach says 'man'. Being is the subject, thought is the predicate. The idea is the reflection of the world and not the other way round. This is what is implied by Marx in his Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right when he speaks of putting the predicate in place of the subject and the subject in place of the predicate.

The effect of Feuerbach upon the young Hegelians

¹Ludwig Feuerbach, Provisional Theses for the Reform of Philosophy, 1842, Theses 33 and 37 cited in Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx, p. 25.
was very great indeed "we all became at once Feuerbachians" wrote Engels. Feuerbach's work constituted a decisive stage in the development of post Hegelian thought. For example, before that time the young Hegelians, especially Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx had thought that Hegel was opposed to Christian theology; Feuerbach on the contrary, defined Hegel's philosophy as Christian philosophy decoded by dialectics and revealing the close kinship between absolute idealism and religion for he said "if one does not renounce Hegel's philosophy, one does not renounce theology".  

It is for this reason that Marx said:  

"I advise you, you theologians and speculative philosophers, to rid yourselves of the concepts and prejudices of the old speculative philosophy, if you want to deal with things as they are in reality, that is, in truth. And there is no other road for you towards truth and freedom than this 'stream of fire' — (Feuerbach). Feuerbach is the purgatory of our time." (italics mine).

It is evident in The Holy Family that neither Marx nor Engels could completely overcome their

1Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 27.
philosophical past. They quote the realistic humanism of Feuerbach against the speculative idealism of Bruno Bauer.¹ They recognized unconditionally the brilliant advances of Feuerbach in having provided the masterly fundamentals for a criticism of all metaphysics and in having set the human being in place of the old eternal philosophic self-consciousness.

Marx owes to Feuerbach the understanding pertaining to the process and reality of human alienation. Alienation was Feuerbach's basic idea. He defined it in his *Essence of Christianity* thus.

"Man transforms the subjective, i.e., the actuality of which exists only in his mind, his perception, his imagination, into something existing beyond his thought. Thus the Christians detach the mind and soul of man from his body, and make this detached spirit, deprived of a body, their God."²

While in the Hegelian system, the entire material world is an alienation from the spirit — for Feuerbach, the transcendence of God itself is an alienation. In the Hegelian system man is an alienation from God — but in Feuerbach's philosophy God is an alienation from man. Man is the subject; God, the predicate.³ Man is not

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individual man but species man, and God is the ideal he projects in a heaven beyond himself:

"Man projects his being beyond himself — the opposition of the divine and the human is an illusory opposition — all divine decisions are the decisions of a human being," which only means that it was not God who created man in his own image; but man who created God in his own image.

The goal of Feuerbach was to liberate man from religion and to arrive at the unity of man with man. It is this deification of man — which Feuerbach calls communism in which man divested of religion finds his unity. The metaphysics of Hegel becomes anthropology in the system of Feuerbach — and the real man is a man alienated religiously. Anthropology for Feuerbach is the philosophy aiming at the concrete emancipation of man, outlining conditions of an actually free human existence.

Feuerbach introduces nature as the basis and medium for liberating mankind. Man's suffering is a 'natural' relation of the living subject to its objective environment; for the subject is opposed and overwhelmed by the object. Despite historical progress, Feuerbach cried, man is still in need and the pervasive fact that

1Feuerbach, Essence of Christianity, p. 298.
philosophy encounters is, suffering. This and not
cognition is primary in man's relation to the objective
world. Marx also saw the universal suffering rooted in
the historical form of society and called for moral and
social action for its abolition.

Feuerbach does not indulge in pure apriori,
excogitated or speculative propositions, but derives
his ideas from an analysis of human religious conscious­
ness — facts converted into consciousness i.e. converted
into elements of understanding. He repudiates uncondi­
tionally the absolute immaterial, self sufficing specula­
tion which draws material from within and as a result all
his conclusions are drawn from premises, not ideal in
character, but objective, actual and historical facts.
He generated thought from object and not object from
thought.

Philosophy, according to Feuerbach, should take
its point of departure from nature\(^1\) and not from idea:

"The real, considered in its true essence, is
the real only in being an object of the senses,
of sensuousness. The sensuous, the true, the
real are identical. It is only through the
senses that the object is truly given."\(^2\)

\(^1\)Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, p. 269.

\(^2\)Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the
Future* cited in Roger Garaudy, *Karl Marx*, p. 29.
But Marx criticized this naturalism and empiricism of Feuerbach. He wrote in a letter to Ruge March 13, 1843

"The only point where I depart from Feuerbach is when he attributes too much importance, in my opinion, to nature and not enough to politics. It is only in allying oneself with politics that an actual philosophy can be fully achieved."

Feuerbach declares that alone to be true philosophy the high office of which is the true being of man. It has for its principles, not the substance of Spinoza, not the ego of Kant and Fichte, nor the absolute identity of Schelling or the Absolute of Hegel...but the true "Ens realissimum" -- a real being in contradistinction to the abstract and conceptual being of the idealists.

By making man the highest principle of reality, Feuerbach made an anthropological approach to religion in which he equated the divine with the human. He just explained religion away as a sheer product of the category of speculation. He only sought to unveil existence not by inventing but by discovering the reality.

"It is not I but religion itself that says: God is man, man is God; it is not I but religion

1MEGA, 1, 1, p. 306, quoted IN Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx, p. 29.
2Ludwig Feuerbach, Essence of Christianity, p. xxxv.
3Ibid., p. xxxvi.
that denies the God who is not man but only
an Ens-rati onis ... it makes God become man
and then constitutes this God, not distinguished
from man having a human form, human feelings and
human thoughts -- the object of its worship and
veneration."

He claimed to have extricated the true meaning
of Christian religion from the web of contradictions and
delusions. Atheism is the secret of religion, which, in
its innermost essence believes in nothing else than the
truth and divinity of human nature itself. As such God,
trinity etc. are not what the illusions of theology make
them -- but rather the native mysteries of human nature.

Feuerbach proclaimed religion to be a dream of
the human mind in which we see the real things in the
entrancing splendour of heaven instead of in the day
light reality -- thus making a sharp distinction between
the appearance and essence and between the object as it
is in imagination and in reality. "I have regarded man
(the universal man) as the criterion of truth." 3

It was this Feuerbach whom Marx recognised as
the enemy of orthodoxies, thus preparing the way for the

1Ibid., p. xxxvi.

2Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 257.

3Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, p. xxxviii.
recovery of man from his alienated condition, through a form of pure natural communion — a kind of universal love of species men — love of "I" and "thou". Marx was not content with this abstract notion of universal love, but drew an insight into the other forms of alienation from Feuerbach's concept of religious alienation.

It was through this philosophy that Marx and other young Hegelians proceeded to materialism, to political radicalism and to philosophical communism. In this connection Marx said about Feuerbach that he had given to socialism, a philosophical base. On the other hand Engels maintained that out of German theoreticians of socialism "Almost none — arrived at communism, otherwise than by way of Feuerbachian dissolution of the Hegelian speculation".¹

In comparison to Hegel, Marx found Feuerbach "extremely poor". He says in this context:

"All the same he was epoch making after Hegel because he laid stress on certain points which were disagreeable to the Christian Consciousness but important for the progress of criticism and which Hegel had left in mystic semi-obscurity."²


²Marx to J.B. Schweitzer, Jan. 24th, 1865, IN Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 185.
His call for the recovery and freedom of total man laid the foundations for Marx's own theory of socio-economic dimensions of alienation and a whole complex of values pertaining to man and society, depending, of course, on the transcendence of the same. Society according to Marx is not characterized by love but by antagonism of classes. Whereas Feuerbach could envisage a perfect humanity resulting from an intellectual deliverance from error, Marx on the other hand found critical thought rather inadequate. He sought, in addition, to bring a radical reconstruction of society in order to establish a truly human society.

Marx criticized Feuerbach for being lead to abstract "from the historical process and to fix the religious sentiment as something by itself and to presuppose an abstract - isolated - human individual." He also criticized him for not seeing "that the religious sentiment is itself a social product and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs in reality to a particular form of society." As we know Marx passed much beyond the abstract humanism of Feuerbach to a kind of historical and universal humanism which took the real socio-historical man both for its point of departure as well as for the end of the moral struggle launched by Marx in the sphere of thought and action.

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^Marx, VII Thesis IN op cit., p. 653.
Marx's profound longing for a new kind of social unity and his intense love for truth moved him in search of the reality of man. Before embarking upon any other intellectual explorations, he wanted first of all to affirm the identity of man, his true self, i.e., the ideal nature of man and then render it into a universal. The truth for him must find confirmation in the true being, in the authenticity, the absolutely supreme being of man.

The primary task in the moral endeavour, for Marx, was to ensure the return of man to his true self, i.e., to his basic human nature. The flight from reality, he held, would only confront man with endless woe and suffering. To be radical, one has to grasp the root of the whole reality. And "for man the root is man himself." ¹ Marx thus establishes a deep relationship between our knowledge of what man is and the moral action that would accordingly follow in the direction of values which are through and through man oriented without recognizing the transcendental.

And naturally, an ethics which claims to be humanistic needs a very deep understanding of human nature for the deduction of what is good and useful from the human standpoint since these cannot be excogitated apriori from any abstract principle. It may be observed that ideal human nature has been the subject of contemplation for moral philosophies before they could offer any sound ethical theory in relation to the moral problems of man and his life.

However, the moral problem for Marx is to organize the empirical world in such a manner that man experiences in it the truly human. This necessitates, our knowing what this 'truly human' nature of man is, for the realization and fulfilment of which Marx seeks to bring about a revolutionary change in society. Moreover, Marxian ethics is freedom oriented. Here freedom is not taken in any spiritual, transcendental or religious sense; it is the freedom of man in his actual, historical, earthly existence within the spatio-temporal framework and within the social nexus. Man happens to be the principle of freedom itself, as such it is not possible to conceive of freedom without due consideration of the ramifications of man. In fact Marx equates the realization of man's individuality with that of his freedom.

It may be pointed out at the outset of the enquiry
that, for Marx, human nature in its essential reality is a discernible entity, both physiologically and psychologically. It must be distinguished from 'human nature as modified in each historical epoch'. Man, through the process of labour, transforms nature, "by thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature."¹ The concept of man therefore here refers to the reality of man qua man — the essence of man in contrast to the various forms of historical existence.²

Yet another reason, therefore, why the concept of man is so crucial in Marxian ethics is that Marx's entire thought and action is directed at bringing the "existence" of man in harmony with his "essence". Before analysing the human existence as it is, we must know what human essence is. Then only it is possible to see the gulf that divides the two, and to form a moral judgment about the immorality of the same. All cure and reconstruction would follow only after the malady has been discovered at its roots.

Besides, the point of departure for the entire

system of Marx's thought is man himself:

"The first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to make history."¹

And again:

"We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process."²

These passages make it unmistakably clear that the problem of man's identity is central to the whole thought content of Marx. It provides a philosophical basis for his theory of morality and society and in fact for his total Weltanschauung.

But before we pass on to an elaborate discussion of man and his true self it will be worthwhile comparing Marx's image of man with the various concepts of man in earlier systems of thought.

We must grant, to begin with, that Marx's own concept of man has its roots deep in the past European humanist tradition. He could not help imbibing the biases as well as the values of this tradition. One of the strands picked up by him from the web of humanist

²Ibid., p. 37.
value judgments and preconceptions of the past is an idealised image of a rational and a natural man unspoilt by civilization — an idea of a social man with altruistic sympathy for the members of his species. Like the romanticists, Marx also greatly deplored the fact that civilization has alienated the natural man from his natural and good self.

Like Plato and Aristotle, Marx also believed in the recognition of rationality and sociability as the unique characteristics of man. His image of a social man striving for the social good by transcending pure self interest seems to be a magnified image of the Greek times. As for Plato and Aristotle, so for Marx, selfishness is a kind of moral depravity — and moral alienation from the rest of mankind.

Marx like Plato, Aristotle, and later Kant and Rousseau, believed that men are not always what they really are i.e. they have alienated themselves from their essential, rational, moral and social nature. But while Plato and Aristotle justified inequality and slavery, Marx revolted against the same.

Epicurean Eudaemonism does not go altogether unheeded, Marx postulated a concept of true happiness

\footnote{C.J. Clement Webb, "Science and Human Nature", Philosophy, XXX, 112 (Jan., 1955), p. 3.}
of man on his return to his true social existence. But, of course, he is more concerned with how such a happiness can be attained rather than with abstract and empty talk of happiness as an ideal.

Where Marx really disagrees, is about the origin of man as conceived by the medieval thinkers. He only accepts the reality of man in its total spatio-temporal existence. But it is interesting to observe that like the medieval conception of the loss of essential humanity through a fall from grace, Marx also conceives of the loss of essential self of man down the history upto capitalism in which alienation of man assumes frightful proportions.

Even Kantian conception of man was not acceptable for its dualism of the god-like element of rationality and the animal nature of passions. Hegel and Marx both found this as too abstract a conception and as such representing mainly one side of human nature.\(^1\)

Hegel had given a social concept of man which was in a way a return to the classical Greek thought of Aristotle. But, surely, a marked improvement upon the abstract conception of Kantian system. Marx found Hegelian image of social man as too narrow and like many

\(^1\)W.H. Walsh, Hegelian Ethics, p. 37.
other systems of the earlier times, theological and idealistic. Marx's own conception was a direct antithesis of Hegelian conception of man.

The idea of freedom of man in its modern form, which Marx partly imbibed, seems to have emerged from the political philosophy and the political economy of 17th and 18th centuries. Freedom came to be conceived in the light of property relations and political power. The idea of natural rights of man also finds a definite place in Marx's thought. It was a distinctive contribution of the age of liberalism which was marked by self interest on one hand and abiding confidence in the rationality of man, on the other; irrespective of the vagaries and failings of human beings.

While on one hand, there was perfect faith in the rational and moral nature of man, on the other, we also find a dichotomy of faiths such as could be seen in the Mercantilist England, "where common man was not so much of a human being as a source of work that unfortunately, had to be fueled". It was in the tradition of

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Roman legal view of man which did not include a slave in the definition of a human being. It were these class bound concepts of man which Marx challenged,

"Is there not a universal human nature just as there is a universal nature of plants and heavenly bodies? Philosophy asks what is true, not what is acknowledged as such, what is true for all men, not what is true for individuals."1 (Italics in original).

Marx gave a categorical imperative to avoid confusion of the illusory horizons of particular classes and worlds with the true horizon of the human mind and human nature.

In his search for the universal nature of man, Marx was driven to explore, first of all, the Unmensch, i.e. what man is not, and where he looks for his reality. Has he any transcendental, abstract superamundane reality to which he must pay homage? The answer to this Marx found in Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound and later in Lucian's Dialogues.2 Prometheus considered by Marx as 'the noblest of saints and martyrs in the calendar of philosophy' makes a confession "In sooth all gods I hate."3


2 Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Ibid., p. 45.

3 Marx, Foreword to Thesis: The Difference Between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and the Natural Philosophy of Epicurus, Ibid., p. 15.
had also said "Not he who rejects the gods of the crowd is impious, but he who embraces the crowd's opinion of the gods."\(^1\) Marx's image of man is cast very much, after the rebellious nature of Prometheus who proclaimed:

"I shall never exchange my fetters for slavish servility. 'Tis better to be chained to the rock than bound to the service of Zeus'.\(^2\)

Marx's Promethean man also protests against the authority of gods.

This defiance of the gods was, indeed, a gigantic breakthrough which shook the world to its foundations and demolished the orthodox systems of religion and thought. It marked the beginning of a new religion of a new age, a religion of man which led to wild and exotic horizons of possibilities and expectations. It brought man from his transcendental abstract and alienated self back to his own specific human nature.

"Man who looked for a superman in the fantastic reality of heaven and found nothing there but the reflection of himself,"\(^3\) declared Marx after the pattern of Feuerbachian theory of religious alienation.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 15.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Ibid., p. 41.
To be sure, the discovery of what man is not, came into being as a result of the criticism of religion.

"Man makes religion, religion does not make man ... religion is the self consciousness and self feeling of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again."  

Religion had been conceived, according to Marx, as the fantastic realization of human essence. He explains how religion came to be accepted. It is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world. It is the opium of the people making them oblivious of the realities and forgetful of their distress. It is an appeal for survival from oppression and a protest against human suffering for, it preaches salvation from bondage and misery in a life beyond, after death in heaven.  

Like opium, religion soothes and makes addicts of its devotees. Marx conceived religion as a state of intoxication and self deception for the whole humanity. It is to bear the burden of self imposed slavery. Thus the abolition of religion is a precondition for the revelation of the truth and goodness of man. Man must be rescued from the illusory happiness of religion — so that he can strive for his true happiness. In the name of whole

1. Ibid., p. 41.

truth, Marx took upon himself the task of unmasking the hidden reality of religions in a bid to turn man back to his true self so that he could respond to the challenges of reality in a more realistic manner. This is clear from the following statement of Marx:

"The criticism of religion disillusions man to make him think and act and shape his reality like a man who has been disillusioned and has come to reason so that he will revolve round himself and therefore round his true sun."  

Religion is only the illusory sun according to Marx which goes around man only so long as man does not discover his true self.

Marx exalted man to the highest reality "Man is the world of man, the state, society" and as such the reality of man is to be conceived in the spatio-temporal framework of this earthly existence. His statement that "Man is no abstract being squatting outside the world" sought to overthrow all metaphysical and abstract conceptions about the reality of man conceived by the idealist and the religious traditions of the earlier times.

This scathing criticism of religion ended in a

1 Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Ibid., p. 42.
2 Ibid., p. 41.
3 Ibid.
kind of apotheosis of man. It was hailed as an epoch making revelation of the truth about man. It was a penetrating insight into the esoteric psychology contained in the systems of metaphysics and theology — a recondite revelation of psychological and anthropological truth. Thus, Marx pronounced the supremacy of man in these words:

"The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man. It ends therefore, with the categorical imperative to overthrow all those conditions in which man is an absed, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being..." (Italics mine).

This gospel of the absolute supremacy of man led Marx to the deification of man which he equated with the "denunciation of Gods". This religion of man was quite the kind of religion a true humanist would own, for the only God that a true humanist would admit is one compatible with man's highest good. And such a God is none other than the true being of Man himself.

Marx called religion a betrayal of man in the illusory name of God. For, it justified the established injustices. It promised to man in the other world what it could not give even in this world. It was a

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pestiferous source of man's slavery and corruption. It is the exaltation of a false consciousness and consequently a devaluation of the reality of his own self. It is a hopeless search of man for a divine meaning in the face of his own meaningless existence. It is a cry for fulfilment in the midst of fulfilled nothingness. Man, by projecting his own essence into its otherness grants it the status of concrete reality and offers it i.e. to his own creation, the undivided loyalty only to divide, disintegrate and enslave himself, thereby only preventing the realization of his true self.

While religion is the negation of man; atheism on the other hand is the negation of God; through atheism, therefore, Marx "postulates the existence of man". For Marx, atheism was a belligerent way of saying "God is man"—it meant the recognition of man as the "sole

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(b) Cf. also, Laszlo Matrai, Atheism and the Affective Life, Ibid., pp. 54-54.
(c) And James Klugmann, Ed., Dialogue of Christianity and Marxism, p. 35.

2Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, p. 114 (Hereafter to be referred as Ec. Phil. MSS.).

3Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, p. 74.
divinity”. This annulment of God is the advent of theoretic humanism. Only through this, annulment, ‘positively self deriving’ humanism comes into being. This coming to be is the realization of man’s essence as something real.

Marx thus discovered God as a mere symbol of the externalization of man’s egoism and loneliness lifted to a cosmic scale, a manifestation and a projection of his consciousness into a being other than itself. Man attributes power to it and thereby suffers a loss of power himself. The more of himself he attributes to it the less he has left in himself. Man loses his spontaneous activity as a consequence of this quest for this higher reality above nature and man. He exists in his religious consciousness for Gods; just as “a labourer exists for the process of production and not the process of production for the labourer.”

Marx calls these gods as the phantoms of human brain -

1Marx, Ec. Phil. MSS., p. 74


"Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings, under the yoke of which they are pining away."¹

Marx accused these phantoms of man's own creation for shattering the concrete reality of man and substituting it instead with illusions.² It is a kind of enslavement by their own consciousness and consequently a loss of their own reality.

What is the way out? How can man come back to his self-consciousness and how can he regain his loss of reality? Man is not conscious of his condition of enslavement because this alienation has been produced not by religion so much as by the conditions in which he lives as a debased, alienated and dehumanized being. And hence, Marx's positive demand to abolish all those conditions which create religious and other forms of alienation. "The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which

¹Marx-Engels, The German Ideology, p. 23.

²(a) Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 30.

needs illusions,"¹ says Marx. He explains religious illusions as merely seeking to confer significance to an existence which is otherwise alienated and meaningless.

In this sense the criticism of religion tears the mist that clouds our vision of reality i.e. reality of man and his dehumanized existence. Marx says in this context -

"The struggle against religion is therefore immediately the fight against the other world of which religion is the spiritual aroma."²

He makes a trenchant criticism of religion to show that this phantom of human mind is at best a haunting ghost to be exorcised for, no social and moral progress according to Marx could be possible unless people understood the incalculable harm that religion does to man's understanding, freedom and creativity. Having demolished religion, theoretically at any rate, he proceeds to build up a system of morality entirely within the framework of sociable interacting humanity. He was moved by a kind of moral faith in the nobility and goodness of man and in the infinite potential of his being. The profanity of the original error was sanctified by him into a new faith in

² Ibid., p. 42.
which Marx's powerful urge to liberate mankind found a new expression.

Marx turned his thought away from the realm of believers who only sought to exalt dogma to a reality; to the realm of authentic moral human beings who wanted to make freedom a reality. Having postulated the existence of man through a negation of God, he now proceeds to examine the universal reality of man's essence.

This aspect of our enquiry takes into consideration the nature and life of man which we would characterize today as naturalism and humanism within the confines of social dimensions of man's nature. Marx makes a distinction between the essence of man and the existence of man, i.e. the original human nature or the true self of man and the man as 'becoming' subject to the inevitable and inexorable laws of history. There is the original generic being of man and there is the alienated self of his.

It is interesting to discern a kind of Christian element of faith in the perfectibility of man in Marx's

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concept of essential human nature. Like the Christian conception, Marxist view also believes in a kind of fall from the 'perfect' essential nature of man. The return of man to his original perfect nature is possible through world revolution by which the alienated man rises above his situation and transcends the state of estrangement.

Marx explores the theme of the identity of man and the human situation or "a self-estranged man in an alienated world", in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. There are a number of questions which he raised during the course of his rather free lance discussions. One of the first questions explicitly stated is whether there is any cosmological origin of man. But to ask such a question about the creation of nature and man implies an assumption of their non-existence. This according to Marx is clearly a case of abstraction. Before entertaining the possibility of nature and man being non-existent one has to think of oneself also as non-existent for, after all the individual himself is continuous with nature. As such he calls such a question as a perverse one. Hence his command, "Give up your abstraction and you will give up your question".

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But the concept of creation cannot easily be dislodged from the popular consciousness. To refute the theory of creation, therefore, Marx advances the theory of \textit{\text{generatio aequivoca}} -- the spontaneous generation or self-generation. This only means that man owes his existence to man. In an individual "the mating of two human beings -- a species-act of human beings -- has produced the human being." \footnote{Ibid., p. 113.} Therefore even physically it is man who repeats himself in procreation, thus remaining a subject always. Hence to entertain the question about an alien being above nature and man implies inessentiality of nature and man which contradicts the reality.

The theory of spontaneous generation demonstrates that:

\textit{\text{"... the entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the begetting of man through human labour, nothing but the coming-to-be of nature for man, he has the visible, irrefutable proof of his birth through himself, of his process of coming to be."}} \footnote{Ibid., pp. 113-14.} (Italics in original).

Marx calls for a \textit{practical and theoretical sensuous consciousness} of man and nature as the essential realities. \footnote{Ibid., p. 114.} The real existence of man and nature has
become practical and sensuously perceptible since man has become for man the being of nature and nature for man as the being of man. Socialism knows man and nature as essential realities as such it is the positive self-consciousness of man himself. For Marx the very aim of socialism was the emancipation of man. And the emancipation of man was the same as his self-realization in the process of productive relatedness and oneness of man and nature, leading ultimately to the development of individual's personality.

Marx explains the ontic status and onto-genesis of man in his relation with nature by the term *gattungswesen* i.e. man as a determinate species being. He says here:

"Man is a species being, not because in practice and in theory he adopts the species as his object, ..., but also because he treats himself as the actual, living species, because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being."1

This passage reveals in no uncertain terms the two important characteristics of the human species i.e. freedom and universality of human essence.

Nature constitutes the ultimate basis for man according to Marx. The universality of man makes all nature his inorganic body in as much as nature is his

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1Ibid., p. 74.
direct means of life, the material, the object and the instrument of his life activity.

"Man lives on nature—means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous intercourse if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature."¹ (Italics in original).

The whole character of species, according to Marx is contained in the character of its life activity, and thence "free, conscious activity is man's species character."² Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and consciousness. Labour as the life activity appears to man merely as a means of satisfying a need, to maintain the physical existence. But in fact the productive life itself is the life of the species "It is life engendering life."³

Here in the tradition of Adam Smith, Marx also based the whole structure of his argument upon labour as the creator of life. That labour distinguishes man from animal, was one of the most radical and consistent formulations upon which the whole modern age is agreed.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 74.
²Ibid., p. 75.
³Ibid.
The labouring activity itself regardless of historical circumstances and independent of its location, possesses, indeed, a productivity of its own, no matter how futile and non-durable its products may be. This productivity lies in the human 'power' whose strength is not exhausted when it has produced the means of its own subsistence and survival but is capable of producing a surplus that is more than necessary for its own reproduction.\(^1\) It is because of not labour itself but the surplus of human "labour power" — arbeitskraft, which explains labour's productivity. It is this meaning of the word labour which, as Engels also rightly remarked, constituted the most original and revolutionary element of Marx's thought.

Man differs from an animal in the sense that while: \(^2\)

"The animal is immediately identical with its life activity,..., Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness.""\(^2\)

Man is a conscious being because consciousness is, a characteristic of his specie. Man's activity is also a free activity, that being again his species character. It is only in the estranged labour that this activity is reversed rendering his essential being into a means to his existence.

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 77.

\(^2\)Marx, Ec. Phil. MSS., p. 75.
Man proves himself to be a conscious species being by creating an objective world by means of his practical activity. He works up the inorganic nature to prove his conscious species character. Animal also produces but only that which is required immediately for itself or its young. The animal produces one sidedly, whilst man produces universally. Whereas, therefore, animal produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, man produces even when he is free from physical need and only "truly produces in freedom therefrom". The animal produces only itself, whereas man transforms and reproduces the whole of nature. An animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, while man freely confronts his product.

In Capital Marx presupposes labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human and differentiates it from the primitive instinctive forms of labour that were peculiar to animals only. Man raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. He not only brings about a change of form in the material on which he works but also realizes a purpose thereby.  

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It therefore follows that an animal only produces things in accordance with the standard and the need of the specie to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every specie and knows how to apply the inherent standard to the object everywhere.

There are two further conclusions which follow logically from this position. The first refers to the aesthetic creativity on the part of the individual because Marx clearly says, "Man therefore also forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty."\(^1\) The artistic creativity therefore also is a part of man's total specie character which affirms his human essence. Through and because of such a production nature appears to him as his work of art and his reality. The object of labour is therefore symbolic of the objectification of man's species life. To be sure, work of art does not have autonomous status independent of the rest of human creativity. As a matter of fact, it is of a piece with variegated human creativity all along the line.

Man according to Marx, duplicates himself not only in consciousness or in intellect, but also in real

\(^1\)Marx, Ec. Phil. MSS, p. 76.

See also, Melvin Rader, "Marx's Interpretation of Art and Aesthetic Value", The British Journal of Aesthetics, 7, 3 (Ju.), 1967, p. 237.
life; and then contemplates himself in a world that he has created. In tearing away from man the object of his creation, the estranged labour tears from him his species life, his very essence, which is of prime significance in Marx's ethical philosophy. Animals on the other hand are not capable of enjoying the aesthetic experience of appreciation or of creation.

The second conclusion refers to man's inventive capacity for, labour is a process in which both man and nature participate and in which man starts, regulates and controls the material reaction between himself and nature. Man develops his potential powers and compels them to act in obedience to his will. The elementary factors of the labour process as enumerated by Marx are (i) the personal activity of man, i.e. work, (ii) the subject of that work and (iii) its instruments.

This third factor is what the man interposes between himself and the subject of his labour and which serves as the conductor of his activity.

"The use and fabrication of instruments of labour, although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labour-process."\(^1\)

Hence the tool making man as defined by Franklin and quoted by Marx:

\(^1\text{Marx, Capital, Vol. I, p. 179.}\)
"It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs."¹

Marx now explains at length, how the human essence becomes natural to man or simultaneously how nature to him becomes the human essence itself. He says in this respect:

"The direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person is the relation of man to woman. In this natural relationship of the sexes man's relation to nature is immediately his relation to man, just as his relation to man is immediately his relation to nature — his own natural function."² (Italics in original).

Marx considers an atomic individual as a fiction for he realizes that one of the most fundamental needs of man is to find his being through the material interaction with others. He speaks of the extent to which the person as a person has become a need for man and "the extent to which he is his individual existence is at the same time a social being."³ He conceives this relationship as the basis of social nature of man. Being social is part of his total specie character and as such is grounded in the total natural self of man, constituting the molecular basis of the whole society. He spells the

¹Ibid., p. 180.
³Ibid.
moral ideal itself as "the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being." In his sixth thesis on Feuerbach, he says:

"The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations."  

The original word used by Marx is das menschliche Wesen, meaning human essence. Even when one is occupied in activity which he can seldom perform in direct community with others, he is social because he is active as a man. Not only is the material of his activity given to him as a social product, as in the case of language in which the thinker is active, but his own existence also is itself a social activity as conceived by Marx. Therefore that which he makes of himself he does it for the society with a definite consciousness of himself as a social being.

This social character of man is also the basis of the historical necessity for action and movement. Man as the subject and the material of labour, are the points of departure as well as the result of the action and movement. "Just as society itself produces man as man, so is society produced by him."  

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2 Marx, Ec. Phil. MSS, p. 104.  
3 Ibid. pp. 103-104.
What Marx means here is that man's activity and consumption, both in their content and in their mode of existence are social. The human essence of nature first exists only for social man, for only here nature exists for him as a bond with man — as well as his existence for the other and the other's existence for him. This constitutes the life element of the human world. Here nature exists as the foundation of human existence:

"Thus society is the consummated oneness in substance of man and nature — the true resurrection of nature — the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both brought to fulfilment."¹ (Italics in original).

Marx warns us against postulating any opposition between individual and society. He says in this respect:

"What is to be avoided above all is the re-establishing of "Society" as an abstraction vis-a-vis the individual. The individual is the social being. His life, even if it may not appear in the direct form of a communal life carried out together with others — is therefore an expression and confirmation of social life."² (Italics in original).

According to Marx, the species life and man's individual life are not different, however particular be the mode of existence of the individual or however

¹Ibid., p. 104.
²Ibid., p. 105.
general be the mode of the life of species. Man affirms in his consciousness of species, the real social life and expresses the same in his real existence. He lives as an ideal unity of thought and being with a boundless potential and infinite urge for more and ever more creation. Marx pronounces the absolute uniqueness of man as essentially a natural, social, creative, purposive, conscious and an aesthetically oriented human being for whom freedom is a natural quality of his basic human essence.

To interpret the original nature of man in terms of the concept of an economic man is not a correct reading of Marx. It clearly finds its complete negation in Engels review of Carlyle's Past and Present in Deutsche-Französischen Jahrbücher in which he speaks of Carlyle's furious attacks on the Capitalist system of economics "Supply and demand is not the law of nature. Cash payment is not the sole nexus of man with man," that is, from the pursuit of monetary aims alone man will not achieve happiness.

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(c) And, Danko Grlic, "Practice and Dogma", Praxis, 1 (1965), p. 58.

In fact Marx differed from the capitalist theorists of his times precisely in this that he did not consider capitalism as an outcome of human nature nor the economic motives which admittedly operate in capitalism. In fact by escalating greed for money and material gain which is the flywheel of capitalism it has produced a situation which is contrary to original human nature and harmful to human interests. The situation calls for a socialist society in which not the pecuniary interest, but human needs and the interests of the community are dominant.¹

We are led to conclude that in the original make up of man's natural social self, his desires are not materialistic. It is the way a man produces, the kind of social relations that obtain between man and man at any particular stage of development, that shape the thinking and desires, the ideals and beliefs, which become the guiding lights and driving forces of his life.² Man as a whole, living in the unique totality of human social existence is the basic idea of Marx. Any departure from such an image is condemned by Marx.

¹Erich Fromm, Marx’s Concept of Man, pp. 62 ff.
²Vernon Venable, Human Nature: The Marxian View, pp. 27, 33, 84.
as immoral. There must not be any fragmentation of his total self and there must not be any split of total human life by class distinctions. Human nature is universal and as such no man is basically superior to another. The moral postulate of equality of man with man follows logically from the universal human essence.

The moral existence of human beings, it follows, must be in harmony with human essence. Only that form of society and those conditions are morally justifiable which give complete expression to the implicit human nature in the self of man. In formulating this kind of image of man Marx directly provides a basis and a criterion for his moral critique of the existing society as well as his vision of a future socialistic society. He, like Butler, conceives virtue as action in accordance with the ideal human nature and vice as action against it.¹

To be sure, Marx forthrightly affirms the right of every individual to good life. In his ethical theory as in any other, the ethical ultimacy of the individual has been accepted as an irreducible fact.² His concept of good life was a well defined concept and what is more,

he sought to make it accessible to the whole human race irrespective of any class or creed. He states the moral ultimacy of man in his famous proclamation "Man is the supreme being for man" and his categorical imperative is "to overthrow all those conditions in which man is an abased, enslaved, abandoned contemptible being." The ethical position could not have been stated more clearly.

Marx's is an ethical philosophy which assumes reverence for human dignity, and such a theory can stand on sound footing only when it is derived from the ultimate, axiological and moral principle of man himself. Again, it is only when the distinction between what is ultimate and what is derivative has been blurred that an ethical theory runs the grave risk of going astray and of putting up false constructions. To avoid abstractions, morality must bear a direct relation to human reality.

Marxian concept of socialism, let us add, follows from his concept of man. The aim of socialism itself is man — the socialized man. It is to create a form of production and an organization of society in which man

1David Gaute, *Essential Writings of Karl Marx*, p. 56.
2Ibid., p. 56.
3Cf. Marx, *Ec. Phil. MSS.*, p. 82.
can overcome alienation from his product, from his work, from his fellowmen, from himself and from nature, in which he can return to himself. The moral ideal therefore is "the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man."¹ It is the genuine resolution of the conflict according to Marx:

"between man and nature, between man and man — the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and the species."²

This is the positive transcendence of human self-estrangement which Marx politically baptizes as the true communism for he says communism is the complete return of man to himself. It is the recovery of his true self. To have a clear cut perspective of socialism, therefore one has to place the concrete man at the centre of ethical enquiry.³ Adam Schaff says something significant in this respect:

"When man is not treated as the central issue of the socialistic ideal, its essence is lost and it is impossible to grasp its meaning."⁴

¹Marx, Ec. Phil. MSS., p. 102.
²Ibid., p. 102.
⁴Ibid., p. 11.
While Marx's scientific socialism basically seeks to amend the socialism that had existed before, it retained its point of departure i.e. the individual and his problems. And hence it fulfils the first requisite for the transition of ethics from the traditional to reflective as well as activistic. In this context Schaff writes:

"In my opinion, the demand for a Marxist Ethics will not be realised until that ethics is developed in the spirit of a broadly understood philosophy of man."\(^1\)

Here by ethics is implied not the codification of morals but a framework of human values having a direct reference to the creative character of individual human practice, which has been accepted on socialistic and humanistic grounds.

For Marx, therefore, morality is not a set of ethical maxims which is far removed from the possibility of actual practice but one that can be translated from theory to actual practice by real men in their actual human struggle. He condemns all those systems of morality which deny the universal individuality of man. He turns away from the traditional semantical questions of "What is good" and what is the proper designation and denotation of so many ethical predicates.

It is man's moral duty, to do what will most adequately fulfil the basic demands of his own nature. Morality is not the negation of man and his personality but it is the affirmation of his self and existence. Therefore, only those moral ideals are worthy of any consideration which are attainable by human faculties — and consequently do not lie outside the scope and possibility of human nature.

Man as an heir of the ages comes into the world with a certain hereditary structure which is the bearer of primordial impulses, feelings and dispositions which are the crude material with which the edifice of character is built. If a socio-moral tradition is not acquired which would provide an adequate protection to the fulfilment of this natural self of man, then moral depravity is all too inevitable. The conception of the unity of moral life with the notion of a supreme value can be realized only when supreme moral value is compatible with the nature of man himself. Then only it is possible to identify one-self with it and achieve that discipline which issues into moral excellence.

Marx, believing in the perfectibility of man hopes that given the understanding and the will any moral height can be reached in any socio-political milieu. And as such we can legitimately accept human nature and its
motivations as the ground for working out of a new secularism, which would ensure the satisfaction of man's natural desires.

Human nature, to be sure, is the primary medium in and through which values come into existence and for this reason the attempt to attain them apart from the knowledge of it is untenable.\(^1\) It involves an immensely rich storehouse of possibilities and potentialities. The right action, therefore, must develop and exercise the best of these.

Once there is a clear image of man's nature, it provides a model. Consequently, men feel a moral imperative to approximate what they conceive to be their real nature.\(^2\) If the social reality is found to be deviating from this conception, the felt moral indignation works up the forces of revolt under specific conditions in order to redeem the society.

The law of morality posits on one hand the individual with his manifold potentialities and on the other a society so organized and ordered as to guarantee full and free access to all the means and instruments necessary


for the adequate and appropriate expression of his capacities and to the realization of his essence. The denial of humanity of man as a human fact is therefore a clear violation of moral law.

Our solutions of the problems of freedom, equality and justice are based on our vision, by which we are consciously or unconsciously guided, of what constitutes a fulfilled human life. Our judgements depend upon our moral, intellectual, economic and aesthetic values; which in their turn are bound up with our conception of man, and of the basic demands of his nature. To have man and his freedom as the highest values, thus, is an inescapable moral dictate of the human condition. Marx ends his treatise on the essence of human nature by saying:

"Assume man to be man and his relationship to the world to be human one: then you can exchange love only for love, trust for trust, etc.... Every one of your relations to man and nature must be a specific expression, corresponding to the object of your will, of your real individual life." (Italics in original).

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2Ibid., pp. 64-65.


4Marx, Ec. Phil. MSS., p. 141.
The concept of man, as we have seen, occupies the most central position in Marx's thought which aims at uplifting the dehumanized man to his dignified human self. In fact humanism is the essence of Marxism. As we proceed to examine this position a few observations seem to be in place. The first question that comes to the forefront in this respect is: Is the conception of ideal human nature sound in Marxism?

It is ironical to note that Marx takes an anti-naturalistic and anti-evolutionary view when he talks of the original human nature to which he wants people to return through the socialist revolution. His theory wittingly or unwittingly comes close to Christian theory of fall of man and fits in better with the transcendental approach to man than with the scientific and evolutionary views of man. For the search of original human nature, at what point are we to start in history, since evidently for Marx man is not outside of history. Shall we go back to about two billion years when man has been evolving on this earth to discover the original human nature or start with the primitive cave man? In any case the original human nature so to say is not very edifying ethically and if all facts of biological evolution were known to Marx, he would not have been enamoured of the species character of man.
To be sure, the primitive man begins his career and that of historical humanity with the forces of love and hate, peace and war which are evident in the family, groupal and tribal life. With cannibalism as a fact of primitive man at the dawn of human history can one be inspired to return to that original human nature? As a matter of fact the higher ethical consciousness is a later arrival in human history as a result of the leadership of men who lead mankind in the direction of love, peace and equality. And yet the story is not complete. Man is still struggling and will continue to struggle for some or other kind of ethical excellence.

The elements of the original human nature so called lie as a matter of fact, not in the past but in future which holds a sort of model for man exercising a pull on the shaping of the original biological man to the so called moral and spiritual. In sum, man is always evolving sometime for good, sometime for ill according to our value judgement. And it is therefore naive to build any philosophy on fixed original absolute nature of man.

While Marx very rightly establishes the reciprocity of man and society and man's rootedness in nature, he does less than justice to the uniqueness of the
individual, to his capacity to transcend the epoch of his times. Otherwise, it is not explainable how any number of utopians and reformers would be living, as it were, centuries ahead of their times. Marx himself belonged to this category of people. This uniqueness of the human individual is the very essence of man.

What Marx in emotional kinship with down trodden and revolutionary zeal for uplifting the mass of people portrays imposingly on behalf of the individual, he partly takes away in his intellectual formulation of his standpoint. In placing man and society together in merciless mutuality, he robs man of his unique individuality without which freedom loses its significance and so does anything in uniqueness of the individual human life that hinges on freedom. In contrast, it is refreshing to call to mind the point of view of Spinoza who while recognizing the force of necessity in life gives a crown to individuality and freedom, thereby trailing a new path in socio-political philosophy.

Although Marx elucidates and dwells at length on the nature of man in terms of sociability yet he makes a fundamental mistake when he explains the whole web of human life and the permutations and combinations of human relations unilaterally in terms of economic relations and means of production. This historic insight of Marx
turns out to be a historic over-generalization. Human propensities, leanings and their interplay which yield to a variety of manifestations cannot be put in a straight-jacket of economic life.

Whereas Marx has called attention to the relationship of men both to nature and women, he has not successfully been able to work out properly and weave into his system of thought the relation of man and woman. Conceding that to some extent human consciousness is determined by economic conditions i.e. modes of production, Marx failed to see the tremendous force of the psychic reservoir issuing into various kinds of human relations between the two sexes. It is possible to conceive and to demonstrate that the propensities of love and hate need not necessarily be dependent on the economic conditions and that these forces could operate independently. It was precisely some of these psychic forces and principles which Marx failed to appreciate and to which in a substantial way the whole lot of psycho-analysts were to draw attention and to make much of.¹

It may be pointed out that the relevance of psycho-analysis is, indeed, great for any moral theory.² The

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²Ibid., pp. 67-72.
unconscious mental processes are integral factors of human reality without the consideration of which no concept of man is comprehensive. The theory of unconscious mental processes has to be taken into account side by side with conscious motives and intentions while building any moral theory. The real importance of psycho-analysis is that it has shown otherwise many inaccessible traces which do not lie idle but rather produce various bodily and mental conditions and influence our behaviour in general. Such elements to be sure, in our psychological life are not immediately given to introspection.

Moreover, Marx did not understand the whole animal nature of man — his basic impulse to power and domination. This has relevance to his concept of the withering away of the state which he conceives as a morally perfect state of affairs. He did not give due weight to aggression, frustration, jealousy and the impulse to power so deeprooted in man's nature. In any case he was being over simplistic in maintaining that economic perfectibility could alone bring about ethically sound human living. It is in the very nature of man's relation to man that a certain amount of conflict is bound to be there. The best that can be hoped for is a reduction in the area and intensity of conflict.
We must assess also the ethical validity of the human revolt itself. The fact that human mind revolts against certain conditions is not a sufficient criterion for its being declared as moral in itself. That is, revolution and morality cannot ipso facto be considered as synonymous. The way in which the protest manifests itself has also to be taken into consideration.

When one steps aside and reflects often looking at the awesome and the architectonic philosophical structure of Marx one comes to quick realization that, all said and done, Marx has after all presented only a fragmentary view of man. That his social man of the original nature and economic man of 'human nature in the process of transformation' remain unrelated even as contemplation with the oceanic unconscious does tear big holes in his philosophy.

It follows, therefore, that while Marx applauds the totality of man, he emphasizes one aspect at the expense and neglect of another. He does not take the total man into consideration though he imposingly speaks of the totality of man. In deifying the state at a particular stage in history Marx makes it monolithic with the result that the poor individual is at the mercy of the state without the possibility of intervention of any other institution. For healthy development man needs
to live and grow through multiplicity of institutions which cater to his basic needs and aspirations. Man becomes what he does through the institutions which he innovates or chooses.

Marx has not taken into consideration the specific nature of corporate man when he speaks of ideal man. The real person of morality in fact is the corporate man, the man enthroned within the system of his institutions. Largely, these institutions furnish means, conditions and ends for his acts; they furnish him with his motives and purposes. Hence, the moral action of the ideal man must also be considered in the context of his institutional situation. The forced ascription of responsibility for what one considers as wrong and the slow erosion of individual responsibility in the context of collective decision has lead almost inevitably to the substitution of man by the mask, so aptly epitomized in the concept of role which is pivotal to the socio-centric images of man. Man becomes an actor by assuming the mask. His reality is reduced to only what others apprehend of him. Marx did not take this aspect into consideration.

2 Daya Krishan, Social Philosophy: Past and Future, p. 28.
In contrast to Marxian state which in the final analysis gives a lie to the individuality of man, democratic world prospers and has its meaning through the voluntary organization of a number of social institutions. In fact a danger signal in any democracy can be seen when state control becomes more tight and the voluntary organizations begin to suffocate.

The involvements of causality and time are also significant in the consideration of ideal nature of man. How much of creativity is he left with? Historicity defines man's being and man finds himself enmeshed in causality, time, society and history even in the best of circumstances. One becomes only a link in the chain of history that weaves a web and stretches from the past to the future. Thus the factor of historicity takes away the creative and the original freedom from the consciousness of man. It takes away even the possibility of man's power to alter the human relations and to reconstruct the whole humanity anew.

As we shall elaborate in the subsequent chapters Marxian oversimplistic and unilateral formula can hardly solve the problems of complex modern humanity. For that matter no single ideology that ignores the different facets of man and society can be of much help. The moral
problem needs be identified and solved in the context of total culture of modern society. Before postulating a moral ideal, it must take into account both the dark and the bright sides of human nature, the gains and reverses of human history and the legitimate aspirations of man.