

Godless Disciples of Modern Scripture: Darwin, Marx, & Freud

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Introduction

The central philosophical argument guiding the present essay is relatively straightforward and fairly easy to comprehend, and it can be briefly captured as follows. It can be demonstrated with confidence that the central doctrines of three of the greatest thinkers of modern times – Charles Darwin (1809-1882), Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) – are logically and empirically flawed beyond remedy, widely known both then and now by an array of eminent scholars, scientists, theologians, philosophers, and several others.

Yet, vast respect and undying homage continues to be accorded to them as veritable geniuses and to their theoretical systems as masterful creations by greater and lesser minds alike across the cultural and institutional parameters of modern civilization. As will be demonstrated here, this homage and respect cannot be explained by wholehearted commitment to tested knowledge in traditional empirical-scientific style. Quite the contrary, it can only be explained by the underlying principles of naturalism, humanism, and atheism contained in their central beliefs, concepts, and ideas, another ugly legacy of Enlightenment thought that has become a permanent fixture of contemporary life.

From educators to journalists to professors to reporters to editors to bureaucrats to politicians to doctors, lawyers, and average administrators of all stripes, and more, the key institutional gatekeepers of modern society, themselves among

the ranks of the Enlightenment faithful, have served as conduits or vehicles through which naturalist and atheistic beliefs continue to be introduced and reinforced in modern society. Among other things, these gatekeepers of modern society hold the decision-making power to set policies and standards for what constitutes acceptable thought and for what information is desirable and not desirable for widespread dissemination.

They are individuals in authoritative positions in various institutions that control access to important needed or desired services, and they hold the acknowledged and recognized power to apply these policies and standards, and to refuse or deny desired access. What's more, gatekeepers tend to operate as filters or screens determining to a large extent the bits and pieces of ideas, thoughts, and information that reach the average public, and that includes belief systems (Lewin, 1943). in other words, they tend to simultaneously operate as moral gatekeepers in their positions of authority in the institutions of modern society, filtering value and belief systems, thoughts and ideas, as much as they control access to services and other general information.

Logical Flaws

Among the many irremediable logical flaws noted below, all of the great thinkers of modernity examined here in one way or another repeatedly denigrated and denied the rationality, reason, and logic of human beings, and rendered them fully dependent on material conditions and biological factors. Yet, at the same time, they apparently viewed themselves to be uniquely free to make independent lawful assertions about human nature, the conditions of human existence, and even the history of humanity itself. Somehow, paradoxically, they believed themselves and their theoretical constructions not to be reducible to social conditions and biological factors.

As well, even while proclaiming human beings to be nothing more than appendages of material and biological factors, they also imported into their theoretical constructs the Enlightenment belief in the perfectibility of human beings and, therefore, the progress and advancement of humanity and society. Now, paradoxically, that means that in their thoughts and ideas, denying humanity's capacity for independent rationality and reason while denigrating them as socially-determined and instinctively aggressive animals sat side by side with a fervent belief in the perfectibility of the human species and the penultimate faith in human progress. Most assuredly, the undying faith in human progress can be considered among the holy grail of the Enlightenment along with natural law, rationality, and liberty.

Arguably, it is precisely these logical flaws in their arguments that ignited constant vehement objections from other notable thinkers which, in turn, compelled unending withdrawals and revisions of their theoretical claims, a process which continues to this day despite the severe empirical flaws which still plague them. As many great thinkers and scientists at the time as now refused to accept these logical and empirical flaws, let alone the hidden shades of philosophical naturalism and atheism underlying the theoretical constructions of these three great Godless thinkers of modernity.¹

¹ To say that many of the thoughts and ideas of these great thinkers were logically and empirically flawed is not to suggest that they did not contain profound insights about the human condition. A logical flaw is simply a problem contained in a claim, statement, or argument that can be firmly disproven through a reasoning process. Empirically flawed simply means that, for the most part, bold theoretical claims were not based upon facts or sound scientific-empirical methods or procedures. These claims were usually not based upon observation and experimentation, and then independently tested and re-tested for validity and reliability. Rather, it means that they relied largely upon untested and unverified theoretical speculation and point of view to interpret and determine results, especially problematic when it comes to making broad claims about human nature, thought, conduct, and history all of which don't readily lend themselves to laboratory settings where careful observation, experimentation, rigorous skepticism, and the other dictums of proper

Philosophical Naturalism vs. Transcendental Religion

Then as now, philosophical naturalism ² vied with transcendental theism to provide socially acceptable explanations for the existence of human rationality and consciousness, the origin and intelligibility of the universe, and the origin of humanity, among many other central beliefs. Naturalism argues that nature embodies all of reality and solely natural laws and forces function in the universe, not spiritual entities or divine beings. Since everything within this thought system must have natural causes, there can be no teleology in nature. Natural causes simply operate or function; they are not purposive.

Interestingly enough, naturalism was quite common in the ancient world among the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Greeks. Essentially, it encapsulated the idea that the gods were to be found in primeval matter, not a supernatural God who created nature and then stands outside of it intervening in its processes only if necessary. Long before naturalism was adopted by Western civilization, it existed in the Hinduism of the 7th-6th-and-2nd centuries BCE and first century Confucianism.

A Western form of naturalism emerged among the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers. Understandably, there is little evidence of naturalism in medieval philosophy due chiefly to the emergence and spread of Christianity and Islam afterwards. Then suddenly, it emerges again in the initial phases of the modern era and the

scientific analysis and testing can take place in order to prevent cognitive assumptions from distorting interpretations. Ostensibly, being children of the 19th century, all of these thinkers were quite aware of the scientific revolution and the origin of early modern science that had begun at least 200 years earlier and continued up to their own time (Henry, 2008; Shapiro, 1998; Weinberg, 2015).

² Naturalism in philosophy is simply connected to the notion that ONLY natural laws and forces are at work in the universe, NOT supernatural or divine laws and forces. In other words, it claims that the causes of all phenomena in the universe are only to be found within that universe and not supernatural entities or factors beyond it. By contrast with ancient and early modern philosophers, most contemporary philosophers would quite likely reject the existence of supernatural entities (Papineau, 2007).

Enlightenment in the thoughts and ideas of Spinoza, Hume, and the dogmatic French materialist philosophy of the 17th and 18th centuries, along with the contributions of several other notable writers and thinkers such as Rousseau, Voltaire, Hobbes, Kant, Locke, Hegel, and Feuerbach (Conrad, 2012; Lennox, 2020; Papineau, 2007).

By contrast, transcendental religion³ argues that a divine God is the penultimate reality and provides the most coherent explanation for human rationality and consciousness, the origin of humanity, and the intelligent design of the universe. It almost goes without saying that the core proponents of the 17th and 18th century Enlightenment worshipped at the altar of naturalism, not in a transcendental reality. The transcendental belief that there are aspects of human existence wholly independent of natural laws and forces existing beyond all known physical laws was soundly rejected, thereby self-consciously and proudly waving the black flag of atheism over the unguarded gates of modernity.

As the naturalistic and atheistic thoughts and ideas flooded through the gates and over the unsecured walls of modernity, the proponents and adherents of the Enlightenment were pleased and looked askance, and modern civilization has been

³ Transcendentalism is generally understood as a fervent belief in the unity of everything in creation including human beings, humanity is innately good, and the discovery of profound truth achieved only when insight reigns supreme over logic and experience. It is a seemingly intimidating word that actually describes a very simple idea, namely, that all human beings possess truths about themselves and the world around them that goes beyond or 'transcends' what is available to them through their senses of vision, hearing, tasting, and touching or feeling (Goodman, 2023). Therefore, transcendental religion is a faith system that incorporates the belief that there is an aspect of human existence that is completely beyond and independent of all material conditions and physical laws and forces in the universe, and therefore, beyond full human understanding. This aspect of existence is connected to the nature and power of supernatural beings. In addition to Christianity and Islam, another pertinent Abrahamic example of a transcendental religion is the religious birthhood of our three great atheistic thinkers, Judaism, a faith system which declares that a transcendent divine Creator God is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent (Lieberman, 2023; Machen, 1949).

living with the ugly aftermath ever since. The ceaseless and merciless extraction of ideas and values associated with a divine Creator God the Father had truly begun in earnest, ardently promoted and reinforced by the thoughts and ideas flowing from that great trinity of modern atheistic thinking – Darwin, Marx, and Freud.

Indelible Mark Upon Modern History

It can hardly be disputed that Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud have left an indelible mark upon the times in which we live, in many ways providing the invisible cement that has hardened the structural joints of human thought and interaction. What's more, many of our major institutions are fundamentally premised upon ideas and beliefs proudly once promulgated by these three great thinkers. The impact of their thoughts and ideas upon the modern world has been so monumentally profound and wide-ranging that even capable thinkers may be momentarily stumped to find an equally impactful comparison. Perhaps a few salutary attempts will aptly demonstrate this basic point.

It goes without saying that the thinking of entire historical periods can be significantly shaped by great minds. Like Martin Luther and John Calvin impacted upon Reformation-era thinking, or like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire impacted upon the Enlightenment, modern thought has surely been profoundly shaken by Darwin, Marx, and Freud in so many different areas of everyday life. It is nearly impossible to divorce their impact from both the conduct of human behavior in general and even the worldview of the average person.

Still, it seems unlikely that the impact of Reformation and Enlightenment thinking upon human thought and society can adequately capture the collective and cumulative impact of Darwin, Marx, and Freud. Additionally, the fact that many of the components of their theoretical constructions were

undoubtedly borrowed from these movements makes this comparison a bit tenuous.

To convey the full magnitude of Darwin's, Marx's, and Freud's imprint upon the social universe, perhaps it can be best understood when compared to great scientific discoveries in the natural or biological universes. Many examples easily come to mind such as Newton's discovery of gravity or Copernicus' discovery of Earth's motion and a motionless Sun or Galileo's discovery of the Milky Way and telescopic observations of the planets or, more recently, Louis Pasteur's germ theory of disease causation and Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin or Michael Faraday's discovery of the principles of electricity generation.

Still, it seems, no scientific discovery by itself or in combination with others can quite capture the enormous cognitive impact and daunting legacy of Darwin, Freud, and Marx that modern humanity still lives with in everyday cognitive and behavioral life, arguably above and beyond the average awareness of many if not most people. Granted, most average people, religious or not, may have more than a passing acquaintance with one or another or all of these three great atheistic thinkers of modernity. But it is highly unlikely they understand how the ideas and central doctrines of these disciples of atheism have infused and implicated themselves into patterns of modern human thought and behavior as well as the very structure of modern civilization.

As these salutary examples demonstrate, it is no easy task to find a comparable equivalent to the collective and cumulative impact of Darwin, Marx, and Freud upon modern life and thought. In their varying and differential efforts to acquire some kind of comprehensive and coherent understanding about human nature and the human condition, among other things, these widely-acknowledged intellectual giants shared a common overriding cognitive predisposition despite some apparent philosophical differences. First and foremost, they

wanted to understand humanity mainly as the product of historical and developmental factors, not spiritual, biblical, or theistic factors, and especially not in terms of the revelation of Christ or the Christian Bible.

Atheistic Legacy

It is precisely this adamant atheistic⁴ legacy that continues to bedevil modern humanity in so many ways, particularly but not only in the area of moral theory or the nature of morality itself. For these three great modern thinkers, the Genesis God of Creation did not factor into explaining why particular actions or behaviors are ‘wrong’ or why human beings should behave in certain ways or how best to organize a society or how best to define human nature or any other part of the human condition. Indeed, the traditional notions of ‘wrong’ and ‘right’ were soundly rejected or put into sharp relief in the explanatory process.

Just a few notable examples will make this point clear. in terms of philosophical orientation, these atheistic intellectual giants

⁴ Actually, the etymology of the term ‘atheism’ disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of ‘God’ or gods in general stems from the late 16th century French ‘atheisme’, in Greek ‘atheos’ from ‘a’ (meaning ‘without’ + ‘theos’ (meaning ‘god’). The historical picture of this belief is an interesting caricature of religious belief in modern human history, to be sure. Evidence of atheistic beliefs stretches way back into classical antiquity and especially early Indian philosophy. But in the Western world, the existence and prevalence of atheistic belief declined as Christianity came to be culturally prevalent. With the Renaissance and then the dawn of the Enlightenment in the 16th century, atheistic thought resurged in Europe. Later, with widespread governmental legislations championing and protecting freedom of thought and expression in the 20th century, atheism came to occupy a much more significant cultural position. Subsequently, a plethora of explicitly atheistic organizations sprang up clothed in protective legal dress to promote the autonomy and legitimacy of atheistic beliefs tandem with secular ethics, secularism, and science. Consequently, the growth of atheistic believers in the world has mushroomed and shows little signs of abatement. It was once estimated that there were more than 500 million atheists in the world (Zuckerman, 2006), and current estimates make this total pale by comparison for reasons this essay hopefully makes clear.

asked questions about how human beings 'become' humans, not about the fixed 'being' of humanity often assumed in traditional or biblical worldviews. The teleological (design and purpose in the material world) and essentialist (inherent and unchanging natural characteristics of people and things) features of explanation which emphasized the permanency of human beings and the human condition so characteristic of biblical thinking, for example, were effectively and adamantly sidelined. They were replaced by a heavy emphasis placed upon processes of causation through time which highlighted dynamism, change, and conflict as central causative factors, not the loving words or actions of a divine sovereign omnipotent entity.

Generally, the 'being' in the term human being which they conceived of was not in permanent fixture as a result of a divine creation expounded in Genesis but, rather, a fragile being subject to constant change from birth to death mainly due to influential material factors of one sort or another. For Marx, it was the primacy of economic factors that explained human conduct and social processes. For Darwin, it was mostly biological factors that were the turnkey of human conduct and society. For Freud, it was subconscious psychic processes that tended to rule over human behavior and social structures. As can be easily understood, each of these great thinkers tended strongly to reduce humanity and society to a particular set of causal factors and influences, despite contributing many wonderful insights into human nature and society. Reductionist thinking was a mainstay for these thinkers.

In turn, a belief in the ever-changing nature or fragility of human beings resulted in a belief in the fragility of the social order which they necessarily created as a result. For these reasons, and following through on their ardent atheistic faith, they believed that humanity was as broken as its social order largely because it had followed the dictates of one or another groundless irrational religious thought, not because they were imperfect sinful creatures at core. Quite the contrary, they

believed wholeheartedly in the rational perfection and advancement of the human species. Despite initial belief in the existence of an unchanging, biologically-grounded, instinctive and aggressive human nature comparable to the animal world, even in his later life Freud came to wholeheartedly believe in the progressive advancement and perfectibility of human beings very similar to Marx's beliefs.

The prognosis was simple. As soon as humanity begins to rely primarily upon its own powers of reason and eschew using infantile mythological and religious speculations as mental crutches, as it were, then the ills plaguing modern humanity can be redressed. Evidently, in line with the core doctrines of Enlightenment thinkers themselves, they shared a fervent belief that religious thought obscures and misdirects reason from acquiring the facts of any matter by fictionalizing the causes of human behavior in some ineradicable sinful predisposition, thereby aggravating the ills of the human condition when projected into society at large and making permanent solutions an impossibility.

These atheistic doctors of humanity genuinely believed that by ridding society of such woeful assaults on human reason, they could cure all manner of social ailments. The implicit hostility in this view toward the Judeo-Christian God the Creator of Genesis surely goes without question here. Therefore, like Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine left their religious mark on medieval society, so, too, did Darwin, Marx, and Freud put their inerasable irreligious stamp on modern civilization, the dark stain of which has yet to dry.

Like Luther, Calvin, and other theologians were supposedly going to fix or remedy the ills of the Roman Catholic Church, or like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Locke argued that reason embodied in the state was going to repair the ills of humankind and champion a new era of peace and freedom, so it was that Darwin, Marx, and Freud, and their faithful followers, were going to heal the ills of a promising modernity that had been

literally diseased by a largely compelled, atavistic emotional attachment to a fictionalized divine or supernatural entity.

Unbridled Humanism

The core of their approach was a rationalist outlook that primarily underscored the importance of human matters in the analytical and explanatory processes, not supernatural or divine forces. At heart, it was a humanistic orientation or humanism⁵ as part of a Renaissance cultural movement that rejected medieval scholasticism and replaced it with ancient Greek and Roman thought employed to promote the free agency and social potential of human beings. The biblical 'God' was not the starting point of any discussion or understanding of human behavior, social structures, the human condition, and social ills. Rather, human beings were both the starting and end points for such considerations.

The profound ramifications of such a view for a proper understanding of modern civilization surely needs to be accented and firmly held in focus here. For these giant thinkers of modernity, the starting point of any serious philosophical and moral inquiry into the human malaise begins with individual human beings, not fictional divine entities. To think otherwise, they believed, was to foster and actually contribute to every sort of social evil from female infanticide, the ban on female education, child-marriage, and the caste system to child labor, poverty, and religious conflicts - just to name a few.

⁵ Simply put, humanism constitutes a rationalist perspective of all human affairs on Earth. It is a system of thought that attaches prime significance to specifically human rather than divine or supernatural causal factors. It emerged as part of a 14th-16th century Renaissance cultural movement that vehemently rejected medieval scholasticism and revived the central writings of ancient Greek and Roman thought. As a philosophical stance, it underscored the primary importance of the individual and the perfectibility and social potential of humanity. Consequently, the starting point of any discussion or analysis of morality and philosophical inquiry was the agency of human beings themselves, not a divine 'God' or supernatural entities (Pinn, 2020).

Rebuttals and Protests from Adherents

Many different types of objections may be proffered to counter the argument laid bare at this point. Of course, even the atheistic intellectual gods of modern civilization have their own disciples and followers in the hallowed halls of academia worldwide, among individuals in the ranks of everyday culture, and in the authoritative offices of institutional gatekeepers. For this reason, many disciples may object to lumping Darwin, Marx, and Freud into one sort of polymorphous atheistic mixture when each may contain some elements that are essentially immiscible. Although there is some merit to this argument, in the end it falls short on the logical front and fails to fully appreciate the similarities.

To Marx, the greatest evil was surely the profit of enterprise, and the greatest strength was perhaps the commitment to social equality. To Freud, perhaps the greatest evil was morality itself, and the greatest strength was viewing human beings as animals possessing animal instincts that must be sublimated in order to attain a peaceful civilization. To Darwin, perhaps the greatest strength was introducing the impersonal force of natural selection, and the greatest evil was probably his own chronic illnesses. It is unlikely that all of this, and more, can be combined and mixed into one big bowl of atheistic batter, detractors may claim.

Granted there are elements and features contained in the thought of each of these great thinkers that can't be easily combined or viewed as complimentary. For example, Darwin was definitely not a communist or socialist like Marx, and he seriously doubted that Marx could legitimately use evolution to prove his historical theory of class struggle. Whereas Darwin's own words across several key writings rejected the notion of a Christian Creator God, he sometimes described himself as an agnostic who wasn't committed to the existence of 'God' or a god

one way or the other. By contrast, Marx openly viewed ‘God’ as an opium.⁶

However, these varying elements between the thoughts and writings of these three eminent thinkers do not detract from the all-encompassing significance of their explicitly open and shared atheistic views in many different venues and through several different means, the central foci of this essay. As well, the claim that Darwin was perhaps more scientific and relied upon more hardcore empirical evidence to support his thoughts than did Marx or Freud, for that matter, falls upon the same shortsighted argument. When it comes to belief in the existence of a God the Creator of the universe founded upon Genesis in the Judeo-Christian Bible, we are not referring to the realm of science.

The focus here is squarely upon one of the most dominant features of modern times, the growth and widening expansion of secular and irreligious atheistic thought across all contours and sinews of civilization and its institutions, not scientific development. In their own right, and perhaps for varying reasons, they all espoused a rather consistent and vehement disbelief in the Genesis Creator God the Father contrary to Jewish birthhood. This much can hardly be disputed.

Despite occasional references to agnosticism, they all explicitly proclaimed an impassioned unfaith, in other words, well-documented in several places. And what must be thoroughly

⁶ It is well-known that Marx euphemistically referred to religion in general as the opium of the people or the opium of the masses, but less people know that it is actually a paraphrased partial statement of a much lengthier statement on what he believed was religion’s role in forestalling revolution by embalming human suffering in the world and in society. The full German sentence translated into English reads: “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people” (Marx, 1990). So, then, it is not only the Judaic Genesis God of Creation that receives Marx’s indictment but, rather, all religious belief systems, all divine beings, any supernatural entities. The literal hostility to any notion of a ‘God’ or gods is certainly palpable (Boer, 2017).

understood and fully appreciated is that it is precisely this impassioned unfaith that was in constant circulation in the minds of these great thinkers, motivating and permeating the thoughts and systems of ideas they created - all of which currently remain a troubling bequest of everyday modern life.

Views of One Another

From a Christian point of view, it was an unfaith that informed their individual lives and even their views of one another, to a great extent. In a letter to Engels in 1860, for example, Marx claimed that Darwin's *Origin of Species* provided the foundations for his own economic determinist views in natural history. Less than two months later, Marx writes another letter to Ferdinand Lasalle, a prominent Prussian-German jurist, politician, and philosopher, claiming that Darwin's book constituted the natural scientific evidence for the prime role of class struggle in human history. Marx claimed that both society and living things result from historical processes of change, and in his mind, Darwin's work in natural history constituted undeniable proof of this assertion. Presumably, this is the recognition that led Marx and Darwin to correspond with one another, and Marx to send him a personalized copy of *Das Kapital* in 1873.

The relationship between Darwin and Freud is just as awe-inspiring as between Darwin and Marx, and it illustrates quite clearly how great thinkers in any historical period make continual attempts to communicate with and support each other in myriad ways, often referring to themselves in lectures and letters, not just official writings, despite holding some incompatible views. Freud more than once mentioned his gratitude to Darwin in public lectures. Late in life, Freud confirmed in his 1925 autobiography that Darwin's theories greatly attracted him because they seemed to convey pronounced hopes for exceptional advances in human understanding of the world and eradication of social evils.

More importantly, at the level of ideas Darwin's theory of inherited features of personality strongly influenced Freud's theories without doubt. Freud regularly applied evolutionary causal factors to account for mental disorders of one type or another on the basis of very little if any scientific evidence, and even strongly believed in inherited unconscious memories as prime causal factors.

Among other key reflections on Darwin's writings, Freud often alleged that man's self-love or narcissism received a resounding cosmological blow from both the discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin's theory of descent. In publications and letters, Freud referred to Darwin at least 20 times speaking with great respect about most of his biological notions except natural selection, subject to controversy at the time (Schatzman, 1991).

In terms of Freud's relationship to Marx, we find the same sorts of explicit connections. For example, in Freud's 1933 book entitled, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, he explicitly referred to Marxism. In that book, he asserted the fundamental validity of Marx's theory although acknowledging it was still a developing theory. On the basis of such beliefs, Freud's analysis of psychic processes was imported into Marxist analysis of social processes by what later became known as 'Freudian Marxists' in the 1920s and 1930s such as Wilhelm Reich, Siegfried Bernfeld, Erich Fromm, and Paul Fedem.

Although there were initial antagonisms in the very early 1930s between Freud and Marx on the view of history incorporating an economic determinant of psychic processes, it is instructive that even at that early stage he never fully and unequivocally repudiated Marxist theory nor communism nor socialism. He cautiously preferred to base his criticisms in reactive defense to the incorporation of psycho-social processes into a materialist view of history. In true reductionist style very similar to both Marx and Darwin, Freud's approach was to underscore the primary independent influence of psychic process on human thought and behavior rather than economic factors.

Unlike the undying optimistic view of the positive malleability of human nature and social improvement of the human conditions of existence sometimes adopted by Marx, Freud was at times considerably more pessimistic. At this time, he felt that communism would not eradicate the instinctive, unchanging, and essentially aggressive animal nature of humanity hidden behind the veils of modern civilization and, therefore, many social evils could not be permanently solved. Despite this early position, however, Freud expresses in his 1927 book, *The Future of an Illusion*, clear and firm socialist and pro-revolutionary sentiments without siding with Marx's violent revolutionary proclamations (Danil, 2018).

In the end, it can be asserted with confidence that not all diehard Marxists were and are totally enthralled with Freud's system of thoughts and ideas on psychic processes any more than all psychotherapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists acclaim and honor Marxist theory. By the same token, not all diehard Darwinists are impassioned Marxists nor worship at Freud's theoretical altar, and vice versa. What this simply means is that there are clear differences between these three great atheist thinkers that existed then and exist now. The argument here is that those differences were not enough to forestall the incorporation of their shared atheistic ideas into the structure and operations of modern society and human conduct, as the arguments here make clear.

The 'Not-So-Great-Anymore' Argument

Another objection against combining the thought of this great atheistic intellectual trinity that may pop up from moaning-and-groaning learned minds nowadays is the view that these thinkers are not so 'great' anymore. It is often heard in the hallowed halls of academia that the thought of one or another or all of these so-called 'great' thinkers contained such gross errors that they no longer merit high intellectual status, and that was then and this is now. Perhaps just as many contemporary Marxists disagree with a great deal of Marxian

theory as many contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists disagree with much of Freudian theory, while not as many modern biologists presumably disagree with some of Darwin's propositions. In all these fields, there is also probably as much popular covert and open dissent as there is learned dissent to varying degrees.

Take Darwinism, for example. No contemporary biologist worth his weight in gold who thoroughly comprehends the inner workings of genetics would dare to argue that natural selection exhibits the creative power that Darwin himself attributed to it. Ostensibly, no one who has actually lived in a communist regime such as Russia or China or parts of eastern Europe is likely to claim that a Marxist revolution or a classless society is just around the corner. By the same logic, male and female university students inside and outside of various popular classes specializing in sexuality spanning across the disciplinary boundaries are likely to emit great bellows of laughter when they are first exposed to Freud's eccentric infantile reflections on sexuality.

All this being said, yet it is so often the case that sentiments of great respect and admiration bordering on virtual intellectual sainthood are expressed when simply the names of these thinkers arise in today's classrooms from both students and teachers alike, or across the pages of today's newspapers, or across the clicks of our television channels, or in the spaceless regions of Internet-land. Further, to declare openly in university settings that Darwin's evolution or Marx's history of class struggle or Freud's dysfunctional sexual causes of mental disorders are not viable or proven facts still commonly invites both outright and closet denigration and belligerence from ardent followers.

Political Caution Trumps Dissent

Even among teachers and professors, considerable political prudence and care needs to be exerted to prevent being

prematurely viewed or labelled by other academics as a scientific ignoramus especially when some Ivy League scholars themselves openly declare themselves devout devotees. Not to agree with the official acclaim of these great atheistic thinkers as expressed by such eminent scholars often imperils publishing abilities and promotional opportunities since they commonly sit on editorial boards as well as hiring and promotional committees within academia. And they are usually linked to other eminent and mainstream scholars, Marxists and not, who often share similar laudatory views both within and across disciplinary boundaries.

Often times, for example, to explicitly declare psychoanalysis to be a barbaric form of infantile speculation not proven by empirical facts may be at the same time to threaten academic opportunity. Without doubt, most psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists would readily concede that Freud's theories and work continue to exert significant influence on the modern practices of psychology and psychiatry and on the contemporary university classroom worldwide.

It is readily acknowledged by practitioners and scholars alike that Freud's ideas helped to shape contemporary views about dreams, childhood, memory, sexuality, and psychological theory. More significantly, it is commonly equally acknowledged that he continues to have a huge influence on the broader culture in general and not just through his impact upon the views of other great psychological thinkers like the famed Austrian medical doctor and psychotherapist, Alfred Adler, and the celebrated Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist, Carl Jung, among many more (Cherry, 2022).

To openly declare that Marx's theory of historical materialism constitutes the delirious rantings and ravings of a deranged mind and not the starting point of any empirically and logically sound analysis and understanding of modern society may be playing Russian roulette with one's academic future. In the U.S., more than 60% of professors across academic boundaries

identify themselves as some shade of 'liberal' in their political views, many of whom lean favorably towards Marxian theory in general or some significant aspect of Marxian ideas even if they don't view themselves as 'Marxists' (Gross and Simmons, 2007). Many of these professors in and out of various social sciences and across the social-natural science divide have openly declared affinities with a Marxian perspective despite disagreements with particular features such as revolutionary overthrow.

Elite Scholars Step to the Plate

The eminent Harvard University professor of sociology, Daniel Bell, constantly railed in various writings and other academic venues about Marx's 'great vision' and how Marx's conceptualizations of ideology are earnestly acceptable as the starting point of analysis in trying to fathoming modern society (Bell, 1964). It's difficult to believe that such elite views did not materially influence educational and administrative decision-making especially when combined with like-minded academic colleagues both inside and outside of his specific disciplinary department, like Nathaniel Glazer.

Harvard-and-Berkeley-trained acclaimed social science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Erik Olin Wright, was eulogized the foremost Marxist sociologist of his era, a first-rate professional scholar who remained a Marxist all of his life basically because his 'moral compass' would not say otherwise (Chibber, 2019). The esteemed contemporary French philosopher, one of France's most prominent thinkers, Raymond Aron, explicitly qualified Marx as a 'genius' (Mesure, 2015) as he cleverly compartmentalized his critical personal laudatory views on Marx in order to "seduce the largest possible number of young people" into liberal ideology (Likin, 2008).

Perhaps the greatest contemporary linguistic and social-scientific scholar who taught at McGill University in Montreal and later became senior research scholar at Yale, Immanuel

Wallerstein, publicly declared on many occasion that many scholars beyond himself found Marx ‘extremely useful’ (Musto, 2018). Again, it’s hard to believe that such clear laudatory views about Marx by highly-distinguished professors and authors at top-ranked educational institutions are simply verbal statements shorn of practical influences in the wide swath of academic decision-making processes, not to mention dominant influence over the decision-making policies and practices of other social institutions.

By the same token, to openly declare Darwin’s evolutionary theory to be not much more than undisciplined speculation and wishful thinking may be to invite stigmatization, reprimand, and condemnation from academic authority figures empowered to make decisions that impact upon chances of academic advance. Certainly, this is not blind speculation when almost 90% of the contemporary scientific community agrees with evolutionary theory as the dominant paradigm that explains biological diversity as the result of natural processes such as natural selection, and considers Creationist and Intelligent Design theories to be essentially primitive and ‘unscientific’ (Masci, 2019). The thoughts, ideas, and writings of students adhering to traditional religious values and transcendental religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam would surely be expected to subsist in a veritable state of intellectual warfare under such academic atmospheric conditions.

Needless to say, it may be granted that many of the claims and statements made by each of these three great atheistic thinkers which garnered them fame and made them world-renown then and now have indeed turned out to be nothing short of high-gliding narcissistic gibberish, at least from a hardcore empirical point of view, even when professed as legitimate. Still, the tremendous awe, respect and admiration that is often awarded to them in varied academic and student communities as well as popular cultural settings seem to transcend concrete historical fact and reality and even the fact-checking authority of empirical evidence itself.

Arguably, there seems to be present in their collective thinking some vestiges of fundamental principles and values that protects them from damaging critique and elicits fierce belligerence from devout disciples and followers even after definite shortcomings are admitted. The argument here is that one of those fundamental principles is just as much the expressed atheism contained in their thoughts and ideas as it is the rationalism and humanistic philosophical values they espoused, very much in line with Renaissance and Reformation thinking. Moreover, the ins and outs of the atheism that profoundly infused and influenced their theoretical constructions is often only vaguely known if at all by the average educated public and even by many capable university students and scholars themselves.

Some Major Detractors at the Time

Not many in the general educated public and even in the scholarly community are aware of the numerous insightful and poignant objections that had been laid against those conceptual frameworks at the time tendered by world-renown scholars in biology, psychology, and economics as well as a host of eminent philosophers. Among the many biological detractors of Darwin's evolutionary theory were: the eminent physicist Lord Kelvin, who argued conclusively that the age of the Earth itself predated Darwin's theories of evolution; the famed Austrian biologist and meteorologist Gregor Mendel, now known as the Father of modern genetics, who argued that heredity was much more important than natural selection; and the germplasm theory of the eminent German scientist, August Weismann, who proved experimentally that heritable data or features are transmitted to the next generation through the assistance of germ cells located in the ovaries and testicles, and definitely not through natural selection.

Without extended additional discussion here, suffice it to say that there were just as many serious scholarly and general critics of Marx's and Freud's ideas at the time as there were of

Darwin's conceptual scheme. Surely ranked among the strongest critics of Marx's theoretical edifice was the claim by the famed social scientist, Max Weber, that social stratification in society cannot be defined solely or even mainly in terms of class struggle. Ranked among the most vehement critics of Freud's theoretical system was the Nobel Prize laureate, German psychiatrist, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, who described it condescendingly as a literal 'fairy tale'.

Another central point about valid criticisms of all of these great atheistic thinkers needs to be especially underscored. Since here we are dealing essentially in the realm of values, ideas, and principles so effectively infused into and to a large extent hidden within the structures of the theoretical systems constructed by these three great atheistic thinkers, the penetrating critiques offered by some of the world's most acclaimed philosophers must necessarily hold a lot of weight in importance. Acclaimed philosophers are often the first to see the glaring defects contained in thought systems in any kind of meaningful detail.

Opposition from Philosophers and Social Scientists

One of the 20th-century's most highly-acclaimed philosophers of science, the great Austrian-British philosopher and academic, Karl Popper, firmly rejected the historical materialism, dogmatism, and utopian engineering championed by Marxist adherents, and accused Marx himself of confusing empirical trends with genuine laws (Popper, 2002; Shearmur, 1986; Thornton, 2023). Other eminent critics of Marx included the great Hungarian-British polymath thinker, Michael Polanyi, who made profound theoretical contributions to philosophy, economics, and physical chemistry. Among the many critical commentaries and analyses Polanyi made about Marx's ideas, one of the aspects that he found quite peculiar was the strange moral appeal of Marxian theory as a distinctly 'magical' philosophy which specifically rejects any and all kind of validity and legitimacy to morals, a point of view which greatly concerns us here (Polanyi, 1956).

Another great early critic of Marx's theoretical constructs was the prominent Russian-born Harvard social scientist, Pitirim Sorokin, who argued vehemently from the beginning that Marxian theory held an obsessively class-bound view of the urban working class which effectively disparages their humanity and intelligence by artificially attributing overriding significance to non-economic factors, and subsequently denying the importance of moral factors in human conduct and motivating social change (Nieli, 2006). The notable British Lord and famed Cambridge-trained social scientist, Anthony Giddens, also landed devastating criticisms of various aspects of Marx's theoretical constructs, accusing him of sloppy vulgarized thinking, economic reductionism projected into his societal typologies, and the application of evolutionary theory in the analysis and understanding of social transformations, among many other mordant criticisms (Giddens, 1995).

Scientific Discovery, Technology, and Literacy

The moaning-and-groaning objections to the arguments laid bare in this essay may not be restricted only to the type mentioned so far, however. After all, perhaps the philosophical naturalism and atheistic doctrines contained in the theoretical constructions of these three great Godless Jewish thinkers of modernity did not become fixtures of modern civilization due primarily to the attraction of their general theoretical constructions or some particular part thereof. Maybe other factors were at play which were equally or more consequential in the widespread social acceptance of these ideas than the theoretical systems of these great thinkers such as scientific discoveries, technological progress, and widespread literacy.

Granted, the emergence and increasing sophistication of the print media combined with other developments in modern communications technology in journalism, movies, television, social media, and more recent advancements in computers and digital media were significant factors enabling the thoughts and ideas of these great thinkers to spread across the everyday lives

of modern citizens at nearly lightning speed. Granted, the emergence of government-mandated mass education requirements across multiple national cultures perhaps also made possible widespread popular acceptance of these thoughts and ideas.

However, if so, it just begs the question of why institutional leaders would present them to massive numbers of comparatively lesser-educated, mediocre-minded people in such a way and in such a praiseworthy form that would make them less likely to be rejected even by God-fearing social members. That, in turn, tends to suggest that the Godless thoughts and ideas of these thinkers were shrouded in the socially acceptable language and imagery of human progress, social advancement, and the perfectibility of humankind. In this manner, these Godless thinkers could be presented as beacons of human progress and adversaries of every sort of evil besieging humanity in modern society.

Mediocre minds could then be encouraged and expected uncritically to view themselves as champions of human progress and perfectibility if only they jumped on the same Godless bandwagon as our great Godless intellectual trinity, and they did. Enormous numbers of lesser educated and philosophically immature uncritical minds came to adopt penultimate faith in human perfectibility and progress. Human beings became the starting point of analysis in human progress, not an all-knowing benevolent divine God who created them.

Unknowingly, massive publics became the torchbearers of philosophical naturalism, the idea that human beings and human works are best understood within the fixed universe of natural causes and environmental conditions, just like all other animals, and not in reference to a divine creator God. By promoting human progress and perfectibility, huge numbers of people unwittingly came to respect and promote the philosophy of naturalism especially as suggested in scientific methodology and the scientific worldview itself.

Human life in all its features and expressions came to be understood as subject primarily to natural causes, thereby denying the presence and pertinence of a divine God in human affairs. Suddenly, the intelligence of human beings comes to be viewed as determined and fueled predominantly by a sort of primitive caveman instinctual struggle for survival founded upon the dictates of species competition in a universal war of survival of the fittest, economic narcissism, and an unhinged, biologically-motored sexual appetite.

Objective Truth as Collateral Damage

Biological drives and material circumstances and conditions comes to be viewed as the prime shapers of human thought. in reducing human rationality and logic to instinctual drives and material circumstances, objective truth becomes inadvertent collateral damage. All truth becomes subjectivized as mainly a matter of opinion directed by instincts and material circumstances. Consequently, since human thought does little more than reflect instincts and material conditions, the existence of impersonal objective truth, including 'God', becomes denigrated to the status of subjective opinion. Human beings made in the free-will image of God as rational, logical, and reasonable subjects? Codswallop!

Arguably, accepting progress and perfectibility then as now means accepting philosophical naturalism and its underlying values which, in turn, means endorsing one of its foundational principles, namely, atheism. in terms of widespread social effects intended or not, to promote the dissemination of the philosophy of naturalism by logical extension also means to promote the spread of atheism. in the act of uncritically panning the thoughts and ideas of these three great thinkers of modern times for gems of wisdom, humanity was simultaneously consuming the Godless values and principles they contained.

Final Thoughts

Of course, it stands to reason that these three great atheistic thinkers of modernity were not the fathers of modern civilization. They were not the founders of modernity, to be sure, so no one is saying here that all the ills of modern humanity can be laid at their intellectual doorsteps. Still, it can be asserted with more than a modicum of confidence that they were the prime architects of atheistic thoughts and ideas largely disguised as philosophical naturalism and humanism, a shameless Godless trinity of intellectual thought who eschewed the Creator God of their Jewish birthhood in the full knowledge that Christ was a Jewish rabbi. Perhaps we need not wonder too much about why the centuries immediately following the widespread dissemination of the godless doctrines of these three great atheistic thinkers was filled with so much bloody carnage and inhumanity.

As such, the singular impact of the theoretical constructions of this Godless trinity upon the human thought and conduct of modernity is monumental and incomparable by any rational measure. Just like Augustine and Aquinas nearly a millennium apart stamped their God-full religious views upon the content and course of Western Christianity in particular and global Christianity in general, so, too, did the irreligious thoughts and ideas of Darwin, Marx, and Freud enter into every sinew of modernity to significantly impact its content and course. As an ugly legacy, every tendon, ligament, and fibrous tissue of modern civilization has been irreparably diseased and weakened as a result.

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