

DOUGLAS L. BENDELL AWARD

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST THOUGHT IN THE YOUNG KARL MARX

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Karl Marx was born a contradiction to the world of his time: from a Jewish family, he would become the world's foremost proponent of atheism; from a culture steeped in German romanticism and Hegelian idealist philosophy, he would become the foremost materialist philosopher; from a profligate son and later, profligate husband and father, he would become the economist who spent hours researching the topic of money for the world-changing "Das Kapital;" and from this man noted for his culture, intelligence, and arrogance would come the destruction of the old order of privilege through the "Communist Manifesto." Karl Marx was a contradiction to his times, and a revolutionary with a burning desire to change the existing society. His thought, however, was not revolutionary in the sense of being original, but a monumental synthesis of influences in his life, which congealed and culminated in three early works: "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction," and the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844."

Marx was born May 5, 1818 in Trier, a city on the Mosel River - a region renowned for its wine, Roman history, Catholicism, and revolutionary French ideas. Trier, a beautiful city surrounded by vineyards and almost Mediterranean vegetation, had a reputation for wine production from Roman times:

Treves (Trier) metropolis, most beautiful city,
You, who cultivate the grape, are most
pleasing to Bacchus.
Give your inhabitants the wines
strongest for sweetness!¹

Marx also had a life-long appreciation of wine; he drank it for medicine when sick, and for pleasure when he could afford it. In spite of the beauty and fame of the city, the business of wine production was economically devastating for the inhabitants of the Mosel region. While other major European cities were becoming wealthy through industrialization, Trier remained primarily a marketplace with few available jobs. Trier was a miserable town for

¹Saul K. Padover, *Karl Marx: An Intimate Biography*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978), 24.

the poor, that is, most of its inhabitants. At least one in four laborers was unemployed.² Marx would have seen the poor, for they were numerous.

Trier was the oldest city in Germany; founded by the Romans in the third century A.D., it became the frequent residence of Roman emperors in the fourth century. The ruins were a constant reminder of the power of the Roman Empire to the inhabitants of Trier. Marx's family home was a mere 50 yards from the intact city gate, the Porta Nigra. Marx, who truly lived in the shadow of this symbol of Roman power, would later destroy long-established social structures through the power of his writing, as the barbarian tribes had destroyed the Roman Empire with the power of the sword.

Trier was also an ancient bastion of Catholicism, and boasted of more churches than any city its size in Germany. Goethe commented on the overpowering ecclesiasticism after his visit to the city: "...within the town walls, it is burdened - yea, oppressed - with churches, chapels, cloisters, convents and colleges; and outside the walls, it is blockaded - yea, besieged - by abbeys, foundations and Carthusians."³ This was an ironic birthplace for the man who would write "religion is the opium of the people."⁴

Trier, located in the Catholic Rhineland, was 93% Catholic, with a small minority of Protestants, and an even smaller number of Jews.⁵ It was a city of great religious tolerance in Marx's day, according to Trier's Oberbürgermeister, Wilhelm Haw. "Everybody, Catholics, Protestants and Israelites, moves about in the greatest harmony." Haw attributed this tolerance to "the Christian spirit of mutual toleration."⁶ Whether religious tolerance in the city was due to Christian ideals or possibly the popularity of French liberal ideas mattered little to the Jewish inhabitants, who were ultimately subject to, first Napoleonic law, and then Prussian law. Both regimes barred Jews from certain occupations and denied them certain rights of citizenship unless they converted to Christianity. Karl Marx and his family were baptized in the Evangelical Lutheran faith, but there is no indication that any family members truly embraced Christian beliefs.

During the Napoleonic wars, the Rhineland had been annexed by the French, and the inhabitants of Trier had become accustomed to constitutional liberty and freedom of speech - freedoms not enjoyed by other Germans. The Trierites also shared the humanist-rationalist beliefs of the French, that is, an optimistic faith in man's ability to use reason to explain and improve the world. They believed all men were rational and good by nature. Human misery was caused by ignorance, which resulted from poor material circumstances and deliberate deception by those in authority, both governmental and ecclesiastical. The humanists proposed education and radical change in material conditions as the answers to

²David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1970), 2.

³Padover, *Karl Marx*, 23.

⁴Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2d. ed., (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 54.

⁵Padover, *Karl Marx*, 23.

⁶*Ibid.*, 18.

human misery.

Out of the French humanist philosophy grew utopian socialist philosophy. Because of the large number of poor in Trier, and the Trierites' unhappiness with Prussian annexation in 1814, and the city's proximity to France, it is not surprising that Trier was one of the first German cities to adopt French utopian socialist ideals. Ludwig Gall, Secretary of the Trier City Council, constantly emphasized the miserable state of the poor, and the growing tension between the rich and the poor. Gall openly advocated the teachings of the French socialists Charles Fourier and the Comte de Saint-Simon as a cure for the economic and social ills of the city.⁷

Karl Marx's father, Heinrich (also, Heschel or Hirschel) Marx, was an avid French humanist, "a true eighteenth-century Frenchman. He knew his Voltaire and Rousseau by heart."⁸ Karl Marx absorbed this love of French culture and affairs from his father, and it developed into a life-long interest. Karl Marx learned to read and write French fluently, the subject of most of his non-economic writings dealt with French affairs, and two of his three daughters married Frenchmen. This interest in French culture gave both Heinrich and Karl an identity which was, for them, a welcome change from their German Jewish heritage. Although Heinrich's male ancestors were all rabbis in Trier dating back to the sixteenth century, he broke with the family and worked to educate himself as a lawyer. This would have been impossible for earlier generations, but the French Revolution had given the Jews a certain amount of political freedom and educational opportunity.

Heinrich Marx was never a wealthy man, but he was able to provide a comfortable living for his five daughters and two sons. Because of the childhood death of an older brother, Karl was raised as the "oldest son" in this patriarchal family. Heinrich had great hopes for his "Gluckskind,"⁹ and the two shared a close father-son relationship. Karl Marx's daughter said that her father "clung ardently to the memory of his father" and that he "never tired of talking about him."¹⁰ The hard and usually unsentimental Marx carried a picture of his father at all times.

Karl did not enjoy a close relationship with his mother Henriette, although she too was proud of her "Gluckskind" in his early years. Henriette was a Dutch Jew, and exhibited a number of the traits often associated with the Dutch: tidiness, frugality, perseverance and respect for material possessions, which she sometimes flaunted. Karl hated these qualities in his mother, and derided her as "philistine" and "bourgeois."¹¹ He would later use these words many times to describe the entire existing social order in Europe. Karl's qualities were

⁷Ibid., 35.

⁸McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, 28.

⁹Padover, *Karl Marx*, I. Ironically, Gluckskind means "child of fortune," and Karl Marx was to live most of his life in dire poverty.

¹⁰Ibid., 4.

¹¹Ibid., 13.

the opposite of his mother's: uncleanness, improvidence, slothfulness and contempt for material possessions.

Although the French Revolution had improved the lives of European Jews such as the Marx family, the Jews were still hated for both economic and religious reasons. Rich and poor Jews were hated as usurers by the oppressed and debt-ridden masses. Jews were also considered enemies of the true religion. Christians believed that the Jewish religion taught only one doctrine - the love of money. Ironically, Karl absorbed this belief in his youth and was never to lose it.¹²

There is no record of Karl Marx attending school before the age of twelve, when he registered in the Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium. He would spend five years there, under the directorship of Johann Hugo Wyttenbach. Wyttenbach was a pro-French humanist and the author of a five-volume history of Trier. He was also Marx's history teacher, and probably the first person to give Marx a vision of the "big picture" in mankind's history. Under Wyttenbach, the gymnasium espoused the spirit of freedom and allowed criticism of the government. The school was put under police surveillance in 1830, and one boy was put in jail for a month for writing an anti-government poem.¹³ The list of teachers and students the Prussian government considered suspicious does not include Karl Marx, although he would endure government oppression his entire adult life. At this time, Karl's interest was in writing romantic poetry, not in politics.

Most, if not all, of the teachers at the gymnasium were pro-French, which also meant they were anti-Prussian. The teachers taught the superiority of the French mind and French culture. Even Marx's math and physics teacher extolled the virtues of the French in those fields, and at least one of Marx's teachers, Thomas Simon, applied French socialist ideas to the plight of the poor in Trier.

I have devoted myself to the problems of the impoverished and neglected people and have done so with a heart full of sincerity and ardent participation. In my capacity as a teacher, I point out daily that what makes a man into a human being is not the possession of cold, filthy, printed money, but character, principles, reason and sympathy for the weal and woe of one's fellow man.¹⁴

Marx's teachers were unimpressed with his abilities, as is shown by their comments on his report cards and his Abitur ("school-leaving" test) grades. Marx graduated eighth in his class of 32, with an overall grade of "B."¹⁵ For the Abitur, Marx was required to write three essays, only one of which gives an insight into his thought. The "Reflections of a Young

¹²Ibid., 14.

¹³Ibid., 37.

¹⁴Ibid., 35.

¹⁵David McLellan, Karl Marx: His Life and Thought, (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 10.

Man on Choosing an Occupation” is prophetic, considering Marx’s later role in history. The central theme of the essay is that nature assigns a position to each creature in the world. Animals have a passive position; men have an active position, because they possess aspiration and judgment. Men must choose a vocation based on their abilities. A proper choice of a vocation will lead to self-fulfillment, and to service for humanity; there is no contradiction between the personal and idealistic.

History calls those the greatest men who ennoble themselves by working for the universal. Experience praises as the most happy the one who made the most people happy. Religion itself teaches that the ideal for which we are all striving sacrificed itself for humanity, and who would dare to gainsay such a statement?

When we have chosen the vocation in which we can contribute most to humanity, burdens cannot bend us because they are only sacrifices for all. Then we experience no meagre, limited, egotistic joy, but our happiness belongs to millions, our deeds live on quietly but eternally effective, and glowing tears of noble men will fall on our ashes.¹⁶

Marx concluded that the proper vocation would make the man himself happy, as well as benefit society. It is doubtful that Karl Marx made many people happy in his lifetime, certainly not the bourgeoisie and his close associates. He did, however, dedicate his life to improving the plight of the poor to the detriment of his own health and economic interests.

The mentor and confidante of Karl Marx during his gymnasium days was not one of his teachers, but the man who would later be his father-in-law, Ludwig von Westphalen. Westphalen was a Trierite who was a member of the Scottish nobility, a man of culture and liberal French ideas. He was bilingual because of his heritage, and could read in seven languages. Marx and he spent hours walking in the beautiful hills surrounding Trier, while Westphalen told Marx of Goethe, Saint-Simon, Cervantes, Homer, and Shakespeare. Marx later would also read in all the major European languages while researching historical and economic subjects, and speak German, French and English fluently.

Having passed his Abitur, Marx entered the University of Bonn to study jurisprudence. His year there was spent drinking, dueling, and causing his anxious parents great worry. Karl was the great hope of the family, but Heinrich and Henriette knew he was a person given to excesses. They worried much about his health, which had always been poor, and his penchant for spending their money freely, though they had so little. Karl soon gave up going to law lectures, and joined two student clubs. One was a political club under police surveillance for anti-government speech. Karl, however, was not one of the members listed in police reports. The other club, the Treviraner, was composed of students from lower and middle class homes in the Trier area. The purpose of this club was to drink liquor and satirize the upper class club, which often led to dueling.

¹⁶Ibid., 14.

After his first year, Marx transferred to the University of Berlin where the students did not carouse, for they were hard-working Prussians. The University of Berlin at the time was still much under the influence of its renowned philosophy professor, Georg Wilhelm Hegel, although he had recently died. An intellectual ferment brewed, as two of his students, now professors themselves, interpreted Hegel in different ways. Professor Frederick Karl von Savigny was a jurist who stressed two main ideas in his lectures: first, laws are an integral part of a nation, like limbs are to the human body; and second, each generation is dependent on, and formed by all previous generations. "Each age does not act arbitrarily or in an egoistic independence, but is entirely held to the past by common and indissoluble bonds."¹⁷ Savigny's emphasis on the continuity of generations through history prefigures Marx's historical materialism. Marx would have objected, however, to his professor's support of the Prussian government as an expression of the Hegelian "Ideal."

Eduard Gans was also a jurist professor who had been a student of Hegel; he differed greatly from Savigny in thought, age and presentation as a lecturer. Gans was a young Saint-Simonian socialist, whose lectures were so exciting that non-students attended them. Gans emphasized the dialectic of Hegel, that is, the movement of mankind forward to something better through historic process, including the struggle of classes. His belief that the French Revolution had been beneficial and liberating for all Europe risked the anger of the Prussian government, but it was for "radical" writings such as the following for which Gans' lectures were suppressed by the Berlin censors:

The followers of Saint-Simon have correctly observed that slavery has not disappeared; that if it has been formally abolished, it nevertheless persists in a most unmistakable form. Just as master and slave once confronted each other, then the patrician and plebian, and still later the lord and vassal, today we have the parasite and the worker. One has only to visit the factories to see hundreds of ill-fed, destitute men and women sacrificing in the service and for the profit of one man their health and all the pleasures of life, in exchange for a meager pittance. Is it not pure slavery when man is exploited like a beast, when he is left nothing but the liberty to die of hunger? Is it not possible to awaken in these proletarians their moral consciousness?¹⁸

Marx would later echo this theme of change from feudal slavery to a more awful kind - the slavery of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Both Gans and Marx considered feudalism the more just of the two economic systems, because the feudal lord was responsible for the health and life of the vassal. The bourgeois, on the other hand, possessed no moral imperatives to care for the health and life of the proletarian. Marx would later say

¹⁷Padover, Karl Marx, 75.

¹⁸Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx: The Evolution of His Thought, (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 16.

in "The Manifesto of the Communist Party:"

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes....

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part....

In one word, for [feudal] exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.¹⁹

During this time, Marx also experienced a love-hate relationship with the writings of Hegel himself. Marx strove to find a metaphysical Absolute in the field of law, such as Hegel's Absolute Idea, but was unsuccessful. Marx believed that laws needed to be based on a philosophic principle, and not just arbitrarily chosen by those in power. Marx joined a club called the "Young Hegelians," with members all older than he, who met to discuss philosophical questions and drink beer. The club members were quite impressed with the young Karl Marx. One member who had not yet met Marx, but had heard about him from Edgar and Bruno Bauer wrote:

Who rushes behind with wild bluster?

A swarthy fellow from Trier, a vigorous monster.

He walks not, hops not, he leaps on his heels

And raves, full of rage, as if he wanted to seize

The broad canopy of heaven, and pull it down to earth,

His arms extended very wide in the air.

With angry fist balled, he rants ceaselessly,

As if ten thousand devils held him by the forelock.²⁰

The club member who so aptly captured Marx's appearance, character and thought without meeting him, was Friedrich Engels. Engels would later meet this "swarthy fellow from Trier" and become Marx's only life-long friend. Already, Engels realized the role Marx would play in history: "to seize the broad canopy of heaven and pull it down to earth," that is, to replace the philosophy of Idealism with the philosophy of Materialism.

German Idealism, that is, Hegelianism, proposed an Absolute Idea from which all man's social and religious structures emanated. This philosophy, which claimed the prior

¹⁹Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, 473-5.

²⁰Padover, *Karl Marx*, 116.

existence of the perfect and eternal Absolute Idea to earthly institutions, supported the claim of existing European social and religious structures to be a reflection of the perfect and eternal, and therefore beyond the realm of criticism. German intellectuals had only two choices at this time: embrace the philosophical and political status quo and be rewarded with a high-paying job, or attack the status quo and expose oneself to harassment, legal prosecution, and exile. Marx would choose to attack, through the one profession open to non-conformist intellectuals - radical journalism. The object of Marx's writing was to expose the false claims of the status quo in order to make way for the new, and this he did in a style that was harshly critical from his first works to his last. What could one expect from the young man who's motto was "Doubt everything"?²¹

The most important book Marx read during his student days, which precipitated the turning point in his intellectual development from idealism to materialism, was Ludwig Feuerbach's "The Essence of Christianity." Feuerbach denied the existence of God as an "Absolute Idea," and stated that nothing exists besides nature and man. Religion existed only in man's mind; that is, God did not create man, rather, man created God. Thus, various aspects of Christianity corresponded to some need of human nature. Feuerbach, like Marx's friend Bruno Bauer, was critical not just of Christianity, but also Judaism. Both philosophers condemned the Jewish believers as interested only in earning money, a position Marx adopted. The young intellectuals considered "The Essence of Christianity" the end of classical German philosophy. Friedrich Engels described the effect of this work on them:

In one blow it...placed materialism back upon the throne...The spell was broken....One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get a real idea of it. The enthusiasm was universal: We were all for the moment Feuerbachians. With what enthusiasm Marx greeted the new conception, and how much he was influenced by it - despite all critical misgivings - one may read in "The Holy Family."²²

Marx studied five years in Berlin before finishing his doctoral thesis: "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature." Both Democritus and Epicurus were Greek materialists who based their philosophies on observation of the universe, but with one great cosmological difference: Democritus observed the static nature of the universe, and therefore posited the unavoidability of all occurrences, whereas Epicurus observed the changeable nature of the universe and therefore posited the irregularity of all occurrences. Epicurus held that this irregularity proved the existence of man's individuality and free will. Therefore, Marx wrote, "Epicurus is the greatest enlightener, and deserves the eulogy bestowed upon him by Lucretius":

²¹David McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Interviews and Recollections, (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981), 167.

²²Padover, Karl Marx, 136.

When, before the eyes of men, disgraceful life on earth
 Was bowed down by the burden of oppressive religion,
 Which extended its head from the high regions of heaven,
 And with gruesome grotesqueness frightfully threatened mankind,
 A Greek first ventured to raise his mortal eye
 Against the monster and boldly resisted it.
 Neither the fable of god, nor lightning or thunder of heaven,
 Scared him with their threat...
 Thus, as in reprisal, religion lies at our feet,
 Completely defeated,
 But, as for us, triumph raises us up to heaven.²³

As the quote above shows, Marx's doctoral dissertation is also a rejection of religion and of those German idealist philosophers who used philosophy to prove the existence of God - Joseph von Schelling, Immanuel Kant, and Hegel himself. Marx criticized their methods as actually proving the non-existence of God. Marx believed philosophy should reign independently of religion, and quoted Epicurus: "Impious is not he who rejects the God of the multitude, but he who attributes the conceptions of the multitude to the Gods."²⁴

Marx did not present his doctoral dissertation to the examiners at the University of Berlin on the advice of his friend, Bruno Bauer. Because of the content of Marx's dissertation and his friendship with Bauer, a professor at the University of Bonn and a well-known critic of religion, the pro-clerical examiners would deny Marx his doctorate in philosophy. Marx therefore presented his dissertation to the examiners at the liberal University of Jena and received his doctorate within a week. The criticism of religion by the young intellectuals greatly worried not only the Prussian government, but also other European monarchies who claimed to be Christian States. As Voltaire had shown in the 18th century, an assault on the Church - the foundation of these governments claiming to be Christian States, was the first step in demolishing these governments.

As there was no chance of Marx teaching philosophy in a German university, he accepted the editorship of a newly founded newspaper, the *Rheinische Zeitung*. At this time, Marx was not yet a communist, but a humanist. His first article on the subject for the newspaper stated: "The *Rheinische Zeitung*, which cannot concede the theoretical reality of communist ideas even in their present form, and can even less wish or consider possible their practical realization, will submit these ideas to a thorough scrutiny."²⁵ Several months later, Marx began to read the major French utopian and socialist theorists, especially the works of Charles Fourier and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. These writers did not convert Marx to

²³Ibid., 120.

²⁴Ibid., 124.

socialism, but they did arouse his interest. Marx would embrace communism through the study of economics, not through the writings of the utopians.

The *Rheinische Zeitung* eventually succumbed to the heavy-handed Prussian censors and financial difficulties. Marx now had time to re-read a number of political and philosophical works. It was at this time also that Marx wrote to his friend, Arnold Ruge, calling for a "ruthless criticism of everything existing."²⁶ The fruits of his study, combined with his aim of criticism, resulted in three critical articles, two of which were critiques of Hegel's philosophy.

Marx found contradictions in Hegel's political system, which he carefully presented in the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." Marx used Feuerbach's "transformational criticism,"²⁷ the method Feuerbach had used to criticize Hegel's system of religion. Feuerbach's transformational criticism was important to the leftist Young Hegelians in that this method preserved the truth of the philosophy of Hegel, but in an inverted form. Instead of man's institutions emanating from, and reflecting the Absolute Idea as Hegel had said, Feuerbach countered that the Idea is but a creation of man's consciousness.

Marx reversed Hegel's notion that institutions are the product of the Universal, and countered that it is actually the human being, and only he, who creates his own social and religious systems. Man does not do this because of some abstract idea, but in response to the material conditions of his existence. "Just as it is not religion which creates man but man who creates religion, so it is not the constitution which creates the people but the people which creates the constitution....Man does not exist for the law but the law for man..."²⁸ Marx maintained that this inversion of Hegel produced the "guiding thread" in his thought that led to his formulation of historical materialism.²⁹

The second part of Marx's critique of Hegel's political system, the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," is a passionate call for a radical revolution to free man from the religious and political remnants of the "ancien regime," in order that man can achieve self-realization. The "Critique" opens with a sweeping condemnation of religion, accusing it of being the first cause of man's alienation from himself. Man looks to heaven to find his true self, but "Religion is only the illusory sun about which man revolves so long as he does not revolve about himself."³⁰ Why does man search the heavens for his true self? Marx answers that it is because of man's misery on earth that "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world,

²⁵Ibid., 144.

²⁶Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, 12-15.

²⁷Ibid., xxii-iii.

²⁸Ibid., 20.

²⁹Ibid., xxii.

³⁰Ibid., 54.

and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."³¹

Marx proposes the elimination of the conditions causing this alienation for man, and this is to be accomplished through criticism, beginning with that of religion. "...The criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism."³² Criticism of religion then moves from the sacred to the secular with the criticism of law; and correspondingly, the criticism of theology moves from the sacred to the secular with the criticism of politics.³³ Thus, Marx has brought the reader to the point of his "Critique" - the criticism of politics in Germany. Marx then describes the scenario that will bring about this radical revolution, naming the proletariat as the universal class which will free all of Germany, while freeing itself. Marx chose the proletariat as the negation in Hegel's dialectic, because it is a class that belongs to no class. Following the logic of Hegel's dialectic, the two universals - that is, the bourgeoisie (status quo) and the proletariat, trade places and the result is synthesis - a new society where man achieves self-realization. A major feature of this new society will be the negation of private property, because the proletariat "only lays down as a principle for society what society has already made a principle for the proletariat."³⁴

The two political critiques on Hegel foreshadowed Marx's next work - the critique of political economy, the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844." The "Manuscripts" show Marx's conversion to communism, his growing concern with the topic of economics, and his elaboration of the theme of alienation. In the "Manuscripts," Marx explores the economic structures which produce alienated labor, again using the critical method of his Hegel "Critiques." In the "Manuscripts," transformational criticism is applied to *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, by English economist Adam Smith.³⁵ The industrial revolution and the capitalist method of production had fragmented man through the division of labor, mechanization, and exploitation. The humanists and the German romantic writers longed for unity of man within himself, of man with his own kind, and of man with nature. The romantic poets and philosophers complained that man had been overpowered by his own works:

Enjoyment was divorced from labor, the means from the end, the effort from the reward. Everlastingly chained to a single little fragment of the Whole, man himself develops into nothing but a fragment; everlastingly in his ear the monotonous sound of the wheel that he turns, he never develops the harmony of his being, and

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 53.

³³Ibid., 54.

³⁴Ibid., 65.

³⁵Margaret Fay, "The Influence of Adam Smith on Marx's Theory of Alienation," Science and Society 47 (Summer '83): 129-51.

instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature, he becomes nothing more than the imprint of his occupation or of his specialized knowledge.³⁶

In the "Manuscripts of 1844" Marx agrees with this description of man's fragmentation or alienation by Friedrich Schiller, and exposes the cause by which man is alienated from himself, other men and nature. "Private property [is] the material, summary expression of alienated labor."³⁷ The antidote Marx proposes is communism:

Communism [is] the positive transcendence of private property, or human self-estrangement, and therefore [is] the the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore [is] the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being....It is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man...³⁸

Marx's thought underwent few changes during the remaining 39 years of his life, and although he continued to write, his mature works are magnifications of themes explored in his early works. *Das Kapital*, for example, is a further exploration of the critique of political economy, begun in the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844." Critical theory remained Marx's chosen method, both to assess the present state of the world, and also to find the emerging - presumably better - world. Marx envisioned this method as open-ended, that is, undogmatic. "...We do not dogmatically anticipate the world, but only want to find the new world through critique of the old one."³⁹ The new world Marx saw emerging was communist, and it would produce the whole man: man free to express himself through his choice of labors, for it was the division of labor that fragmented and alienated man.

...In communist society, ...nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind..⁴⁰

³⁶Ernst Fischer, ed., The Essential Marx, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 15.

³⁷Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, 81.

³⁸Ibid., 84.

³⁹W. A. Suchtig, Marx: An Introduction, (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983), 23.

⁴⁰Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, 160.