

God the Son of the Unholy Godless Trinity:

Karl Marx, (1818-1883)

Marc Grenier

“Thus, heaven I’ve forfeited, I know it full well. My soul, once true to God, is chosen for hell” – Karl Marx, *“The Pale Maiden”*, 1837

“See this sword, this blood-dark sword, which stabs unerringly within my soul? Where did I get this sword? The Prince of Darkness. The Prince of Darkness sold it to me...” – Karl Marx, *The Player*, 1841

“I wish to avenge myself against the One who rules above. The idea of God is the keynote of a perverted civilization. It must be destroyed. My object in life is to dethrone God...” – Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848

It is exceedingly difficult to conceive of two characters or personality types, if you will, that were more radically different than Darwin and Marx. in many ways, Marx is a character altogether different from Darwin even though they may have shared many of the same philosophical predispositions and leanings of their time such as human perfectionism, progressivism, humanism, naturalism, materialism, atheism, and more, as noted above. in all honesty, the characterological contrast is so stark as to cause shock and awe even in the most emotionally disciplined and discerning readers and scholars. Yet, the social effects of their thought systems remain quite parallel.

The wider social implications of this serious contrast between the characters of two of the greatest thinkers in contemporary society is often ignored, downplayed, obscured, or even unappreciated by many contemporary biblical scholars if not most scholars in general. At the very least, it surely underscores the overwhelming power of causal factors operating in the wider society over time. In terms of the present study, the powerful ability of larger societal trends of thought to influence, direct, or even dominate the human thought systems of an era regardless of the wide range of conflicting temperaments and personality traits of the individual human agents allegedly creating and carrying them is confirmed beyond doubt.

Character and Writing Style: Darwin and Marx Contrasted

Above all, Marx's revolutionary leanings identified him as a fighter willing to sacrifice anything to realize his conception of a just society and social progress including whatever the cost in human lives. Expectedly, Marx tended to be adored and revered by revolutionaries like himself, but scorned, vilified and hated by a host of others for being arrogant and quarrelsome including many who knew him best, something even Engels himself recognized in a eulogy at Marx's funeral. A funeral attended by less than a dozen people including members of his own family says a lot about the kind of person or character Marx was despite sentiments towards his thoughts, ideas, and theories. To some extent, these contradictory sentiments of others towards Marx reflect the dualistic and conflicting nature of his own personality.

On the one hand, he was the consummate Promethean rebel and rigorous intellectual always taking sides against established doctrines and beliefs, someone who thought he had a monopoly on the truth about human existence, the operations of society, and human history itself, and supposedly, he wanted to share it with humankind in the quest for a more just and humane society. Fashioning himself as the champion or, if you will, the revolutionary 'Jesus' of modern humanity, the heavily

implied humanist desire contained in such thinking is palpable, to say the least.

Here the analogy to Jesus is neither inaccurate nor happenstance especially since Marx on more than one occasion had openly suggested himself to be the savior of humankind, more or less, but replacing the gentle and loving techniques of the biblical Jesus with the warrior approach of a Prometheus or Spartacus. On the other hand, Marx's capacity for the expression of open and explicitly arrogant, cruel, crude, and authoritarian sentiments greatly plagued him his entire life and contrasts markedly with these self-professed humanitarian motives.

Modeling his entire life upon what he knew about his most admired character, Spartacus, who led the slave revolt against Roman authority in the first century BC, Marx would fashion himself in his writings and conduct himself in everyday interactions with others as a great Thracian gladiator and warrior who would lead an uprising against the leaders of a perceived brutal economic regime believed to enslave everyone. in the process of imagining this scenario, Marx felt justified in doing and saying whatever he had to do and say to get this great project of humanity accomplished, no matter the risks and questionable behaviors that may be involved such as hypocrisy, social and racial slurs, plagiarism, public ridicule, and just about every form of mean and mendacious behavior imaginable (Ebeling, 2017).

Despite the fact that appearances can be deceiving, by contrast Darwin appears to be more of a saint than a sinner, in a manner of speaking. Compared to Marx's constant vitriolic venom against others who disagreed with him combined with arrogant, cruel, close-minded, insulting, and disagreeable mannerisms, Darwin was genuinely agreeable and humble, open-minded, conscientious, and willing to learn from others who disagreed with his point of view. Like Marx, he was a voracious scholar, prolific writer, highly capable abstract thinker, and eager to

learn just about any topic. But unlike Marx, he was always willing to compromise, admit mistakes, and respect opponents' views.

Even when his beloved daughter died, he could still interact effectively with others and manage his family although suffering from deep depression and insomnia for years afterwards. Even though the bulk of his time was spent in considerable solitude working on non-social tasks relevant to his scientific interests such as breeding pigeons, his collaborative capacity was well-known. He was even willing to work with others who didn't necessarily share his opinions.

Contrary to Marx's extroverted nature whose fighting predisposition often brought him out into the public to push his revolutionary agenda to the maximum possible, to do battle with opponents, or to defend himself against accusations and legal entanglements, Darwin was perhaps much more introverted and worked in solitude completely consumed by his scientific projects and voyages (Aveling, 2007; Geher, 2018; Rejon, 2018).

In significant and perhaps understandable ways, the writing styles of Darwin and Marx contrast almost as much as did their characterological traits. Marx as a writer is perhaps best understood if he is viewed as a combination of scientific, philosophical, and literary writer all wrapped into one individual thinker. He chose a specific mode of literary expression that emphasized the systematic unity of thoughts and ideas within text viewed as a whole at the abstract level, the application of dialectical thinking in the analytical process largely in the Hegelian tradition, and above all, the gifted usage of metaphorical language to express abstract relationships in human societies over history. Each of these central components of Marx's writing style were noticeably placed at the duty and service of radical revolutionary ends.

Darwin and Marx: Rhetorical Strategies Contrasted

The obsessive preoccupation with the systematic unity of thoughts and ideas at any cost, the shadowy metaphysical notions, the incessant dialectical and oppositional sentence structures, and the highly suggestive and spicy metaphors, are just a few of the rhetorical mechanisms of persuasion contained in Marx's writings (Silva, 2023). Indeed, Marx uses a whole panoply of rhetorical ploys just as much to convey contempt and vitriol as to entertain with wit, sarcasm, and satire.

Pick up almost any of Marx's writings and readers will no doubt notice the constant connections between actual ideas and the great range of rhetorical forms in which they are expressed, so rich in meanings it's difficult to know with certainty in every case which meaning is intended. Complex ideas are placed inside of laconic poetic phrases, grandiloquent generalizations, baggy catalogues of descriptives and examples, convoluted oppositional and antithetical conceptions bursting with inverse logic, with classical references often abounding everywhere (Zhang, 2023).

Whether it's letters, essays, articles, reports, presentations, speeches, or books, Marx's writings more often than not read like a stage play or theatrical melodrama, not like the cold, objective, impersonal, and so-called 'scientific' analysis of society and human history it was, and often still is, presented as. Rather, it is a style characterized by the lexicon, language, and techniques typically employed in live comedy or drama theater. Rampant disrespectful insults, character abuse and even assassination, simple and variational rhetorical repetition, fiery and provocative phraseology, ghostly imagery, damaging and catastrophic ironies – all dominated by an irascible tone of condescending sarcasm, satire, contempt, and vitriol. In his writing as in person, the rhetorical Marx was all of this and much more.

In his mind, Marx believed himself to hold a monopoly on truth about human society and history, a gladiator that would free modern humanity from the chains of its enslavement. He was living and writing on a stage in a society and world he immensely deplored and wanted to abolish by hook or by crook regardless of the collateral damage along the way. The goal was always to forcibly replace it through revolutionary means, and his writing is the rhetorical stage upon which he attempts to persuade others to rally around this cause. Revolutionary rhetoric permeates almost every aspect of Marx's major ideas in writing.

By contrast, Darwin's writing style was a bit different, to say the least, but no less rhetorical as we shall soon see. Marx tried desperately to present himself as a scientist but was, in fact, the consummate philosopher, whereas Darwin both in training and in practice actively engaged the scientific methodology of his day in medicine, natural history, geology, biochemistry, among other sciences, combined with his own unrelenting natural explorations of nature. Consequently, Darwin felt no overwhelming compulsion to persuade others about his scientific orientation or even to present himself as a scientist when he was, in fact, directly engaged in scientific training and exploration.

Therefore, unlike Marx, there was really no felt need to be overly concerned about convincing others that he was doing scientific thinking, analysis, and exploration. By contrast, Marx knew he was doing philosophy, not necessarily strict scientific methodology in the raw sense, as reflected in his life and educational training. Nevertheless, he well understood the consummate importance of capitalizing on the powerful institutional status of the science of his time to gain acceptance of his thoughts and ideas about society and social change.

Despite the dramatic contrast of sentiments and personality, however, Darwin shared a very similar rhetorical approach in literary style. The difference between them was dictated more

by the ends to be achieved than by the means to achieve them. Darwin wanted to change the dominance of the Judeo-Christian bible over the culture of his day and the biblical perspective on human origins and creation, whereas Marx wanted to change the dominant capitalist mode of organizing economic production into communism.

Consequently, while Marx was busy putting rhetoric at the service of forcibly achieving socio-economic revolution, Darwin was busy employing shrewd rhetorical techniques to achieve acceptance of evolutionary theory by milder manners. Again, to some extent, the contrast between Marx and Darwin in rhetorical tone was governed by the nature of the ends to be achieved within the context of differential characterological traits.

For Darwin, there was really no felt need to adopt a warrior or gladiator posture toward securing the widespread social acceptance of evolutionary theory that could be achieved in more gradual and less forcible ways. Among other things, this position towards human origins had already been championed for centuries through both the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, and it was not a typical preoccupation of his own scientific work and explorations.

By contrast, Marx was trying to figure out the assumed laws which governed the development and transformation of human societies over time with the expressed purpose of changing its course by force, a political position not widely shared at the time. Therefore, Darwin had little need to adopt an insurgent rhetorical tone nor writing style.

Nevertheless, as many scholars and writers have been at pains to point out, Darwin was just as rhetorical as Marx in his writing style. Even though during his time the writing styles within science still tended to vary from the methodologically mathematical and prosaic to the meanderingly narrative and story-like styles, the trend in scientific writing style was

definitely away from rhetorical eloquence and towards direct, pragmatic, concise, concentrated, and unadorned writing.

However, when *Origin* is examined closely from a literary point of view, it becomes clear that Darwin is not choosing to follow the dominant trends of scientific writing. That conscious decision not to follow scientific convention in the writing style was not simply to deflect scientific criticism of his theory. No doubt it was also a strategic move aimed at reaching and securing as many converts to evolutionary theory as possible. Darwin had his eyes fixed upon accessing the minds of the common reader and adopted a literary style to make that possible.

Conventional scientific formats and criteria are not followed in *Origin* to any significant degree, if at all. A falsifiable hypothesis is not put forth; the facts are not presented and then analyzed; rival explanations of the facts are not compared and then assessed; and conclusions from the analysis and discussion are not drawn. When the literary structure of Darwin's *Origin* book is compared to that of the scientific books of his time or even nowadays, we are immediately struck by the idiosyncratic literary structure of Darwin's writing.

Instead of a conventional scientific format of writing aimed at a prosaic statement of 'facts', he chose to follow the classical rules of rhetoric in his writing style (Thomson, 2010). After Darwin lays down the central proposition of evolutionary theory by natural selection underpinning the chosen rhetorical style of writing, the *Origin* reads like one long meandering rhetorical argument. It is a lengthy exercise in effective rhetoric shrewdly designed to direct readers through a maze of sometimes consistent but often conflicting types of evidence and rhetorical devices cunningly calculated to appeal and manipulate the emotional guard of readers through presenting bits and pieces of a discursive narrative rather than a formal declaration.

Basically, Darwin's tactical strategy is to first present his basic evolutionary premise, after which he goes on to document a great range of species variation in nature. Then he presents a slew of mathematical imperatives usually adopted in popular biology which emphasize the struggle for existence supposedly operating across this species variation which culminates in the function of natural selection, implying that math supports and confirms evolutionary theory.

Following this approach, Darwin then devotes nearly a third of his book to identifying and discussing the most evident and serious difficulties and weaknesses plaguing his theory. All throughout this long argument from beginning to end, Darwin is self-consciously exploiting the widest possible range of rhetorical devices to convince the average reader of the validity of his evolutionary interpretation of human origins.

The deliberate exploitation of rhetorical devices to achieve the broadest intellectual sweep and to persuade the reader to his own evolutionary point of view was a literary tactic that Darwin had learned well from Lyell, whom he greatly admired and respected. From direct experience, he had learned from Lyell that writing is an art especially when you're trying to convince hostile readers or audiences to your own point of view about a topic.

Observing Lyell employ a wide range of rhetorical devices to handle controversy and opposition taught him a great deal about how to structure his own evolutionary argument to minimize hostile opposition and maximize acceptance. It taught him how to gather the evidence first and then how to use it inductively to weaken and eradicate previous thinking or theories about that topic using whatever rhetorical devices available and applicable along the way.

For Darwin, the object of writing was to persuade and convince, not to coldly, impersonally, and objectively describe scientific facts and information. Rather, the aim of writing was to

persuade listeners and readers, the audience, generally speaking. That is what 'rhetoric' means, to persuade the reader to the writer's point of view. So, then, writing becomes simply an art of persuasion, not an established means of communicating factual information.

That is, and let's be clear and unequivocal about this point, it becomes what it was for Marx - a means to achieve a desired end, not a means to communicate objective knowledge. Under the trance of such a persuasive dictum, any literary devices and compositional techniques becomes justifiable because the central issue involved is not to communicate findings to peers.

Explanation and description are put to the service of bending the reader's point of view on a topic towards that of the writer, not necessarily to convey legitimate or proven information. The most common techniques of rhetorical writing are dictated by the writer's desire to change the reader's point of view: description, exposition, narration, and persuasion. Writing can describe details of information; it can explain, inform, or analyze that information; or it can tell a story by recounting events and experiences.

In addition to using description, exposition, and narration as rhetorical devices, writing can also persuade through many other means, and Darwin did not hesitate to use them. Writing can convince by using logic and reason, or by appealing explicitly or implicitly to the writer's credibility and character, or by making emotional appeals to the reader or by invoking the sympathies of the reader through the use of flowery language or touching stories or other means, or even by strategically selecting the right time and place in the writing to make claims.

Darwin's Rhetorical Writing Strategies

Although for the most part Darwin, unlike Marx, does not employ cruel, insulting, or otherwise emotional attacks on the person or character of opponents as standard modes of literary

expression, it should be clear to any reader of *Origin* that Darwin maximizes the exploitation of selective and milder types of rhetorical devices nonetheless.

Arguably, Darwin learned very early on how to emotionally disarm readers so that his evolutionary views could gain piecemeal entrance into their thinking and solicit consideration. If Darwin's aim was to implant bits and pieces of his evolutionary views in the reader's mind rather than to gain immediate acceptance of evolutionary theory as a systemic whole, then surely Darwin's literary strategy must be judged a resounding success.

If he could win over by piecemeal the hostile views of friends and scholars by adopting less intimidating and challenging emotional literary strategies, then generalizing that particular literary tactic to gain acceptance of his evolutionary views by average readers would be made that much simpler. Even if some pieces of the long evolutionary argument in *Origin* could be rejected by hostile readers, Darwin perhaps reasoned quite shrewdly that it would be highly unlikely that such readers could so easily reject all pieces of the discursive argument.

Darwin likely realized that wholesale rejection of evolutionary theory by the reader could be effectively minimized or reduced simply by the choice of literary format within which it was presented. Suddenly, then, Darwin's many statements to scholars and publishers alike about how he was so disgusted with his bad writing and about how he thought his writing style was so incredibly bad can be seen in a different light as a coy marketing strategy designed to maximize piecemeal acceptance of his evolutionary theory (Horton, 2008).

The contrasting characterological traits and literary modes of expression between Darwin and Marx change little in terms of the questionable legitimacy and validity of their ideas. The tone and form within which idea systems are communicated cannot by any means be construed as an indication of the degree of

objective truth contained in these doctrines, to be sure. The fact that both of these great modern thinkers withdrew, revised, and reinterpreted so many of their central tenets lends considerable support to this assertion. In turn, these withdrawals and revisions produced a veritable panoply of both Darwinian and Marxist theoretical types all vying against each other for consideration as the sole representatives of authentic Darwinism or Marxism.

Like Darwin, Marx was continually tormented with how to present the central ideas of his theoretical system so as to best maximize acceptance of his point of view. Withdrawals, revisions, and reinterpretations meant lengthy delays between conception and publication as both thinkers tried to figure out how to capture the allegiance of listeners and readers by anticipating problems or gaps in their respective theoretical edifices.

Varieties of Darwinism and Marxism

If we look solely at responses to Darwin in an effort to figure out the central tenets of evolutionary thought, we confront a great typological variety of evolutionary thought each of which differ in minor and significant ways from Darwin's actual words in *Origin*. Well before, during, and after Darwin expressed his own version of evolutionary ideas, there was a considerable diversity of contrasting evolutionary opinions. A simple brief review of only some of these evolutionary theories can illustrate quite clearly the great variety available then as now.

Fixist evolutionary thought arose from a literal interpretation of Genesis and argued that species remained immutable over time; creationist evolutionary theory, also out of Genesis, argued that an almighty God created species to be environmentally adaptive within set parameters; catastrophist evolutionary theory argued that the occasional disappearance of species due to natural catastrophes required an intentional repetition of the creation process from time to time; Lamarckist evolutionary theory

argued that species transformed into other species over time by acquiring beneficial characteristics in response to environmental changes which were then passed down from generation to generation; orthogenetic evolutionary theory claimed that living organisms possess an innate tendency to evolve or develop towards a definite goal primarily due to the existence of some internal mechanism or force; and Darwin himself argued that evolution proceeded from genetic randomness, not environmental changes (Bowler, 2003; Gould, 2002; Levinson, 2019).

Additionally, there are still many more modern versions of evolutionary theory that both favor and counter Darwin's evolutionary schemata, many of which incorporate or are derived from some of the central tenets contained in the previous list of theories. These versions of evolutionary theory include: theistic evolution (a divinely-guided evolutionary process), saltational evolution (the possibility of large evolutionary jumps occurring at various times and under varying conditions), and intelligent design theory (which argues there are too many aspects of life that are simply too complex to have 'evolved' willy-nilly without positing supernatural intervention).

In the end, there appears to be so many different varieties of Darwinism or Darwinist evolutionary that it becomes exceedingly challenging to keep track of who exactly said what about evolution. In order to understand the nature of responses to evolutionary thought, it was important in chapter one to stay focused on what Darwin actually said in his own writings. Of course, what applies to Darwin in this regard applies with equal force to Marx's highly politicized body of ideas, if not more so.

And so it goes with Marx's body of ideas. There are so many different varieties of Marxism focusing on one or another aspect of Marx's conceptual apparatus and then claiming or implying to be the one and only authentic representative of Marx's thought that it becomes difficult to separate the forest from the

trees, so to speak. Like for Darwin, therefore, we need to keep focused on what Marx actually said, not necessarily the interpretations of others. As well, and like for Darwin, we need to try to understand the central role that the dominant philosophies of the 19th century played in shaping both his body of theoretical ideas and the social response to these ideas, particularly atheism.

The French Enlightenment

To appreciate the dominating role of atheism in the thought of Karl Marx from its inception through its development in various writings, first we need to begin by addressing the kinds of ideas that Marx was exposed to as a Jewish child growing up in the city where he was born, Trier, Prussia (now Germany) in 1818. As the leading state in the German Empire and the driving force behind the unification of Germany in 1866, Prussia existed between 1701 and 1918 as a dominant political power..

After Napoleon had established the civil emancipation of Jews in Trier, Marx's father was able to practice law in Trier by converting to Lutheranism. But when Napoleon was later defeated, the new Prussian monarch later revoked Napoleon's Jewish emancipation. All members of Marx's family were forced to renounce Judaism. By contrast, one of the defining characteristics of the French Revolution was the civil emancipation of Jews championed by Robespierre himself, one of the key revolutionary architects. Consequently, liberal members of German lands at that time looked upon the ideas of the French Revolution and French Enlightenment as the signposts to a free and prosperous future.

Although Marx's parents were well-to-do fans of Rousseau and Voltaire, his father as a lawyer was a moderate liberal at most who continually cautioned and despaired over young Marx's liberal leanings. However, it was not his father who introduced Marx to radical theoretical analyses of human society and history but, rather, his future father-in-law, Ludwig von

Westphalen. Westphalen was well positioned as a privy councilor in Trier sitting among the most trusted group of the monarch's advisors on matters of state. It was Westphalen who approvingly exposed Marx to the radical features of the French Revolution and the French utopian socialist writings of Henri Saint-Simon, among many others.

Soon after Westphalen arrived at Trier, he had met Marx's father, Heinrich, one of Trier's best-known lawyers, and they became friends. They were both members of the same well-to-do social and professional clubs including the most exclusive private Casino Club composed of Trier's top professionals, businessmen, and military officials. These club members would meet on a regular basis to discuss and give speeches on political affairs and liberal political ideas like representative government and popular sovereignty, eventually drawing the undesired attention of the sitting Prussian monarch. Soon they were giving speeches on and singing the praises of the French Revolution, inviting government investigations and club disbandment.

These club members were not raving radical utopian socialists by any stretch of the imagination, but simply typical liberals living in a highly repressive German state. Although they championed many of the progressive ideas of the French Revolution such as liberty, equality, and fraternity, the expression of these ideas was effectively constrained by their own ideology and social position as Prussian government member and Jewish lawyer. Still, the French revolutionary ideas they so resolutely championed functioned to expose and pressure their children in radical directions which they themselves could have never foreseen (Fluss and Miller, 2016).

Soon Westphalen's friendship with Marx's father blossomed into a meeting and friendship with Marx himself. Westphalen started to take young Marx under his wing by including him in political discussions with his own children. Ludwig's love of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, the French classics, and liberal and socialist thinkers like Henri Saint-Simon was passed down

to Marx, many times in long walks across the hills that flanked his home. These long walks and intellectual conversations continued for many years.

During these conversations, often times the topic of the French Revolution would arise along with its associated ideas of liberty, fraternity, religious tolerance, civil liberties, representative government, equality before the law, and progressive taxation. Westphalen believed that the principal cause of this revolution was the contempt of the French aristocracy towards the dire economic suffering of the people. Along with utopian socialist writers, he viewed socialism as a practical way to solve mass poverty, not just as an abstract idea.

However, he strongly cautioned young Marx against radical means of initiating revolutionary change because he thought it always gave rise to terror and dictatorship, like it had with Napoleon and the Jacobins in France. He believed there were always better ways to alleviate the economic hardships of people, ways that didn't add more suffering and miseries to the people themselves. Following Saint-Simon's doctrines, and other utopian socialist French writers, Westphalen believed that society should take care of its poorest members and provide work for everyone in a safe and secure environment even if it meant limiting property and inheritance rights. In his mind, these were wise ways for political rulers to reorganize and restructure society in order to maximize the benefit for everyone.

Within this kind of liberal intellectual environment, Marx absorbed all of the central ideals of the French Revolution and the French Enlightenment, and so, too, did Westphalen's daughter, Jenny, who would later become Marx's wife. It is this Westphalen body of ideas that would later inform and infuse almost all of Marx's subsequent writings. A fervent belief in the powers of human reasoning, progress, and science to advance human conditions was prominent.

Human reasoning could discover truths about the world on its own without dependence on received wisdom or religion with the ultimate aim of improving the lives of humankind. The belief in liberty, tolerance, the goodness of humanity, human progress, and the perfectibility humankind were all key ideas Marx adopted in his own thinking about human beings in society. As well, he believed that all human beings were born with an intrinsic set of values which functioned to guide their behavior and reasoning. These rules or principles of right and wrong are inherent in all people as a function of natural law, and affords all people the same rights such as the right to happiness and the right to live without coercion. As the term implies, this law is not created by judges or by society, but is inherent in human nature.

One key idea from the French philosophers of the Enlightenment that Marx absorbed was an intense dislike of organized religion. The strong feelings that the French philosophers held against the established Christian Church Marx himself came to hold against all religion. Marx believed that religion was simply an invention of the churches used by the political rulers to justify exploitation of others while, at the same time, providing for them an emotional escape from the material conditions of their suffering and exploitation.

The French Revolution and Marx

In terms of the French Revolution, Marx was well aware of what had occurred to the established church. What initially began as sporadic attacks on a few perceived instances of Church corruption and the flaunted wealth and decadence of some of the higher clergy soon spread to an all-out attack on the existence of Christianity itself. During the one-year Reign of Terror alone, for example, all clerical privileges were abolished and anti-clerical abuse, persecution, and killing reached levels of intensity and frequency rarely if ever seen in modern European history (Kennedy, 1989).

Under highly organized and directed leadership, revolutionary authorities and various revolutionary groups and organizations suppressed the church so violently that it has since that time never been repeated or surpassed anywhere in the world. The Catholic monarchy was completely abolished, all Church property was forcibly nationalized without compensation and then sold to fund a new revolutionary currency, more than 30,000 priests were either executed or exiled to horrid places and left to languish or die, and hundreds of clerical members were beheaded or killed in other gruesome ways. In just a two-day period alone that began on September 2, 1792, angry mobs massacred three Church bishops and more than 200 priests (Price and Collins, 1999, pp. 176-177).

An intensive full-scale de-Christianization of France occurred that included desecration and destruction of iconography from all churches (statues, plates, etc.) as well as all external signs of worship (crosses, bells, etc.), revolutionary civic cults of faith were instituted (Cult of Reason, etc.), summary execution of clergy and all those who acted to protect them, and all clergy were legally compelled to take an obligatory oath of first loyalty to the French Republic or face the guillotine or deportation.

Faced with death, imprisonment, military draft, and loss of income, about 20,000 priests were forced to abdicate the priesthood by handing over their letters of ordination. About half of these agreed or were coerced into marriage, completely abandoning pastoral duties. By the end of these heavy-handed persecutions, very few of France's 40,000 churches were operating; most had been closed, sold, destroyed, or converted to other uses (Tallett, 1991, pp. 1-17).

Atheism Rears Its Ugly Head

So, then, this prolonged intensive exposure to the anti-religious features of the French Revolution and the French Enlightenment through Westphalen's tutelage surely played a central role in the full-fledged atheism that came to govern

Marx's thought process at an early age. After a wasted year of spending enormous amounts of his father's money on drunkenness, fighting, and sword dueling with students at the University of Bonn which landed him imprisoned, his father despaired about all the effects of all these radical liberal ideas in his son's head. So, his father enrolls him at the University of Berlin to study law and philosophy.

At Berlin, Marx was introduced to Hegelian philosophy and joined a group called the Young Hegelians in continual highly-charged philosophical and political discussions which centered once again on denying received wisdom and challenging the ideas and claims of the traditional establishment including all existing ethical, political, philosophical, and especially religious institutions. He soon became the leading member of this group composed of members who, among other things, directed Hegel's ideas about history and the transformation of dominant idea systems against established religion.

Marx's Doctoral Dissertation: Atheism Unbound

By the time Marx completes his doctoral dissertation in 1841, the atheism that had flourished during the French Enlightenment and rampaged through the blood-tainted French Revolution ending in the dechristianization of France was now raised front and center. Titled, *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, and dedicated to Ludwig von Westphalen, here Marx dives into the ancient Greek materialist philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus to explore the interconnections between philosophical thought systems and prevailing socio-economic conditions, foreshadowing the historical materialism he would come to be best known for.

At first, Marx generally argued that the superior wisdom of philosophy necessitates a serious downgrading of theology in the quest for truthful knowledge. But the innocence towards theology is shrouded within a maze of philosophical details

about ancient Greek thought that masks the key significance of rampant atheism running from start to finish. In several places in his dissertation, Marx literally declares war on not only the God of the Judeo-Christian Bible, but also on all transcendental religious belief systems. Given the views and writings of Marx's thesis advisor, Bruno Bauer, this heavy-handed atheism should not really be that surprising. Before continuing, therefore, a few words about Bauer's theological views are in order as well as the impact of related atheistic writings dominant at the time.

Enter Bauer, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and Strauss

Once a member of the Young Hegelians club at Berlin like Marx himself, Bruno Bauer would later gain great notoriety as the first author to argue that, historically speaking, Jesus did not exist, although his initial theological position was a bit less stark. Schweitzer makes this clear in his own book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Schweitzer, 1906). Although Bauer started out trying to restore the honor and historical integrity of Jesus from the onslaught by strident atheists at the time, he ends up with the same theological conclusions as David Strauss (1808-1874) in his 3-volume *Life of Jesus* published in 1835-6, and Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) in his *Essence of Christianity* first published in 1841. Of course, we could add to this list of highly influential atheistic writings the powerful works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) such as *The Gay Science* (1882) and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-5). However, here we shall only briefly pass through the previous two thinkers since Nietzsche was a comparatively late comer to the atheistic 19th century.

Six years before Marx's doctoral dissertation, Strauss's *Life of Jesus* set the theological world afire when it was first published in 1835-6. Strauss was a liberal Protestant German theologian who applied a straight historical method to the gospels of the New Testament. The great scandal that he ignited across the Protestant world was caused by his adamant conclusion that

all miraculous events in the gospels were categorically mythical and ahistorical. As noted above, a few years later Feuerbach publishes his book, *The Essence of Christianity* (2008), a book which greatly impacted the thinking of Darwin, Marx, and Freud. As such, it merits some degree of special attention here.

Feuerbach was a German anthropologist and philosopher noted for his critiques of the Christian faith. Like Bruno Bauer, he was also a member of the Young Hegelian circles that constantly applied a critical view of religion and established thought so crucial for the later development of historical materialism. Feuerbach approached the question of God's existence from an anthropological and humanistic perspective. It wasn't so much that God created man as it was that man created God. He contended that the idea of God is simply a projection of needs contained within human nature itself.

Therefore, every aspect of 'God' corresponds to some particular feature or need of human nature. in a word, God is nothing more nor less than the outward projection of humanity's inward nature. There is nothing higher than the perfection of humankind. Human beings created the notion of a higher 'God' in order to provide themselves with comfort and relief in a hostile world until human development could reach a stage where it was no long deemed necessary.

We can easily see here why Feuerbach's ideas would be so welcomed in the radical thinking of Young Hegelian circles and how they contrasted so markedly from Hegel's own religious thoughts. Even when he approached Hegel himself with such ideas, Hegel recognized the underlying atheistic sentiments rooted in the natural science of his time, and refused to respond positively to Feuerbach, understandably. For Hegel the Lutheran Christian, the dialectic was conceived as the march of God's Spirit through human history towards the realization of human freedom. For Feuerbach, such Christian Western cultural notions and institutions would soon disappear to be replaced by reason and science.

Bauer comes to play his own part in the development of 19th century atheism. In his 1841 book, *Criticism of the Gospel History of the Synoptics*, Bauer proclaims that the Jesus portrayed in the Judeo-Christian Bible is first and foremost a literary image, but left open the question of an actual historical Jesus. Subsequent books made it quite clear, however, that the true origin of Jesus was not to be found in historical fact but, rather, in the mythical reconstructions of the Gospel writers who employed Greco-Roman classics to do so. Although in this outlook, Jesus may or may not have been a real historical figure, he was still viewed as being simply a man, not a supernatural being. Bauer makes this clear:

“Everything that the historical Christ is, everything that is said of Him, everything that is known of Him, belongs to the world of imagination, that is, of the imagination of the Christian community, and therefore has nothing to do with any man who belongs to the real world” (Bauer, 1842, p. 308).

When we remember that this is the same Bauer who was Marx’s thesis advisor, we come to understand perhaps why Marx decided to submit his thesis at Jenna rather than Berlin. Whether Bauer played any role at all in this consideration is not known, but certainly not out of the realm of possibilities. In any case, we know Marx’s thesis was deemed so controversial at the time that his friends urged him not to submit it to Berlin but, rather, to the University of Jenna, a school known at that time for its strong liberal inclinations. Marx complied, and acceptance of his thesis soon followed.

Marx the Gladiator Savior of Mankind

Not very many scholars appreciate and many more neglect or downplay the significance of Marx’s doctoral dissertation as a key to understanding Marx’s thought process. But even if we just cursorily examine the dissertation in terms of dominant motivating themes, we can easily decipher the impact of an

intense atheism both up front and in the shadows. in the Foreword to his thesis, Marx (2021) begins by presenting himself once again as the consummate gladiatorial Spartan rebel in the guise of Prometheus out to rid humankind of the scourge and constraints of the gods:

“Philosophy makes no secret of it. The confession of Prometheus, ‘In simple words, I hate the pack of gods’, is its own confession, its own aphorism against all heavenly and earthly gods who do not acknowledge human self-consciousness as the highest divinity. It will have none other beside”

Here, humanity itself replaces God as the “highest divinity”. The strong implication is that neither Prometheus nor ‘the gods’ in general nor the Judeo-Christian ‘God’ the Creator of humanity and the universe in particular is superior to humankind. The explicit notion here, of course, is that humanity actually possesses godly powers and should not hesitate in the slightest to exercise them. in order to advance and improve as a species, humanity needs to stop projecting its own powers into the stratosphere of religiosity and begin to exercise its own true divinity. in the mask of characters in ancient Greek literature, this is a core tenet of the Enlightenment write large to frame Marx’s dissertation.

It bears repeating how this view contrasts so markedly to Hegel’s. Hegel himself saw no intractable problem with a God external to and higher than humanity nor with the Christian religion per se. For Hegel, human thought itself travelling through history is religious first and foremost, then philosophical, not the opposite way around. Since both religion and philosophy are intimately concerned with the unity of all things, they share the same object and content.

Hegel viewed God as absolute Spirit, and Christianity, therefore, as absolute religion. Hegel’s doctrine of God is completely compatible with Christian theology (Williamson, 1984). One

would expect such a compatibility from a scholar who self-identified as a Lutheran Christian his entire life (Fritzman, 2014, p. 23). It must be admitted, then, that Marx's statement implies that philosophy is supreme, not theology, so it is in complete contradiction to Hegel himself.

Prometheus Bound and Atheism

The Promethean statement is not the only place in the introduction to Marx's doctoral dissertation where Marx declares war against all gods. Just prior to this statement, Marx quotes from a letter written by Epicurus to a contemporary, named Menoeceus, summarizing his ethical doctrines:

“Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them, is truly impious.”

Evidently, what Marx found so attractive about Epicurus's ethical doctrines is that Epicurus held earthly pleasure to be the greatest good at the same time that he rejected the whole idea of divine providence. God doesn't exist mainly because of ongoing suffering in the world which a loving guiding deity surely would bring under control if it existed. Therefore, if the gods do exist, they do not concern themselves with human sufferings in the world; to do so would taint their blessedness.

Just in case the reader didn't understand the thoroughgoing atheistic thought within which Marx is framing his dissertational analyses and interpretations, he caps off the foreword to his thesis in resounding Promethean style. Always careful to camouflage his own fervent atheism by hiding behind the words of mythological characters, he once again quotes from Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*:

“But to those poor March hares who rejoice over the apparently worsened civil position of philosophy, it responds again, as Prometheus replied to the servant of the gods, Hermes: ‘Be sure of this, I would not

change my state of evil fortune for your servitude. Better to be the servant of this rock than to be faithful boy to Father Zeus'. Prometheus is the most eminent saint and martyr in the philosophical calendar." – Berlin, March 1841.

These combative assertions at the start of Marx's doctoral dissertation are only a small sample of the atheistic interpretations of ancient Greek literature championed throughout the thesis itself. By the time he finished it, Marx was surely a full-fledged atheist by any definition or measure of that term then or now (Erdozain, 2015). The defiant epigraphs from Prometheus and Epicurus introducing Marx's dissertation allowed him to test the waters of social acceptance with his own atheistic ideas, more or less, and to entertain follow-up writings along the same atheistic vein based on responses.

It is no wonder that Marx and friends decided to submit his thesis for approval to a much more liberal-leaning university rather than to risk rejection at the more conservative Berlin school (Batista, 2023; Mins, 1948; Stanley, 1995; Teeple, 1990; Wheen, 2001). Sperber (2014, p. 66) mentions an additional reason why Marx adopted the strategy of submitting his thesis to Jenna which is much more palatable in terms of his behavioral history at university. He argues that Marx actually ceased to be a student at Berlin because he had already reached the maximum limit of four years without achieving his degree. What's more, he had also failed to apply for an extension to the thesis program at Berlin, so other strategies had to be implemented in order for him to achieve it. This is probably where the advice of Bauer and his close friends regarding Jenna comes into play (Wheen, *ibid.*).

Bauer Runs into Trouble

It almost goes without saying that the numerous defiant atheistic statements contained in his dissertation are not just an expression of animosity toward the Judeo-Christian God or all gods of all faiths, for that matter. They also reflect a passionate hatred of any claim that asserted or implied the innate inferiority or imperfection of humanity which, in Marx's mind, functioned to limit the exercise of man's supreme powers and abilities to improve his earthly conditions of existence.

In turn, unloosening these bars assumed to imprison the human mind implies that the present state of affairs is not dictated in stone by the gods that be but, rather, amenable to change and vast improvements. Whatever they might be, the present state of affairs need not be accepted, and humanity should not hesitate to exercise its godlike powers to change them for its own benefit. The orthodox Prussian authorities made no mistake in reading these kinds of assertions as direct threats to the legitimate exercise of its own political powers.

When Bruno Bauer's atheism and questionable behaviors landed him into serious trouble with the Prussian government, it spelled trouble for Marx as well since they were very close friends. Marx was looking forward to Bauer's support in landing his own academic position. Bauer had obtained a theology professorship at the largely conservative-leaning University of Berlin from 1834 to 1839. But after he published a merciless attack on a colleague and former teacher, Berlin decided to transfer him to the theology department at Bonn from 1839 to 1842, where Bauer defiantly continued unorthodox teachings and writings.

Finally, Bauer's teaching license was revoked by the Prussian government in 1842 for highly unorthodox writings on the New Testament and championing liberal causes which invited the direct personal dismissal by the King of Prussia himself. Consequently, Marx's own chances for landing a university post were effectively stifled although it is doubtful that he would have maintained any academic position in any department at

any university anywhere given his own uncompromising and rambunctious behavior and fanatical atheistic views in a strongly Catholicized country like Prussia.

The Pivotal Turn to Journalism

Subsequently, both Bauer and Marx turned to journalism for income and to spread their own radical beliefs. Bauer's political writings spanned from 1842 to 1849, writing on historical research on the Enlightenment and the French Revolution for a series of newspapers ranging from the anti-liberalism of a government-sponsored newspaper, *Die Zeit* to *Die Post*, the *Kleines Journal*, and the *New York Daily Tribune* (Moggach, 2022).

For his part, Marx became a journalist in Cologne in 1842 writing for a radical newspaper, *Rhineland News* (*Rheinische Zeitung*), where he expressed his early views on the merits of socialism and on economics in general, and later (1848) founded his own newspaper. Marx edited the *Rhenish Newspaper* in Cologne from January 1842 until it was terminated by the Prussian state censor in March 1843. Eventually, this newspaper was succeeded by a daily newspaper initiated by Marx on behalf of the Communist League in 1848, called the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of the *New Rhenish Newspaper*.

Compared to Bauer, Marx had a long and relatively illustrious career as a journalist. In fact, many scholars today argue that Marx should be seen first and foremost as a journalist, not mainly as a philosopher or political economist (Ledbetter, 2008; Sherman, 2018). Marx ended up writing for the *New York Daily Tribune* for eleven years (1851-1862) which came about through a chance meeting with an American newspaper editor who had asked Marx to contribute some articles to the *Tribune* as a foreign correspondent. This newspaper had become the largest in the world and the most well-known anti-slavery newspaper in the U.S.

Throughout his journalistic career, Marx was constantly fighting unemployment, political persecution, and serious financial difficulties especially after his father's death severely reduced his income. Among other concerns, his journalism was mainly characterized as an all-out effort to prepare and educate readers for the coming revolution against capitalism, exemplified in his leadership of various socialist movements at the time such as the Communist League and the League of the Just (Chakravorti, 1993).

Like most of his other radical activities during his lifetime, Marx would use journalism to actively undermine the existing socio-political order by fanning the flames of revolutionary sentiment in whatever manner he could muster. Journalism, like everything else, should ruthlessly seek to change the world, not simply interpret, describe, or reflect it, Marx thought.

Through journalism, Marx was drawn into local practical political and economic concerns and controversies which, among other things, compelled him to investigate the nature of economic processes under capitalism and the impact of economics upon other central institutions of modern society such as politics, education, and religion (Kurz, 2014). It was also through journalism that Marx would meet his lifelong collaborator, Friedrich Engels, who had been sent by his rich father in 1842 at 22 years of age to work in the offices of a family-owned mill producing sewing threads in Salford, England. On his way there, Engels stopped at the editorial offices of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne where Marx worked (Wheen, *ibid.*).

Conventional Political Economy and Socialist Writings

The practical local economic concerns and controversies involved in Marx's journalism compelled him to add economics

to his enormous intellectual warehouse. At this time, Marx became intimately familiar with the principal economic writings of his time by both conventional political economists and socialist economists. On the conventional side, Marx devoured the works of Adam Smith (1723-1790) on the *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and David Ricardo's (1772-1823) *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817), among many others.

He also mastered the central economic writings of socialist economists such as the French political, economic and socialist theorist and businessman Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825) who championed a broad view of the needs of the working class; the upper-class Genevan historian and political economist Jean Charles Leonard de Sismondi (1773-1842) who delivered the first liberal critique of laissez-faire capitalism and actively advocated for unemployment insurance, sickness benefits, progressive taxation, pensions, and the regulation of working hours, and who would later earn Marx's explicit commentary in *The Communist Manifesto*; and the French socialist, politician, philosopher, economist, and self-declared anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) who wrote a book in 1840 focused upon the idea that property is theft, later to become a central theme in Marx's theoretical perspective.

As can be seen in this brief and partial review of major political economic writings which existed at the time, Marx's focus upon the impact of economics on other parts of society was certainly not novel, exceptional or otherwise atypical. Indeed, the 18th and 19th centuries were characterized by a wide range of competent works closely examining how the realm of politics influenced the economy and how the economy insinuated itself into every corner of modern society and seriously impacted upon the lives of individuals, the operations of governments, and the setting of public policy. Indeed, Marx himself would acknowledge the contributions of these works in his own writings and go on to sustain an ongoing conversation with the central tenets they contained for the rest of his life.

Marx's Humanism Not Distinctive

Just like Marx's concern for the deleterious impact of economic processes on the institutional arrangements of human society and human history was by no means novel nor groundbreaking, so, too, was his overriding concern for the general human welfare of the industrial working class not distinctive. All of the conventional and socialist political-economic writings mentioned above voiced tremendous humanitarian concern for the economic plight and deplorable life conditions of factory wageworkers and the poor.

As well, many great social and political leaders from a variety of countries had done the same. In France during the French Revolution of 1848, Louis Napoleon (1808-1873) had elevated the dire conditions of the peasantry and the industrial working class to a major political concern by writing a pamphlet entitled "The Extinction of Pauperism". This pamphlet was widely circulated at the time and earned him solid support from the peasantry and the industrial working class in his own ambitions to become a political leader.

Even before he became political leader, he had explicitly campaigned on the basis of providing work to the unemployed, taking care of workers during old age, introducing industrial laws to improve working conditions and to establish the right for workers to strike and to organize as well as other rights, and to promote the health and well-being of workers. In the first French direct presidential elections in 1848, he would capture almost 75% of the popular vote, by far many times greater than all of the other candidates put together including socialist parties and leaders (Milza, 2006, pp. 189-190).

In England, the Jewish-born politician, novelist, and essayist, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), served twice as Prime Minister, partly but significantly on the basis of using the power of the landed aristocracy to protect the poor from the flagrant exploitative practices of merchants and the new industrialists

of the middle class (Blake, 1967, p. 168; Bradford, 1983, pp. 116-117). Later as Prime Minister, his government was responsible for enacting a series of legislative reforms aimed at improving the housing and working conditions of industrial wageworkers and the poor. Other legislative reforms established the rights of workers to picket peacefully and to sue factory owners in the civil courts if they violated legal contracts. It was even widely acknowledged at the time that Disraeli's conservative government has done more to improve the life of the working classes in Britain in five years than all other political parties combined in the previous 50 years (Monypenny and Buckle, 1929, p. 709; Weintraub, 1993, p. 530).

In Germany, one of the founders of the German labor movement and once disciple of Karl Marx, Jewish-born Prussian-German jurist, philosopher, socialist, and politician, Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864), had championed the rights of the poor and industrial workers through initiating a social-democratic movement. Contrary to Marx, Lassalle came to believe that socialist revolution was not the inevitable conclusion of capitalist development and had long ago passed out of possibilities, and that legal, political, and evolutionary approaches to deal with the abusive excesses of industrialization were the best ways of advancing and protecting the living and working conditions of the industrial poor. Therefore, he advocated peaceful and legal means for improving the living and working conditions of the working class such as integration into political and social life, establishing welfare state policies, and promoting working class political organization and peaceful legal agitation to establish, advance, and protect legal rights (Footman, 1994).

In Britain, legislation to regulate and improve the working conditions of industrial workers started to come into being long before Marx even conceived of socialist agitation. The early Factory Acts began in 1802 with the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act which placed strict limits on the number of hours children could work as apprentices and concentrated on

improving the welfare of young children employed in the cotton mills. It was initiated by the British politician and industrialist, Sir Robert Peel (1750-1830), and it included measures to compel mill owners to provide some sort of schooling for these children. Peel had shown great concern for the working conditions of children in the cotton industry as early as 1800. In 1815, Peel introduced a bill placing strict limits on the hours all children could work in textile mills, not solely apprentices, which finally became law in 1819 as the Cotton Mills and Factories Act.

Since there was no inspectorate established by law to enforce these acts, it was left to factory owners themselves to act responsibly. Still, the handwriting was on the wall, and many of them took notice and aimed at compliance. By 1833, a Factory Inspectorate had been established and factory legislation started to be enforced in earnest. Over a short period of time, mill and factory owners came to realize the bottom-line benefits of a healthy and well-protected industrial labor force in increased production rates, lower absentee rates, and higher profit rates under conditions of international competition.

The Factory Act of 1844 extended permissible working hours to women; the 1847 Factories Act limited the total daily working hours to 10, a limitation the millworkers themselves had long lobbied for; the Factories Acts of 1847, 1850, and 1853 strengthened the enforcement and punishments related to previous legislation, remedied defects in those acts, and greatly strengthened already existing legislation regulating ventilation, hygienic practices, and machinery guarding in textile mills. After the 1860s, many other types of factory industries were also covered by these earlier Factory Acts (Cornish, 2019; Hutchins and Harrison, 1911; Pollard, 1963).

Factory Owners as Pre-Socialist Reformers

The early concern for the terrible plight of industrial and mill workers was not the exclusive economic and humanitarian

focus of political leaders. Many of these early pre-socialist reformers were moral vanguards within the textile and factory-owning establishment itself. For example, Peel mentioned above was a factory owner himself and ranked among the top 10 millionaires in Britain at the time. He just became greatly alarmed to see what was happening in his own factories after he previously thought factory managers would behave paternalistically towards workers, and wanted to do something to address the problem.

There were also other textile mill owners who were taking notice of what was happening to workers in factories and who wanted to remedy the defects of unregulated industrialization. The Welsh textile manufacturer, social reformer, philanthropist, and founder of utopian socialism and the co-operative movement, Robert Owen (1771-1858), is a veritable case in point. He made his wealth as a textile mill owner in Scotland in the very early 1800s, and then used a substantial part of that wealth and political influence to improve the lives and working conditions of factory workers.

As we learned from the Peel example above, Owen was only one of several textile mill owners who ceaselessly struggled to improve working conditions in factories, actively promoted experimental socialistic communities, and pressured for a more collective approach to childrearing and the general education of children including government-controlled education - all of this decades before Marx agitated for social reforms and championed socialist doctrines (Gunderman, 2021).

The Harvard-trained American industrialist, Francis Cabot Lowell (1775-1817), is yet another grand example of industrialists who genuinely cared about the lives and working conditions of workers in their factories. The humane working conditions he established in his factory along with the housing units he built and provided for his workers with state-of-the-art hygienic and sanitation facilities as well as many other amenities were absolutely exemplary for the period.

During 1810-1812, Lowell journeyed through the British Isles with the goal of closely examining and studying the operations and management of textile manufactories in England and Scotland. Upon returning to the U.S., he assembled partners and created a factory in Waltham, Massachusetts, which he believed would correct most of the ills exhibited in the factories he had visited overseas. Historians concede that the economic success of Lowell's own textile factory combined with the great humanitarian care of his workers was absolutely instrumental in bringing the Industrial Revolution to America.

Moreover, as other textile mill owners across New England and other regions in America learned about the formula to Lowell's success, they also came to visit his mill and later copied his paternalistic ethos in their own factory establishments. The result, of course, was that American factories were able to compete successfully against their British counterparts in the international marketplace for textile goods (Rosenberg, 2010).

As can be seen from this brief review, there wasn't much about Marx's interests, concerns, and thoughts that had not already been addressed by a host of thinkers and writers before him from both the socialist and non-socialist perspectives on both sides of the Catholic-Protestant and Jewish/non-Jewish divides. Disraeli, Lassalle, and Ricardo hailed from Jewish families, with Disraeli converting to Anglicanism, Lassalle declaring himself a socialist, and Ricardo converting to Unitarianism; Peel and Smith identified as Protestants throughout their lives; Napoleon was nominally Catholic; Saint-Simon championed a 'new Christianity'; Sismondi advocated humanitarianism; Proudhon was openly an atheist; and Owen dabbled in spiritualism.

Wider Societal Ideological Trends

In terms of the present study, one of the important points to catch here are the dominant ideological and theoretical trends in the wider society impacting upon the thoughts and ideas of individual thinkers, bending them over time in different ways

and at different rates towards compliance. All of these thinkers addressed the same kinds of favorable and deleterious social, political, economic, religious, and cultural effects of industrialization that occupied Marx's attention and interest at the time.

It is unlikely that any of these thinkers saw themselves as advancing atheistic modes of thinking per se even though atheist, naturalist, and progressivist philosophies easily fed into each other at the wider level of societal trends. Indeed, Marx at the time was simply fashioning himself to become yet another carrier of the core ideas and concepts contained within these broader societal streams of thought across Europe. As such, Marx was greatly indebted to previous and contemporary thinkers in putting together his own thoughts about the impact of industrialization on human society and history.

There was very little particularly distinctive in his writings until he gets to Paris in 1843 and starts writing a book against Hegelian philosophy called, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Even here, however, Marx was stimulated to realign his allegiance to Hegel partly but significantly in response to previous writings by Ludwig Feuerbach. Although this book was never published in Marx's lifetime, he did manage to publish the Introduction in a Parisian journal called, *German-French Annals*, which he had created to counter the previous censorship by the Prussian authorities of the *Rheinische Zeitung* mentioned above (Leopold, 2007, p. 67).

Feuerbach's Atheism and Anthropological Materialism

Just before Marx wrote his critique of Hegel's philosophy, Feuerbach had first published *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) and then one year later published his own critique of philosophy in a book titled, *Preliminary Theses on the Reform of Philosophy*. Whereas the 1841 book argued that God is simply

a projection of the needs of human nature into the cosmos, more or less, the 1842 book took direct aim at the underlying metaphysical roots of Hegelian philosophy itself in the form of Absolute Spirit or 'God', if you will, travelling through human history. Here Feuerbach deploras the metaphysical or abstract state of philosophy at that time represented by Hegel and then puts forth a set of principles to address its problems. Sounds like Marx a bit already.

He argues that philosophy itself needs to be firmly grounded in concrete material reality and human experience rather than Hegelian spiritual abstractions and Christian metaphysical presuppositions. Philosophy needs to begin its task at the level of observable realities within the concrete material physical world, not in some abstract metaphysical idea or 'Absolute Spirit' cum Hegel. For Feuerbach, God is a creation of man, not the other way around, as Hegel had argued. In essence, Feuerbach's atheistic position represents an unceasing anthropological materialist critique of the prevailing Christian religious concept of God which aptly and unmistakably foreshadows Marx's own atheism and views about religion in general. It also presages many other core components of Marx's thinking such as alienation, ideology, anthropological materialism, human nature, God, and humanism itself, just to mention a few notable overlaps (Erdozain, *ibid.*).

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche Extend Feuerbach's Atheism

It is little wonder that two of the most influential of all modern thinkers, Schopenhauer and especially Nietzsche, both self-professed atheists, borrowed extensively from Feuerbach's satirical criticism of religion. The atheism of the great German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) would allow no subtle contemplations about a 'God' in any philosophical

discussions about the mathematical sublimity of the heavens so prominent in the idealism of Hegelian and Kantian philosophy. He would take Feuerbach's atheism and anthropological materialism to new heights by using significant elements of Indian philosophy, such as self-denial and asceticism, to develop his own atheistic metaphysical and ethical system (Hamlyn, 1985).

The highly influential German classical scholar, philosopher, and critic of culture, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), also borrowed extensively from Feuerbach's fervent anthropological atheism and evolutionism to engage in his own satirical criticism of religion. Nietzsche's employs Feuerbach's critique of Christianity to envision the emergence of a liberated humanity. Feuerbach believed that many of the central elements of orthodox Christianity functioned in concrete life only to impede human advancement, not to facilitate it. Christian presuppositions represent prison bars around the human spirit, effectively preventing it from actualizing its own grand potentialities. Therefore, the flourishing of humanity can only be achieved by liberating human beings from the self-imposed restraints of Christian metaphysics (human fallenness, otherworldliness, etc.).

Nietzsche appropriates all of these Feuerbachian ideas in his four-volume fictional masterwork, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885) (Duke, 2024). Here Nietzsche sets up the historical Zoroaster as the protagonist, the Iranian religious reformer and founder of Zoroastrianism in the second millennium BC, to reflect on ideas about the death of God, the goal of humanity to be superman in this earthly world (ubermensch), the will to power as the principal motivating force within human beings, and the cyclical infinite repetition of time for eternity without afterlife. Zarathustra teaches that human beings are simply physical bodies, not composed of body and soul as in Christianity proper.

Thus, says Zarathustra, spirit, soul, and consciousness are

simply parts of the human body, nothing more. Only an eternal cyclical repetition of life occurs, and without an ensuing afterlife, not through resurrection nor by any other means. To transform humankind itself into some kind of higher order superhuman species is the highest goal in this earthly world for human beings. The whole purpose of life is to promote and contribute to some sort of an ongoing human evolutionary progress to a superior or superman species status (Ramonas, 2007). Essentially, then, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* book is not much more than Feuerbach's attack on Christianity enabled and masked by a humanistic atheism in the fictionalized literary style of a *Zarathustra* mouthpiece.

Marx Amplifies Atheistic Critique of Christianity

More pertinent to our concern with the central influence of atheism in its various shades, hues, and colors in the dominant thoughts of 19th century thinkers, the contention here is that Marx's critique of Hegelian philosophy penned in Paris in the early 1840s was not so much about identifying the ills of philosophy as a discipline at the time as it was concerned with tightening or strengthening the clutch of atheistic critique over Christian interpretations of human nature, social organization, and human history. Christian presuppositions just happened to be found wallowing around Hegelian waters, as Feuerbach had argued. Now Marx the gladiatorial atheist was about to exorcise the Christian demons from Hegelian philosophy.

Having already read Feuerbach's latest books, Marx begins his Critique with the following phrase in the very first sentence of his Introduction: "...the *criticism of religion* is the prerequisite of all criticism". in the second paragraph of that Introduction, still more atheistic pronouncements: "...*speech for the altars and hearths...for God and country* has been refuted"; "Man...has found only the *reflection* of himself in the fantastic reality of heaven, where he sought a superman". in the third paragraph, more atheistic spin: "*Man makes religion*, religion does not make man"; "Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and

self-esteem of man”; “Man is *the world of man* – state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness of the world”; religion “...is the *fantastic realization* of the human essence...the struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly *the struggle against that world* whose spiritual aroma is religion”; and finally in the 4th and 5th paragraphs comes the coup de grace of Christianity itself:

“*Religious* suffering is, at one and the same time, the *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. 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.

“The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their conditions is to call on them to *give up a condition that requires illusions.*”

“It is, therefore, the *task of history*, once the *other-world of truth* has vanished, to establish the *truth of this world*...It is the immediate task of *philosophy*...to unmask self-estrangement in its *unholy forms*...Thus the criticism of Heaven turns into the criticism of Earth, the *criticism of religion* into *criticism of law*, and the *criticism of theology* into the *criticism of politics.*”

Then in the next to last two paragraphs:

“The only liberation of Germany which is *practically* possible is liberation from the point of view of *that* theory which declares man to be the supreme being for man...The *emancipation of the German* is the *emancipation of man*. The head of this emancipation is *philosophy*, its heart the *proletariat*...”

“When all the inner conditions are met, the *day of*

the German resurrection will be heralded by the crowning of the cock of Gaul” (all italics from original text).

After reading this 45-paragraph introduction that begins by denouncing religion and meanders through notions about human suffering and alienation, history, philosophy, the German nation, pigtails, civil society and state, politics, the Israeli God, Moses, the Christian-Germanic bond, the ancient and present Germanic regime, Greek culture and Prometheus Bound, the Scythians, Hegel’s philosophy, Luther and the Protestant Reformation, the German Peasant War, the Roman Empire, German emancipation, the political economy of France and England, Christian-Germanic serfs, and the Middle Ages – to name just a few topics touched upon - it’s exceedingly difficult for any discerning mind to believe that Marx’s book is supposed to be an impartial paragraph-by-paragraph critical evaluation of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, published in 1820, especially Hegel’s political science (state, civil society, bureaucracy, etc.). But even there the rabid atheism orienting critical analysis is rather pronounced.

Belief in God Stultifies Objective Rational Criticism

If we return to Marx’s initial statements in the Introduction to his *Critique*, we are left dumbfounded at the audacity of making the cognitive act of rational criticism dependent upon a criticism of religion (i.e. atheism in Marx’s mind). The implication of such a statement is, of course, that a thinker who believes in the ‘God’ of the Judeo-Christian bible or any ‘God’, for that matter, cannot possibly engage in objective rational critical analysis.

Belief in God is integrally linked to a mummified condition of the human brain, more or less, adamantly denying the freedom of human thought in the process as we discovered earlier in this study. in other words, your mind is literally ‘free’ only if ‘God’ is not a governing part of it. The liberation of human thought can

only occur when man as supreme being is declared, and that declaration cannot be made without dumping 'God' as ruler. God is an illusion; in actuality, man is God. Clearly, these interrelated claims represent not much more than Marx genuflecting at the Feuerbach altar writ large from start to finish of the Introduction.

For Hegel, philosophy began with an idea or Spirit or 'God' coming to be realized dialectically in concrete historical reality against opposing philosophies and resulting in ever progressively higher syntheses until that final state is reached. Human history is the progressive development of opposing ideational forces until the freedom of Absolute Spirit manifests itself. For Feuerbach, as we saw, philosophy should begin with the concrete material realities of this world, replacing the spiritualism of Hegel with a materialist understanding of human history. Marx takes Feuerbach's empirical focus on man as observed in the real world, anthropological materialism, combines it with Hegel's progressive development of opposing ideas throughout human history, and concludes that this history is characterized by opposing material forces rather than clashes between opposing ideas.

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Marx, 1964), also known as the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx advances many of the conceptions of human nature and human history laid out in his critique of Hegel's philosophy. First published in German 1932 by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in the Soviet Union and in Germany, the Paris Manuscripts were just a series of notes Marx had written to himself between April and August 1844. In these notes, Marx once again employs the Hegelian and Feuerbachian philosophies to critique classical political economy (Smith, Ricardo, and others). It represents a cogent argument against the material conditions produced by modern industrial societies.

Marx and Alienation

Modern industrialization directed by an unrelenting and uncontrolled pursuit of profit establishes material conditions characterized by an increasing division of labor and a stratified social structure of classes each defined by its relation to the means of production. In turn, these material economic conditions of production effectively convert the human 'self' into a mechanistic part of a social class structure. Essentially, the result is the separation of people from their own human nature or humanity. They become estranged or 'alienated' in this way from the products of their own labor, from the processes of their own work, and consequently, from themselves and from each other.

From Marx's point of view, the grounding of alienation within the physical means of production governing human life in industrial societies means that 'alienation' is not just a psychological state of mind (Meszaros, 2006). Claiming that he had located the essential 'materialist' causal factors moving human history, Marx would later go on to expand and repeat these core components of this socio-economic historical doctrine across many key writings including the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Capital* (1867).

Since Marx claims that modern capitalist industry creates conditions of human labor that estranges human beings from their own humanity, the products they produce, from their own labor, and from themselves, he then goes on to champion an alternative means of organizing the production process which he believes would exalt humankind to its rightful divine status – communism. Once again, we see here how philosophical humanism plays into Marx's atheistic and radical communist political-economic agenda.

Only Through Bloody Revolutionary Overthrow

However, this socialist-communist mode of production is not established peacefully, Marx asserts. Real and lasting emancipation for humankind from such alienating conditions

of production can only be achieved through a bloody revolutionary overthrow, not through peaceful and gradual political means. Marx heaped considerable scorn upon blueprint socialism, which envisages a kind of 5-point or 10-point plan of graduated achievement of communism over a number of years.

Nothing short a radical political revolutionary action can achieve communism because the social classes in power in capitalist society would never willingly give up that power through a calm rational collective-sharing agreement. On the other hand, Marx seemed to be worried about more than just revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class in order to bring about a fair distribution of wealth in society. In Marx's eyes, communism had to be much more than just a crude replacement of one class by another or a simple matter of redistributing productive wealth. Otherwise, the aftermath of revolutionary overthrow could make conditions even worse than before, he thought.

Marx was much more alarmed about the implications involved in the worldwide spread of alienating conditions of labor rather than the concentration of these conditions within national boundaries. One of Marx's central concerns appeared to be how the capitalist owners of economic production at the national level were extending them to the international level.

For Marx, that meant imprisoning the entire human species in an international system of alienated production and commerce. He feared that the whole human race was being ensnared by a production system that effectively arrested its improvement and prevented it from assuming its genuine deified place as sole governor over what it produces. Instead, the capitalist-industrial system of production and commerce was governing humanity.

All of this did not mean, however, that Marx vilified the industrial system itself beyond redemption. Unlike many

socialist revolutionary rivals at the time, such as the Russian revolutionary anarchists Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) and, as we saw earlier, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), who could not see anything redeemable about the industrial system and even the institution of government itself, Marx held a much more positive view of the liberating potential of the industrial system for all of humanity. To this extent, this positive view reflected the undying faith of Enlightenment thinkers in the saving graces of technological development.

Revolutionary anarchists like Bakunin and Proudhon argued for its total destruction and a retreat to community-based living and production. By contrast, Marx viewed the modern industrial system as a power capable of catapulting humankind into previously unreached heights of prosperity, happiness, and freedom. He believed that the ills of modern industry could be remedied by simply putting governorship into the right hands, although this wouldn't be an easy task.

In the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx makes some important statements about human nature and human origin. He firmly contends that humankind cannot rightfully claim to be the exclusive governor of its own life-being and potential as long as it makes its physical existence dependent upon something greater than itself. For Marx, making humanity's existence conditional upon the existence of a deity greater than itself is intolerable and unacceptable, and the true socialist man cannot concur with such notions:

“But since for socialist man the whole of what is called world history is nothing more than the creation of man through human labor, and the development of nature for man, he therefore, has palpable and incontrovertible proof of his self-mediated birth, of his process of emergence...the question of an alien being, being above nature and man – question which implies an admission of the unreality of nature and man – has become

impossible in practice.”

And just in case the reader didn't understand the intimate connection here between Marx's ruminations about human origins and the atheistic orientation of those thoughts, he adds in the following paragraph:

“Atheism, which is a denial of this unreality, no longer has any meaning, for atheism is a negation of God, through which negation it asserts the existence of man. But socialism as such no longer needs such mediation. Its starting point is the theoretically and practically sensuous consciousness of man and of nature as essential beings.”

Marx as a Teenager on God

Although Marx made such assertions about human origins in the Paris Manuscripts, and in many other writings afterwards, he also penned the following theistic statement as a teenager in 1835 just before leaving home to attend university (Payne, 1971, pp. 34, 41):

“Our heart, reason, intelligence, (and) history all summon us with loud and convincing voice to the knowledge that union with (Christ) is absolutely necessary, that without Him we would be unable to fulfill our purpose, that without Him we would be rejected by God, and that only He can redeem us.”

A shocking contrast, to say the least, strongly suggesting something happened at university to compel such as drastic transformation of such deeply felt personal religious beliefs.

Marx Responds to Feuerbach: Truth is Political Action

In *Theses on Feuerbach* (Marx, 2023), the socialist man and the socialist system that Marx refers to in the quotes above are specified at greater length although they were not intended to

be an explicit outline of Marx's view of political action. These *Theses* were originally just eleven short philosophical notes he wrote as a basic outline for the first chapter of another book titled, *The German Ideology*, in 1845. In fact, neither one of these books was ever published in his lifetime.

Across these philosophical notes, Marx comes to assert that the truth of socialism is not dependent upon reason, fact, or logic to be proven true, a rather bizarre claim coming from a thinker professing to be rational. It is might in practical action that will prove its legitimacy, direct and forceful political action, not reason or logic. The truth of socialism is to be found in political action, in the political efforts to establish it. In other words, 'truth' for Marx is a practical matter, not a theological one.

What is truth must be proven in the courtroom of practical political action since human thinking and truth itself are the direct products of material circumstances. When political action is taken to change the existing order to a socialist form of social organization, at that point socialism becomes 'truth'. It is oddly suspicious that Marx doesn't consider his own thinking to be a byproduct of the material circumstances of his time.

Socialist philosophy, therefore, will only become recognized as truth when socialism is established by political power, not when fact, reason, logic, or even a 'God' are appealed to. That's why Marx states categorically in the final 11th thesis of the *Theses*: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." This expression was considered so pivotal to Marx's thought that it was engraved on the stone of Marx's tomb, alongside another famous quote from *The Communist Manifesto* also supporting revolutionary political action: "Workers of all lands unite" (Aslet, 2005).

In February 1845, this constant heated emphasis upon political action to overthrow the existing social order invited the unwanted attention of the French minister of Foreign Affairs who promptly deported Marx. Finding sanctuary in Brussels,

Belgium, and joined later in April by Engels, it was here that they would collaborate to write a new philosophy of history in a book titled, *The German Ideology*, a theory of history known as historical materialism.

As stated previously, there were intimations about the core organizing principle of materialism in Marx's thought when he adopted the anthropological materialism of his favorite atheistic philosopher, Feuerbach. This concept proposed the idea that changes in political history were the result of economic struggles between owners and workers within the dominant mode of production. Struggle between the ruling and oppressed classes across human history was the ultimate cause of transformations in social organization.

Materialist Conception of Human History

At the beginning of *The German Ideology*, Marx provides a general outline of the materialist conception of human history which examines the social functions of the division of labor and propounds a theory of human nature. He begins by claiming that human beings differ from animals "as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence" to satisfy their survival needs. The implication is that how and what human beings produce determines their human nature, not some Judeo-Christian God in the creational act outlined in Genesis. The nature of human beings, therefore, is determined by the material conditions of production. The division of labor determines how far these productive forces can be developed. Therefore, there is a direct connection between types of ownership of the means of production and the division of labor.

The real ruling class of any society are those who own, operate, oversee, and direct the means by which human beings satisfy survival needs. Very importantly, ruling over the material means of production also simultaneously awards control over the ideational means of production. When the ruling class rules over the material means of human subsistence, it rules over the

production and distribution of the ideas governing that particular time in the history of human society. When the owners and rulers own and control the material forces of society, they simultaneously govern over the intellectual forces of society.

Over concrete historical time, the status of ruling classes change in accordance with changes in the materialist forces of production, to be replaced by new ruling classes who impose their own sets of ideas upon the rest of society. Once changes in the economic forces of production take place new social structures, political institutions, and ideational systems are put into place that represent and promote the material economic interests of the new ruling class. The new ideational systems represent the superstructure of society which is composed of morality, religion, ideology, cultural, and other sorts of metaphysical ideas supporting ruling class ownership of the economic means of production or what is called the substructure.

In essence, the superstructure as a whole must be seen as a kind of false consciousness that allows the owners of the means of production to continue ruling society with the willing compliance of others. It simply functions to mystify the true economic relations of production so that workers and others can continue to accept domination by the ruling class. This pattern will be repeated ad infinitum ad nauseam throughout human history as long as society is organized by and based upon the economic interests of a ruling class (Marx, 1998).

The Impermanence of the Social Order

One of the basic theoretical forces directing the thought behind the German Ideology is Marx's presumption about the impermanence of the substructure and superstructure of every socioeconomic order throughout human history. Therefore, the social structures of any society are in essence an ongoing developmental process. Capitalism is not fixed permanently in

the nature of things any more than feudalism was a permanent fixture before it, although social members may feel it as such at the time. Since the historical picture of socioeconomic systems conveys a picture of ongoing transience, this means that socioeconomic order is always open to intentional rational change at any point in time. Once again here Marx fails to consider just how the deterministic “iron necessity” of the “natural laws” of history are supposed to be compatible with the intentional rational social change he champions.

Early Christian Thinkers on Transitory Social Structures

The transitory nature of social structures emphasized by Marx was certainly not a theme unique to Marx any more than Darwin’s denial of biblical creation was a theme unique to Darwin, as demonstrated earlier. Indeed, many early Christian thinkers well before Marx had underscored the transient nature of human existence and all human productions. In Augustine’s *The City of God* (2004), for example, all human productions such as states, empires, and laws, are wobbling or trembling on the constantly shifting scene of human existence: “...humility...raises us...by divine grace...above all earthly dignities that totter on this shifting scene.”

Nation, state, and empire are but fleeting moments in humanity’s being on Earth. Augustine pursues the theme of the transience of temporal time throughout his *Confessions* (1961), especially Book 11, which literally expounds his account of time itself. Augustine asserts that man has a constantly changing temporal or transitory nature, while God has an unchanging eternal nature not locked by the constrictions of time and change. Therefore, all of man’s creations are limited by the human experience of time. There is a finitude to man’s existence and all that he creates on Earth, whereas God is unchanging eternal divinity.

Among other possible contributory sources, Augustine is here perhaps referring to St. Paul’s assertion in Corinthians 4: 7-18

of the Judeo-Christian Bible that the things which are visible to human beings in this earthly world are locked within time and last for only short moments in comparison to the invisible eternal nature of God outside of time which lasts forever, and human lives themselves are even shorter than human history. Therefore, whatever is visible to human beings will be subject to change; it will come and go in the moments of time. So, then, it can be convincingly argued that Marx's emphasis upon the impermanence of human social structures is hardly a novel nor unique contribution to social thought itself.

Overthrow Justified by Social Impermanence

Contrary to Augustinian notions about God standing outside of time judging humanity's behavior on Earth within time, the impermanence of human creations in human existence in Marx's hands suggested very strongly that the established socio-political economic order could and should be forcefully overthrown in a bloody "body against body" class warfare and replaced with a more humanitarian form of social organization. Just a few short sentences before the end of Chapter 2 of his *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx states boldly (Marx, 1955):

“Indeed, is it at all surprising that a society founded on the opposition of classes should culminate in brutal contradiction, the shock of body against body, as its final denouement? Do not say that social movement excludes political movement.”

And what, pray tell, is Marx using as a theoretical guide to support making such pronouncements? Answer: statements made in a French novel entitled, *Jeanne*, by George Sand (2022) that states as follows:

“Le combat ou la mort; la lutte sanguinaire ou le neant. C'est ainsi que la question est invinciblement posee.” (“Combat or Death; bloody struggle or extinction. It is thus that the question is inexorably

put.”)

George Sand and Bloody Struggle

One of the most curious features of the author Marx quotes here, George Sand, is that it is actually a male pseudonym adopted by a female Parisian writer called Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin (1808-1876). Born into a longtime well-respected high-level aristocratic family, she was well-known at the time for strongly opposing the established 19th-century view of women, among other eccentricities. To make a long story short, after having published two novels in 1831-32 while married with two children for many years she simply decided to take the door, as they say, and never look back. She left her husband without warning nor reason and took her two children to Paris in 1835 in search of fame and fortune as a writer.

While in Paris, she often times wore men’s clothes likely to camouflage herself while she engaged in numerous sexual relationships with well-known high-society men (among them the famous composer and pianist, Frederic Chopin; the eminent French writer and member of the French Academy, Alfred de Musset; the great Hungarian-Austrian composer and piano virtuoso, Franz Liszt; and many open and secret others), all of which she recounted quite gloatingly in her 20-volume memoirs. She rarely stopped long enough to consider the potential deleterious effects of her questionable lifestyle on the social, moral and emotional well-being of her children (Storr, 1911).

Logical Conflict Between Humanism and Overthrow

For his part, often Marx didn’t stop to think either about some of the logical conflicts between many of the statements he made, as intimated above. In advancing notions about the necessity of bloody body-on-body actions in the above quotation, for example (and in different words across many other writings), it is simply remarkable how Marx apparently never stopped to

consider the glaring contradiction between his oft-repeated 'humanitarian' concerns and the bloody revolutionary political actions proposed for realizing them. Exactly how the terror of body-to-body physical violence was supposed to result in the emergence of a new and higher type of purified and ennobled human species is never really outlined but, rather, simply assumed.

In Marx's mind, a bloody revolution was guaranteed by the "iron necessity" of the "natural laws" at work within the process of capitalist production itself (*Capital*, 1971, pp. 13-14). The inherent contradictions of capitalist production would lead to the increasing immiseration and alienation of workers finally erupting in full-scale bodily warfare against the capitalist class. The iron necessity that Marx is referring to are the laws of historical necessity which he proclaims to have uniquely discovered.

Since the natural laws of capitalist production and the natural laws of history work with iron necessity towards inevitable results, Marx could portray his atheistic socialist thinking as being 'scientific' in nature, as opposed to the many planned socialisms in vogue at the time. He believed he had uncovered the underlying developmental laws of human history in the material conditions of production. Just like the material conditions of feudal production had been replaced by the material conditions of capitalist production, so, too, would capitalist production eventually be replaced by socialist production.

This was the historical law that Marx thought he had uncovered and laid bare. Natural laws working within the production process and human history don't compromise with opponents or tease proponents. They simply occur with "iron necessity". The aim, then, should be to prepare all workers as a social class for the historical inevitability of open and vicious class warfare simply because history dictates it. Ostensibly, that was the ultimate purpose of writing *The Communist Manifesto* (2014),

notwithstanding the popular call to arms in the very last sentence: “Proletarians of all countries, unite!”

Marx’s Communist Call to Arms

Originally commissioned by the international Communist League (formerly called ‘League of the Just’), an international political party established by Marx and Engels on June 1, 1847, in London, England, the purpose of this short book was to enunciate the goals and rationale of the Communist Party. The entire thrust of this work is to argue that workers as a united social class should and must forcibly overthrow capitalism by taking control of the means of production and government.

As such, Marx and Engels were not simply articulating a political platform but, as well, responding to economic and political conditions which they perceived in 19th century Europe at the time. They believed that these conditions indicated that a drastic change in the means of production was imminent which would usher into being a bloody overthrow of capitalist owners by the working class, just like the bourgeoisie themselves overthrew the guild masters under feudalism.

All of human history is a history of class struggles, and now the moment is fast approaching for the final class struggle of human history between workers and capitalists which would, at long last, establish collective ownership over the means of production and over government itself by the working class for the benefit of all social members. This dictatorship of the working class over the means of production and over government would abolish all classes and create a new society where every social member was free and equal. As Marx stated in the very last sentence of Chapter 2:

“In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association of the people in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.”

It's crucial to emphasize that this political platform is not simply an effort by Marx and Engels to educate the working class in the matter of their role in history, although it certainly lends itself to this kind of interpretation in certain expressions.

Still, *The Communist Manifesto* cannot be interpreted mainly as an agenda for educating, uniting, and simply preparing the working class for bloody warfare against the capitalist class. It is much less a matter of preparing for a political action as it is actively pressing for it. After all, if natural laws are truly at work in human history and human agents are just unconscious carriers of these laws, there is hardly any need for educating or preparing per se, another rather glaring inherent contradiction in atheistic Marxian socialist thought. The natural laws of history will govern the behavior of its human carriers whether they are conscious or not, willing or not, but they can certainly help to bring the inevitable to fruition.

With this kind of thinking in mind, needless to say, wherever Marx went he was always expecting (wishing?) the final revolutionary class warfare to break out at any moment; the equality of all was right around the corner, to so speak. Predictably, he would use his radical journalism to fan the flames of revolutionary fire as much as he possibly could wherever he found himself to be. When the Revolutions of 1848 broke out across many European countries such as France, Austria, and Germany as popular response to heavy taxation and discontent with autocratic political structures led to discontent and uprisings, Marx was on the move. He would move from Belgium to Cologne writing inflammatory journalistic pieces to incite even more popular unrest and rioting until governments ordered him to leave the country. Finally, Marx finds himself in London where he ends up fully exploiting its political freedoms to establish the Communist League and then write *The Communist Manifesto!*

Although he always expected to be called back to guide, assist or perhaps even to lead the inevitable worldwide working-class

revolution, that never occurred. As many of the monarchs began to acquiesce in staggered style to popular agitation for freedom of assembly, written constitutions, fair taxation, and other demands, the Revolutions of 1848-9 began to fizzle out in many countries particularly in the German confederacy of states and the Austrian Empire (Sperber, 2005). Marx's visit to London in 1849 ends up being an unexpected permanent stay where he enjoys the protections and freedoms accorded to him by an advanced democratic political structure only to pursue the creation of socialist organizations and to rant and rage against the ills of capitalist industrialism in any way he could.

Marx Critiques Convention Political Economists

While in London, he initiates a protracted critique of the writings of the dominant theoretical exponents of capitalism by the political economist at that time, chiefly Adam Smith and David Ricardo, as mentioned earlier, in a book titled, *A Contribution to the Critique of the Political Economy* (2022), later used as a basis for writing *Capital*. In this work, Marx dissects the inner operations and social class structure of the capitalist mode of production and the ideological systems by which it reproduces itself. He investigates the problem of commodities and commodity production and the central issue of using money as a universal measure of value and medium of exchange between capitalists located within different national geographical borders.

He reviews and assesses the quantity theory of money which argued at the time that the price level of goods and services was directly proportional to the money supply (or the amount of money in circulation). In other words, the causal factor for the price of goods moves from money to prices. By contrast, Marx argued that the economic value of a good (or service) was determined by the total amount of labor that went into producing it, a labor theory of value first developed by Adam Smith and then revised by David Ricardo.

The argument was relatively straightforward. Smith argued that the exchange value of a good on the open market was determined by the amount of labor put into producing it. The price of a good, therefore, reflects the amount of labor it can save the buyer (Smith, 1994). Ricardo claimed that the value of a good or service corresponds to how much labor was required to produce it including the labor required to produce the raw materials and the machinery used in the process (Peach, 1993). The key role of constant technological over the pricing of goods and services makes it exceedingly difficult to gauge the actual determinants of price, he admitted.

Marx argued that the exchange value of a good or service is determined by the total amount of 'socially necessary labor' required to produce it, meaning the average quantity of labor time that must be performed under prevailing conditions of production to manufacture a commodity (Indart, 1987). Once the good or service is produced, capitalist owners can then sell it on the market for more than what it cost them to produce it, reaping a 'surplus value' which represents 'profit' to them. Ricardo himself realized that technological change within the wider society in general and within the production process in particular made it nearly impossible to gauge the actual determinants of both the value and the price of a good over time.

Not surprisingly, the labor theory of value has long since been invalidated, and so has the inevitable revolution along with the increasing immiseration of workers and the abolition of social classes, not to mention a host of other Marxian platitudes and political rhetoric masquerading as 'natural laws' of capitalist production and human history (Keen, 1993). Despite the many profound and penetrating insights into the inner workings and widespread social effects of productive systems throughout human history such as the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands, neither Marx nor his followers could ever really accept that his theory of history and society was but one view, not the one and only 'Truth' on the matter.

Marx's Theory of History and Society: Only One view

The historical interpretation of history and human society was, at best, only one way to think about history and society, not necessarily the only valid way to think about them. It was only one possible interpretation out of many partial, subjective, incomplete, and flawed interpretative approaches, and as such, it held no particular exclusive epistemological status as a monopoly on the 'truth' of human history and society. Even though on occasion he may have considered himself to be some kind of prophet who had somehow uncovered a set of fixed laws operating the levers of human history, it would not turn out to be a spotless perspective by any stretch of the imagination.

It was really not much more than just another way to think critically about the established economic order and a future state of social perfection based on the fundamental underlying principles of atheism, anthropological humanism, and historical materialism. This future state of social perfection was very similar to Darwin's future state of biological perfection. For Darwin, the biological struggle for existence governed by natural selection led to a higher state of biological perfection just like class struggle led to a higher form of social perfection in the emergence of a communist society. The life-and-death struggle between living organisms in Darwin's jungle of survival of the fittest out of which newly perfected species emerge met its equivalent in Marx's body-against-body class struggle out of which a new human species emerges perfected by the process of revolutionary terror.

The Gotha Reformist Program

As Marx stated in his 1875 Critique of the Gotha Programme, social perfection would be reached only when revolutionary action achieves a higher-phase communist society in which all individuals can make contributions "each according to his ability" and receive rewards "each according to his need", not through planned, piecemeal, or otherwise compromising

measures (Marx, 1966). The so-called Gotha Programme was simply a proposed political platform presented by the Social Democratic Party of Germany for a forthcoming party congress to take place in the town of Gotha at the time that advocated a moderate evolutionary approach to socialism in order to gain immediate concessions from capitalist producers that would improve the present deplorable conditions and livelihood of workers.

Despite Marx's critical rejection of its compromising reformist approach towards ameliorating the ill effects of capitalist production upon workers, political party leaders had seen enough blood spilled in previous revolutions with little if anything gained and mostly to the detriment of workers themselves, not producers. They thought that violent revolution was not the only way to improve the immediate living conditions of workers, and so, the program passed with only minor alterations. The powerful German socialist party was founded at that congress through merging the Social Democratic Workers' Party with Ferdinand Lasalle's General German Workers' Association.

Bloody Revolution and Humanism Incompatible

This official political response by the German socialist party in Gotha to Marx's constant railing about the absolute historically-based necessity of bloody revolution at any cost underlines a central element of Marx's thought that many students, commentators, and teachers of Marxism don't really pay that much attention to. The philosophical implications of advocating a revolution based on terror and bloodletting for Marx's self-professed humanism and the general welfare of human beings are rarely fully appreciated in any kind of meaningful detail.

Some may even deny that he actually advocated the widespread application of unmitigated terror against other human beings to achieve the ideal socialist society, even against like-minded

allies. But Marx was very clear in many writings about what he meant by the term ‘revolution’, namely, a physically-forced revolution against the will of others whoever those others might turn out to be in the end. in his mind, violent terror was the only way to achieve a better society, as noted previously in one of his earlier books with the phrase, “the shock of body against body”.

Never Explicitly Renounced Revolutionary Violence

For those who may think that Marx was grossly misunderstood on the issue of advocating or supporting revolutionary violence, think again. Despite expressing some degree of revulsion at the terrible bloodletting that occurred during the French Revolution of Marx’s time, in particular the Reign of Terror, Marx never explicitly renounced revolutionary violence. For Marx, revolution meant more than simply the passive replacement of one system of production by another.

In writing about the acquisition of California through annexation following the Mexican-American War (1846-48), Marx penned the following statement: “Without violence nothing is ever accomplished in history” (quoted in Williams, 2020). in the last paragraph of *The Communist Manifesto*, it states firmly and clearly with no room for doubt or misinterpretation:

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

For those who may think the term ‘class struggle’ implies a peaceful revolution, these kinds of statements make that position untenable. Further, Marx would not waver from that

position on violence to the end of his life despite a few passing descriptive commentaries on the many revolts and uprisings he would live to witness and write about. From Marx's prophetic point of view, revolutionary violence was part and parcel of the fixed laws of human history and not subject to the discipline and control of free rational human will. Revolutionary violence was never a matter of political choice exclusively but, rather, the iron law of historical necessity.

Revolution as Natural Law

When the natural laws of history have spoken and the material conditions are ripe, a bloody and violent body-against-body revolution takes place. Once those conditions have matured within the bowels of the old society, Marx over and over again countenanced the use of merciless violence, terror and bloodletting against other human beings, even allies, to achieve the desired ends. Marx makes his position clear early on in the last paragraph of an article he wrote in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848:

“There is only one way in which the murderous death agonies of the old society and the bloody birth throes of the new society can be shortened, simplified, and concentrated, and that way is revolutionary terror.”

Two years later when Marx with Engels (1850) was composing what he would say in the Address to the Central Committee of the Communist League, his stance on the use of violence is once again loud and clear although camouflaged at the very end of a lengthy Footnote 1:

“...Far from opposing so-called excesses, instances of popular revenge against hated individuals...must not only be tolerated but the leadership of them must be taken in hand...(From) the first moment of victory mistrust must be directed not against the conquered reactionary party, but against the workers' previous

allies...”

More than two decades later at the 1871 London Conference of the International, Marx insisted to include the following sentence into the program: “... we will proceed against you where it is possible and by force of arms when it is necessary” (quoted in Mallinson, 2017). In *Capital* in 1887, again Marx underscores the necessity and acceptance of violence in achieving revolutionary social change: “Violence is the midwife of every old society pregnant with the new one”.

Since Marx only provided a series of fragmentary references to revolutionary terror, violence, and bloodletting across a wide variety of different writings, presumably it is always possible to admit some room for doubt about the exact nature of Marx’s position. However, the consistency of such pro-violence statements across time in different writings including personal letters belies Marx’s actual stance on violence. Moreover, the repeated references to the historical necessity of unbounded violence in the quest for revolutionary social change corresponds to many of the central elements of his theory.

Violent Undertones of Marx’s Conceptual Apparatus

Much of the conceptual apparatus that Marx constructed as integral parts of his theoretical edifice itself oozes violent undertones such as ‘forcible overthrow’, ‘revolution’, ‘dictatorship of the Proletariat’, and ‘class struggle’. There is little room for doubt that many of these concepts contain implicit references to force or violence against the will and legal rights of others or not.

For example, ‘dictatorship of the Proletariat’ implies preventing other social classes and groups from exercising and defending their rights, legal or otherwise, compelled to acquiesce to the destruction of their own lifestyle and living conditions. In terms of accomplishing a socialist society, some concepts are more central than others and imply greater levels of violent content.

Despots Championed Marx's Revolutionary Terror

There is also little doubt that such an interpretation of the Marxian perspective is not very far from veracious, to say the least. There have been many despots across the world who have explicitly championed Marx's stance on revolutionary terror at any expense to justify the desired end of a 'perfect' society, even insofar as to use his own written words to perpetrate the most horrendous of crimes against humanity. The three common modern examples that are typically provided to showcase the actual practical results of Marx's theory of violent social change are Nicolai Lenin and Joseph Stalin in Russia, Mao Zedong in China, and Fidel Castro in Cuba.

In the five years of Lenin's reign over Russia commonly known as the 'Red Terror', scholars estimate that nearly 10 million people were mercilessly killed by Lenin in a great variety of ways from massacre, murder, and butchery to mass execution, intentional starvation, and through other horrid means. Joseph Stalin deliberately killed about 6 million people for largely political and religious reasons, but that number rises sharply to nearly 9 million as a result of deaths in forced labor camps, forced resettlements and deportations, and various ill-fated political policies, and it rises drastically if we include the deaths of 5.5 to 6.5 million people from starvation. The latest figures estimate as many as 25 million people may have been killed by revolutionary regimes in Russia.

The actions and policies of Mao Zedong in China were responsible for a vast number of deaths, anywhere from 40 to 90 million victims due to starvation, persecution, prison labor, mass executions, and a variety of other means. Just the 'Red Guard' movement alone was responsible for more than 10,000 deaths (Courtois et al., 1999). The Red Guards were a mass student-led social movement which Zedong had mobilized in 1966 and then abolished two years later during the first phase of his so-called 'Cultural Revolution'. By October 1966, 85% of counties in China had official Red Guard activity (Walder, 2019).

Finally, how many people were killed by Fidel Castro in Cuba and his communist dystopia depends on, like for Lenin, Stalin, and Zedong above, what criteria are used for counting. Even though scholars don't know with 100% certainty, they have pinned down some plausible numbers and posited some common estimates. At the start of the so-called 'revolution', between 7,000 and 10,000 people were executed by Castro, his brother Raul, and their murderous companion Ernesto 'Che' (or 'pal') Guevara, an Argentine Marxist revolutionary, physician, author, military theorist, and self-styled guerilla warfare leader who personally engaged in the torture and killing of more than 500 political dissidents in Cuban prisons he was in charge of. He had been gallivanting around the world fomenting revolutionary activity until he joined Castro, and continued to do so long afterwards until his untimely death.

Between the 1950s and 1990s during the Castro regime, nearly 20,000 more victims died from execution and imprisonment. Another 30,000 to 40,000 out of more than 100,000 people have died from drowning in shark-infested waters trying to flee Cuba in the roughly 100-mile swim to Florida, while Cuban military helicopters on orders from Castro were dropping sandbags over them from above in efforts to kill them. None of these estimates account for the terrible persecutions and deaths of other types of dissidents, homosexuals, priests, and others during the existence of the Castro revolutionary regime. For a tiny island, it must be admitted that such numbers and actions are horrendous by any measurement (Courtois et al., *ibid.*).

Communist Regimes Killed the Most People

However, although notoriously difficult to calculate the killings within national boundaries, the terror, killing, and mayhem of these well-known socialist revolutionary leaders doesn't stop at the geographical borders of their own countries, unfortunately. Fully in line with Marx's own worldwide revolutionary socialist endorsements, they have also been heavily involved in

fomenting violent socialist revolutions around the world that have killed millions more people such as Korea (nearly 4 million), Cambodia (1.7 million), Vietnam (perhaps 3 million), Ethiopia (1 million), Angola (more than 750,000), Poland (more than 1.5 million), Afghanistan (more than 1.5 million), Nicaragua (150,000 to 500,000), and many other nations (Courtois et al., *ibid.*).

Although the total number of people killed by revolutionary communist regimes around the world depends upon definitions to a considerable degree, these numbers tend to be conservative figures. They do not convey the full range of the many horrid ways in which human beings were tortured, persecuted, terrorized, and killed, itself varying in morbid cultural techniques. Since the historical inception of communist theory itself, the latest scholarly figures vary from as low as 10 to 20 million to as high as 110 million deaths, and likely much more.

Many scholars claim that no matter how one defines socialism or communism or ‘death by revolution’, for example, the raw statistics on people killed by Marxist-inspired socialist regimes around the world are staggering indeed. Moreover, the figures are not likely to be only coincidental to Marx’s revolutionary proclamations when revolutionary leaders around the world are themselves known for quoting Marx’s name, expressions, phrases, and other statements from a plethora of his writings during the course of their revolutionary activities from start to finish. Most scholars agree that socialist-communist regimes have more than likely killed more people than all other types of political and economic regimes or movements combined over the bulk of modern human history, if not recorded history (Courtois, *ibid.*; Goldhagen, 2009; Kengor, 2020; Rosenfield, 2010; Rummel, 1994, 1990).

History Not Characterized by Iron Natural Laws

As intimated above, both in person and in his writings Marx openly and cruelly scorned those who denied the ‘iron necessity’

of what he declared to be the ‘natural laws’ of capitalist production and human history which he alone had uncovered and understood best, incessantly attacking and insulting those who championed other peaceful and gradual means of social change even in his own socialist camp, like Ferdinand Lasalle, for example. These ‘natural laws’ pointed to an inevitable massive bloodthirsty revolution after which would emerge some kind of new superhuman species, Marx believed.

In turn, this new species of human beings would finally attain and maintain levels of freedom and material plenty previously unheard of in human history. Well, the course of human history has not exactly traveled the Marxian trajectory. The verdict of human history has vetoed many if not most of Marx’s revolutionary pronouncements and projections as well as many key concepts in his theoretical apparatus. Uncritical minds may get easily swept away by revolutionary rhetoric, but rational critical minds can recognize the overwhelming weaknesses in Marx’s thinking that history itself has exposed.

Marx’s Secular View of Human Creation

Marx’s rejection of his religious heritage led him to adopt of secular view of human creation arising from nothing but itself. Humankind owes allegiance to nothing but itself for its own creation, not to supra-human or supernatural or divine causes. As we saw earlier, humanity is ‘self-created’ through the process of his work and production as a ‘species-being’ determined by specific and variable social and historical formations with no fixed permanent biological status throughout. But the concept of self-creation viewed in this way is itself chiefly based upon Marx’s (and Feuerbach’s) bald assertion alone and as such remains irremediably enigmatic and indiscernible.

Simple bald assertion, no matter how pleasurable to the ears, should not be the basis upon which critical minds accept or reject doctrine. Most discerning minds would prefer to admit,

however reluctantly, that it is likely humankind owes its being to causal factors arising other than from itself. As well, to claim that human beings are only identifiable or specifiable as a 'species-being' attached to historically-specific forces and relations of production or means of subsistence is to view them as being and functioning robotically at all times not much differently than ants or bees, if at all. Such a condescending view of human nature is not based on rational criteria and hardcore empirical fact, among other things.

Other bald assertions by Marx about how open class warfare and bloodthirsty revolutionary activities would somehow result in the achievement of a higher moral stature for humanity, much less produce a higher and morally superior type of humanity, must be defined as patently absurd in and of itself. Simply believing in such notions as legitimate or truthful belies the extremely problematic and sickly nature of the undiscerning minds who might accept it. Even during the revolutions at Marx's time, it was clear that a higher type of biological-moral humanity had not emerged, and human beings had remained essentially unchanged both biologically and morally.

Capitalist Resilience and Humanity's Goodwill

The capitalist industrial system that Marx condemned as operating according to iron, inhumane, and immovable 'natural laws' has proven to be remarkably resilient, transformative, and subject to reform – even through the efforts of some of its own leaders, not only through worker movements or political stewardship. The boundaries of human freedom have in fact expanded much more greatly under the jurisdiction of capitalist industry than within other kinds of politico-economic systems throughout human history.

The deplorable material conditions of workers had improved markedly even during Marx's lifetime, and they have continued

to do so into the 21st century. What's more, this improvement occurred largely through peaceful legal and political reforms as well as through the efforts of many capitalist-industrialists themselves, not mainly through wild unionizing and striking activities by workers and certainly not due to revolutionary body-against-body violence, as Marx had predicted. Neither have increasing worker immiseration and decreasing worker wages occurred as predicated by Marx even during his time.

So, then, when tested against dyed-in-the-wool historical fact, Marx's veritable ultimate criterion for legitimacy, many core components of Marx's revolutionary socialist perspective seem to fall far short of warranted. The good will of industrialists, politicians, and workers themselves was a key factor in bringing about many of the needed remedies to the excesses of the industrial system in its earliest stages. But evidently, Marx was not willing to sacrifice his own apocalyptic conception of human history upon the altar of humanity's goodwill. It turns out that human nature is not quite so functionally robotic as ants or bees and as centered upon an organic law of 'survival of the fittest' as Marx may have thought.

Materialist View of Human History Falls Short

The fervent, near-religious belief that the means of production is the central 'natural' cause of all meaningful social and political change in every age throughout human history has proven itself to be an historically ludicrous proposition. Many examples come to mind that can easily falsify this position. To the discerning historical mind, the very notion that all of the catastrophic social, political, economic, and spiritual changes that took place from the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt (2700-2200 BC) to the New Empire of Egypt (16th-11th century BC) could be explained by changes in the means of production fails to be supported. Many kings and gods were throned and dethroned during this period, but the means of production by

which the ancient Egyptians cultivated the Nile Valley remained unchanged.

The same point surely holds true even when historical eyes are placed upon the Roman Empire. History confirms that the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, much less so for the emergence of Christianity, was due chiefly to changes in the means of production or modes of subsistence in place at that time. Further, changes in the means of production or subsistence had little if anything to add to the story of how the Great Schism of the Christian kingdom took place in 1054, much more likely to have been caused by doctrinal differences, the rejection of papal authority, and increasing sociopolitical differences between eastern and Western Christianity rather than by changes in the means of production between East and West.

The rise of the nation-state is still another example which seems to put the means-of-production mode of explanation into question. The emergence of the ancient and modern nation-state likely had as much to do with the raw human necessity for security within a context of constant warfare and the organized institutional efficiency of the nation-state itself in resolving conflict and cooperation problems between social groups and nations politically and legally than it had to do with changing patterns within trade, property rights, and capitalism.

Even when we look closely at the constitutional monarchy of Germany followed by the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler (1918-1933), best viewed as Germany's experiment with democracy since the town of Weimar in Germany was where the constitutional assembly met, we can see that changes in the means of production by itself cannot explain all of the cataclysmic changes that took place. This period in German history after World War I was mainly characterized by political turmoil, great economic hardships, new social freedoms, and widespread artistic movements.

The German emperor was largely ineffective in addressing all

the problems Germany faced after the war after military leaders had absolved themselves of any responsibility: more than 6.2 million young males dead or wounded; a civilian population dying from starvation due to wartime military blockades; hundreds of strikes for better pay and working conditions; several military mutinies; left-wing political agitation; right-wing extremism; and much more. Military influence over government, ineffective political leadership, a crippling war debt paid for unwisely by printing more currency, and several serious political movements were all causal factors by far more closely related to Weimar's decline than changes in the means of production.

Wide Range of Powerful Forces Shape Human History

A little common sense can also go a long way in explaining why Marx's means-of-production mode of explanation for social and political change is simply overdrawn. A great variety of factors have caused changes to occur in the social, political, and economic structures of many societies around the world: emigration, wars and other types of military activity, laws, and even plagues and epidemics. A strict materialist view of human history cannot account for the wide range of powerful forces and events that have shaped human history. There are so many examples from both ancient and modern times that come to mind to prove this point that it is hardly worthwhile to consider counter-claims, and surely Marx must have been aware of many of them.

At various points in history, plagues have occurred that have killed millions and dramatically changed modes of subsistence as well as social, political, and economic structures. There have been at least three great world pandemics of plague recorded (541 AD, 1347 AD, 1894 AD), and we are not even considering here lesser epidemic instances throughout human history such as malaria, mumps, yellow fever, cholera, tuberculosis, the Spanish Flu, the Russia typhus, Japanese smallpox, and the Naples Plague – just to name a few. Each of these plagues have

caused drastic levels of mortality for people and animals across the world, more often times than not irrevocably changing social, political, and economic structures of society (Frith, 2012).

Family, friends, and entire cities were abandoned, funerals became makeshift, work ceased. Whenever they occurred, they caused abrupt and extreme changes in the economy. Securing workers to produce goods became much more expensive. The difficulty and danger in procuring goods through trade led to sudden skyrocketing prices. Unhappy or unattached peasants working the land for masters could suddenly switch masters that were offering more wages and benefits due to the drastic reduction in their own workforce. The occurrence of just one plague could and often did drastically and irretrievably change the social and economic structure of entire continents. Marx's historical materialist view just fails to match historical fact (Courie, 1972).

Flawed View of Human Nature and Human Thought

The fact that a strict materialist conception of human history and society seen through means-of-production glasses does not correspond very well to historical reality suggests that its underlying view of human nature and human thought is also problematic, to say the least. As we learned earlier, Marx followed the naturalistic leanings of French Enlightenment thinkers who claimed that all beings and events in the world are natural and fall within the pale of scientific inquiry. Wherever and whenever possible, religious authority is to be opposed if not eradicated, and other freedoms promoted.

If human history and human thought are wholly the product of natural processes, that means the human mind was not made in the image of a transcendent Genesis 'God' specified in the Judeo-Christian Bible. Human beings created by 'natural' materialist processes are human beings emphatically not created by a Genesis God. It didn't take long for the attack to begin on the religious foundation of ethics through the

Philosophes of the French Enlightenment and, consequently, for atheism to take hold and expand its reach into the nooks and crannies of French society.

Atheism of the French Philosophes Implicated in Marx

Atheism alongside a strict materialist conception of human thought could easily be found in the works and views of such thinkers as Julien Offray de La Mettrie, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, Baron d' Holbach, Jacques-Andre Naigeon, Claude-Adrien Helvetius, Diderot, d'Alembert, and many other Philosophes that Marx was surely intimately familiar with. Even though many thinkers would keep such atheistic-materialistic views under the public radar for fear of repercussions or maintain vestiges of a Creator God somewhere in the minds of human beings, these Philosophes were simply repeating and expanding upon ideas that were already well entrenched in the salons of French culture.

For his part, Marx tended to swallow the French Enlightenment's atheistic fish hook, line, and sinker, as noted above, but the profound implications for conceptions of human nature and human thought are rarely fully appreciated quite beyond the scientism, naturalism, and humanism of the era. The historical materialism and atheism with Marx's conceptual apparatus specifically defines human beings as organic creatures who function instinctively in much the same way as other animals do: for survival and sustenance birds build nests, beavers build dams, bees build hives, squirrels build dreys, and human beings construct their means of production.

There isn't much thinking that goes into this process since it is essentially instinctive. At heart, then, Marx's deterministic view of human thought is profoundly anti-humanist because it denies them freedom of thought and, therefore, opposes the notion that human beings are capable of making good choices. Whereas Marx's humanism follows the path of most other humanists in rejecting the idea or belief in a transcendent

divine being called God and rejecting any notion of an afterlife, focusing instead on the pleasures to be sought in present life, Marx's materialism makes it clear that human thought is chained by instinctual functions to create the means of his subsistence. Human thought or mind is determined by the economic forces of production:

"It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness." (Marx, 1998)

"The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with their material productivity, produce also principles, ideas, and categories in conformity with their social relations." (Marx, 1955)

"...intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed." (Marx and Engels, 2014)

"...The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness." (Marx, 2022)

"...the ideal (or thought) is nothing but the material transformed and transplanted in the head of man." (Marx, 1971)

"...in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange...form the basis (of) the political and intellectual history of the epoch." (Marx and Engels, 2014)

Marx's Humanism in Question

These kinds of statements don't exactly inspire the greatest confidence in the veracity of Marx's humanism, to be sure. Surely a more humane, just, and compassionate society based upon human reason and dignity, social responsibility,

experience, and reliable knowledge is never achieved by denying the freedom and independence of the human free will applied to achieve it. When the human mind becomes viewed as simply a tool of economic forces (or biological instinct, for that matter), the idea of free human thought becomes an illusionary contradiction in terms. Moreover, that contradictory dictum applies just as much to Marx's own thought as it does to anyone else.

It is clear that Marx's atheistic historical materialism emphatically rejects the independent existence of the human mind or 'consciousness'. Mind contains irrational "principles, ideas, and categories" that have their source in the economic means of production, and it is largely a reflection of material economic interests, nothing more, nothing less. The binding glue of Marx's core doctrine of historical materialism, then, is essentially a repeated atheistic denial of free human thought, except his own, of course. On this point Marx's kinship to Darwin even at the level of the nature of human thinking is pronounced and unmistakable.

Trapped in Contradictory Logic

Like Darwin posited a sort of mindless instinctual human struggle for survival of the fittest in true Spencerian style, a struggle in which human thought was simply an automatic robotic function at the service of biological survival, so, too, did Marx make human thought an instinctual reflection of economic interests. Clearly, the theoretical edifice of both Darwin and Marx unequivocally rejects the whole notion of free will or free human thought.

In forging such a denial, whether implicitly or overtly, Darwin and Marx inadvertently condemn and invalidate their own thought systems as robotically reflexive and illogical. If human thought only rationalizes biological instincts for survival, then that dictum also applies to Darwin; and if human thinking is only an instinctual reflection of economic interests, then

obviously that decree also applies to Marx himself. in both cases, free and independent human logic and reason are verily placed well beyond the capacity of all human beings including Darwin and Marx themselves.

To state or imply that human logic and reason are simply the function of biological instincts or class interests is truly antithetical, that is, it is contradictory logic or logic that flouts all systems of formal rules or norms of appropriate reasoning. It is a type of paradoxical thinking that not only nullifies itself but, as well, contrasts markedly with perceived realities within the human world. Although at times ideas may or may not be employed to support class interests or biological survival, at many other times the ideas contained within human thought seem wholly independent of them.

The Ordinary Independent Status of Ideas

Many examples immediately come to mind. The idea of storing electrical charges or electricity preceded the invention of the battery, as Alessandro Volta (1745-1827) illustrated. The idea of designing and producing a more consistent, longer-lasting, higher quality, and safer light than that produced by oil or gas lamps preceded the invention of the lightbulb. The idea of producing a car cheaply and efficiently that was actually attainable by the multitude of people preceded the invention of the assembly line by Henry Ford, itself an idea that was stimulated by Ford's visit to the meat-packing houses of Chicago where he had seen a grain mill conveyor belt operating.

The idea of cracking the complex code found in the Nazi Enigma system preceded the design and invention of the first computer. The idea of transmitting the human voice electronically over huge distances preceded the invention of Alexander Graham Bell's (1847-1922) first telephone, itself inspired by his father's occupation in teaching the deaf to speak and his mother's loss of hearing. At the very least, what these few examples illustrate is that human thought conceived as 'ideas' are not always, if

ever, a reflex of biological instincts or class interests.

Difference Within and Between Social Classes

Another obvious reality about the human world that deterministic thinking flouts are the remarkable differences in the way that individuals think and behave even within the same social group which itself suggests the presence of tremendous levels of freedom in human thought. Not all individuals will act upon their instincts for survival in the same way as Darwin suggests. A survival of the fittest way of behaving towards others may be attractive to some individuals while it may repulse many others.

Some individuals will choose more aggressive methods of competing for survival, while others will choose more passive or cooperative ways. Even under wartime conditions, the supposed instinctive impulse to survive may lead some individuals to engage in horrid unnecessary acts of inhumanity, while other individuals will keep such extreme behavior well under control. The point is that even under the most trying of material conditions and circumstances, the supposed biological struggle for survival may or may not express itself. And when it does, it will express itself in a great variety of ways among different individuals as well as within and between different social groups. Human thought and human behavior is not simply a mindless robotic reflection of biological instincts to survive.

Ideas Within and Across Historical Periods

The same logic applies even more so to Marx's deterministic thinking about class struggle or class interests. When we look closely at the kinds of ideas which characterized particular historical eras marked by different economic means of subsistence, what we first notice is the great variety of different idea systems in existence. We also notice that many ideas are shared by different individuals situated within different means

of subsistence. For example, a great many of the early Greek or pre-Socratic philosophers shared many ideas about cosmology, ontology, and mathematics, yet differed from each other in significant ways. But they did not differ from each other in terms of the rejection of mythological interpretations and preference for reasoned discourse.

As early as the 6th century BC, Thales of Miletus was providing a naturalistic explanation of the cosmos, claiming that all things are created from a single material substance, namely water. Anaximenes disagreed that water is the source of all things, but claimed that nature is ruled by laws that should be observed and explained naturalistically, not mythologically or by reference to a divine being. Xenophanes argued that all phenomena had a natural rather than a divine explanation, and that there is only one God to speak of, namely, the world as a whole.

As the first Sophist, Protagoras claimed that despite the veracity of naturalistic explanations of phenomena, human beings cannot use nature as a guide for how to live life. Man is the measure of all things that are and all things that are not, so the world in which people live is their own making. With relatively minor variations, much the same sorts of ideas graced the thinking of Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides of Elea, and many other pre-Socratic thinkers (Burnet, 1920).

We see much the same overlap and variation in the ideas of classical Greek thinkers – Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Socrates was known for recognizing that disavowing knowledge is the first step towards wisdom, usually by constantly proclaiming his ignorance before investigating a topic or subject in typical dialogue method of refutation. Within these dialogues, a wide variety of topics fell under his investigations such as religion and science, human nature, love, sexuality, and the contrasts between perception and reality, body and soul, nature and custom (Ahbel-Rappe, 2011).

The twin pillars of Plato's philosophical edifice are most likely his theory of Forms and the immortality of the soul (Cornford, 1941). Plato says himself that he was decidedly influenced in his thinking by pre-Socratic thinkers such as Pythagoras, Parmenides, and Heraclitus. Plato begins with the notion of denying the reality of the material world by viewing it as only an image or imaginary copy. The apparent reality of the material world is grasped only by the human senses that are in a constant state of flux or change. Underneath the sense perception of material objects is an invisible world of fixed or unchanging Forms or types of things, objects which can only be grasped by reason. Cars and tables refer to objects in the material world while justice and truth refer to objects in another world.

In terms of the soul, Plato followed ancient Greek philosophy by defining it as the entity that gives life. There are several discussions and dialogues in Plato regarding the immortality of the soul, the existence of an afterlife, and even a belief in reincarnation where the spiritual essence of human beings begins a new life in a different physical form after death. In other words, the immortality of an individual's soul continues after death through its transmigration into a newborn or an animal.

Aristotle's thinking spans a great range of topics from the natural sciences, philosophy, linguistics, and economics to politics, psychology, and even the arts. Aristotle also engaged the earliest known formal study of logic as well as mathematics, physics, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, rhetoric, natural philosophy, astronomy, and empirical research. Basically, the central concepts of Aristotelian philosophy used to explain everything are function, classification, and hierarchy. Contrary to the emphasis of laws in contemporary science, Aristotle puts the highest premium upon attaining the accurate definitions of things by reducing them to their essential properties (Wilburn, 2020).

Ancient Grecian Perspectives in Modern Times

This brief journey through the ages of pre-Socratic and classical Greek philosophy illustrates the absurdity of reducing human thought to the biological struggle for survival or to class interests. While many of these Greek thinkers shared the same or similar ideas, they also differed substantially from one another. While the historical period in which they lived may have changed in significant ways, they often shared the same ideas and interests. Still other Greek thinkers changed their ideas without experiencing a change in their social conditions even within the same historical period.

Likewise, Marx's claims about the nature of human thought and ideas evaporates under closer scrutiny. Besides the fact that we can find today amongst us in all walks of life various pure-to-blended versions of Aristotelian, Platonist, Sophist, and Socratic thinkers, to name just a few ancient Grecian perspectives, speaks volumes for the ability of free human thought to be carried through the ages despite changes in means of subsistence from one historical period to another. What's more, even in contemporary times most of us have relations or friendship with individuals who are clearly identifiable members of post-Socratic schools of thought as cynics, skeptics, stoics, or epicureans. Again, ideas and idea systems are rarely if ever just a perfect reflection of economic interests.

Everyday Life and Ideas Within and Between Social Classes

It is largely the same story when we actually care enough to examine how ideas are distributed within and between social classes. If we pay attention, everyday life teaches us that most ideas about most subjects are not under the exclusive causal jurisdiction of an individual's specific relation to the means of production. As we saw earlier, many millionaire industrialists (especially but not only those who actually visited their own factory operations) understood that the living and working

conditions of wage-laborers needed to be drastically improved and wages significantly increased, among many other perceived needed reforms.

Even in contemporary times, it is not uncommon to meet workers who share many of the political and economic views of their bosses. It is often the case that individuals in different social classes share many of the same ideas on a wide variety of issues and topics, not just political or economic, while individuals located within identical social classes differ sharply among one another on a wide spectrum of personal, social, political, economic, and ethical issues, from abortion to collective ownership to government regulatory powers to immigration, taxation, and education.

These differences and similarities in the ideas held by individuals within and between social classes on a wide variety of subjects and issues belies the freedom of human thought and contradicts viewing them as deterministic biological and economic reflexes. When human thought is accorded the level of dignity, respect, and freedom it merits by its own constitution, the astonishing irrationality and callous indifference to common sense of both the Darwinian and Marxian deterministic conceptions is easily recognizable.

Economic Determinism of Human Thought Rejected

This last point is especially crucial for a proper understanding of Marx's system of ideas. What it means is that once the economic determinism of human thought is withdrawn as the core organizing principle binding Marx's conceptual apparatus, the entire socialist edifice begins to crumble into the murky waters of falsehood. Perhaps that explains why Marx and Engels felt so compelled to repeat the dictum of economic determinism so many times across in so many different expressions across so many writings from the beginning to the end of their writings. Once we withdraw economic determinism from the Marxian theoretical picture, it can be seen that social

structures, ideational systems of thought, and spiritual modes of thinking about life do not rise or fall according to changes in the means of production characterizing a particular historical epoch, let alone across eras.

Once economic determinism is rejected, it can easily be seen that rational discussions, debates, negotiation, compromising, mediation, arbitration, government intervention, adjudication, and other kinds of peaceful efforts to resolve disputes actually, and in fact, did address many economic and other types of societal ills without the necessity of bloody body-against-body revolution. The history of capitalist industrialism makes clear, as do many other events in human history, that bloody revolution is not the only way of achieving meaningful social change, ameliorating material deprivation, or addressing social ills.

The Bible and Early Christian Scientists

It almost goes without saying that the Judeo-Christian Bible counsels the use of such peaceful, rational, dignified and cooperative methods for addressing and remedying social injustices that may sometimes occur when human thoughts and actions are occasionally overcome and governed mainly by personal, political, or economic interest, or swayed by the weight of sudden or unforeseen circumstances. Still, many of the Hebrew prophets and early Church Fathers from Origen to Augustine fervently believed that human beings could regulate imperfections in fallen human nature with strict spiritual discipline and obedience to God's Word.

In their personal and professional writings, even the very early Christian scientists proudly based their scientific activities and decision-making upon biblical dictums. The vast majority of the greatest scientists in human history up to date across different means of production were devout Christians: Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) in astronomy and math; Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) in astronomy, physics, and scientific method;

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) in astronomy; Robert Boyle (1627-1691) in chemistry, physics, and experimental science; Isaac Newton (1643-1727) in math, physics, astronomy, mechanics, optics; Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794) in chemistry; Michael Faraday (1791-1867) in electromagnetic induction; Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) in genetics; and Francis S. Collins (1950-) in the link between genes and disease.

This very partial list can be extended by many dozens more well-known scientists whose thinking was not in the slightest motivated by social class membership or economic interests or any kind of material interests whatsoever, much less a pure reflection of biological instincts. In fact, the intimate historical link between Christianity and science is so strong that it is arguably fair to claim science as we know it today would not exist at all in the absence of Christianity.

Historically speaking, Christianity has been and still is a loyal patron of the sciences (Stark, 2003). Between 1901 and 2001, more than 56% of Nobel prize laureates in scientific fields were Christians and 26% of them were Jews. Those statistics alone constitute a whopping indictment against both Darwinian and Marxist views on the nature of human thought reviewed above (Beit-Hallahmi, 2014, pp. 215-220).

Atheism and Marx's Alienation

Once Marx's deterministic conception of human thought is withdrawn, we can also begin to see how atheism impelled him to provide a view of human alienation as a purely natural material process, contrary to a biblical interpretation which views it as a spiritual process. The term alienation itself is based on the Greek term 'apollotrioo', meaning to be estranged or to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy. In spiritual terms, then, it means to be estranged or to be shut out of fellowship and intimacy with God; to be estranged from life in Him.

As Genesis makes clear, humanity was shut out of intimacy and fellowship with God through sinful disobedience, resulting in the Fall of man and the introduction of sin and death into the world. The depraved alienation of humanity from God through its sinful fallen nature means that humanity by itself cannot make itself righteous and erase its inherent hostility to God and God's laws (Eph 2:12; 4:18; Romans 5:12; 8:7-8). Fallen humanity is dead to the things of God, unable by himself to truly see God's will.

The Judeo-Christian Bible posits that the internal sinful nature of humanity cannot be cleaned up and reconciled to God without God's help through Christ. From a biblical perspective, Christ came into the world as a redeemer to seek and save God's lost people, to reverse their sinful alienation from God, and therefore, to reconcile His people to God (2 Cor 5:18-19; Cor 1:20-21). All human beings are effectively alienated from God the Creator due to their sinful fallen nature, both Jews and non-Jews, the latter of which were also alienated from God's chosen people, the Jews. Christ entered the world to destroy all hostility to God and all alienation and barriers between God and humanity, and by doing so convert hostility to peace and alienation to reconciliation.

Materialist Conception of Alienation

By contrast, Marx's conception of alienation means people are separated or estranged or alienated from various aspects of their own human nature; alienation does not constitute separation from God in a sinful fallen human nature a la Genesis because the whole idea of 'God' (and religion as a whole) is a myth exploited by the ruling class as an instrument of domination over society. The capitalist-industrial division of labor produces a society stratified by social classes in which workers are alienated from their work, from the products they produce, and from their own selves as a consequence of being

a mere mechanistic part of a production process and social class membership.

Marx's underlying claim regarding alienation is that under capitalist industrialism all workers lose the ability to govern their own lives and destiny because they are prevented from being the owner and director of their own actions. They can't determine the character of their own productive activities and exert their own power to define the nature of their relationships with others. They cannot own and choose to do with as they please the goods and services that are produced through their own labor. As members of a social class and participant in the capitalist industrial production process, all of their work activities are directed to goals and activities dictated by capitalists (Marx, 1964).

Marx's Debt to Feuerbach

Marx's assertion that workers as a collective are alienated from various aspects of their own human nature is largely derived from Feuerbach's critique of Christianity (2008). Here Feuerbach argues that Christianity inappropriately alienates or separates individuals from their own basic human nature. It does so by compelling them to hold false beliefs about God as an objective entity somewhere out there in eternity. The heart of alienation is represented by the Christian dictum to sacrifice, deny, or repress the core features of human nature itself. After humanity denies essential aspects of its own nature, these denied features are then projected into eternity as characteristics of an objective 'God' (Leopold, 2007, pp. 206-208).

Problems with Marx's Theory of Alienation

Suffice it to say at this point that Marx's theory of alienation is problematic in several key respects, although for our purposes it is not necessary to engage in a full critical evaluation and assessment here. Due in large part to uncritical adoption of

Feuerbach's anthropological atheism, Marx ended up constructing a theory of alienation based upon erroneous definitions of humanity and human consciousness. Defining human beings solely in their industrial-productive roles in England at that time failed to take into consideration other survival options open to people there and elsewhere before, during, and even after the English industrial revolution.

Prior to industry, people's central occupation was agricultural labor, not productive labor, presumably characterized by the same features of human nature. Defining the nature of human beings inaccurately in this way, that is, assuming human nature in productive labor was human nature pure and simple, by logical necessity led to an equally erroneous description of how human consciousness develops. The value of dependent productive labor was prioritized above the value of independent human reason and consciousness which he flatly rejected. Inaccurate definitions of human nature and consciousness allowed him to create false distinctions between humanity and human labor.

Assuming that alienation was solely an inherent characteristic of the industrial-capitalist process, Marx failed to look at or consider other possible sources such as human existence itself, other features of human labor, or other means of human livelihood including agricultural labor. There were a great variety of survival options open to people during the heyday of industrial capitalism even in the England of Marx's time although many of those options were progressively closed off in England whereas in other places they were not.

Where land and opportunity were available, many workers individually and collectively sought ways to ameliorate their deprived material conditions during the Industrial Revolution. For example, wage labor was not the only survival option available to human beings in France at the time, so the material condition of peasants and workers were very different than they were in England even during Marx's time. Therefore, the central

features of alienation in France were not identical than those in England (Dunham, 1955).

We can see here that Marx's theory of alienation is not sufficient to explain the conditions of wage-labor in England, and certainly not applicable as a general law, because making a variety of survival options open to people and protecting those options is not a strict function of economic processes but, rather, a political decision. Many moved out of wage-labor and bought and lived on land, as examples in France and elsewhere even up to modern times has shown. England obliterated the option of agricultural existence for the worker, but France did not, with the consequence that alienation was far different. Where more than one survival option is made available to wage workers and enjoys political support and protection, the character of work changes. Moreover, if we entertain the possibility that alienation is a function of any type of human labor or perhaps even a function of human existence itself, even more questions abound regarding Marx's reductionist view.

Concluding Reflections

On the basis of intellectual honesty alone, the strong reductionist and deterministic elements of Marx's socialist theory must surely be admitted and forsworn. But if the economic reductionism is disavowed, then Marx's theoretical edifice trembles and collapses upon itself despite its mixed penetrating insights and profound exclamations. In truth, it must be recognized and accepted that human minds and economic forces are always in continuous interchange. But that interactivity is not in all cases a determined outcome by any stretch of the imagination.

Indeed, human minds are always unceasingly interacting with all manner of external material conditions and circumstances characterizing their environment, not only economic forces – social, political, and so forth. Human minds act upon and are impacted by a veritable host of social forces whose outcomes

are rarely if ever inevitable and predetermined outside of human choice. The key question is whether human minds are interacting with external material forces in at least partially independent and reflexive ways, or are they interacting in mechanical programmatic fashion incapable of independently reflecting or influencing them.

For his part, Marx evidently chose to answer that question with the iron hammer of Feuerbach's anthropological atheism. This atheism compelled him to remove all dignity and independence from the human mind, derogating and reducing reflexive human thought to a purely robotic natural process totally accounted for by material economic circumstances and forces. The rank derogation of all human thought to such a natural process engenders the ludicrous notion that economic circumstances or some ensemble of material conditions in external environments somehow transmit various creations to their human carriers.

This argument is tantamount to claiming that economic circumstances or material conditions somehow transmitted the 5th Symphony to Beethoven or The Mona Lisa to da Vinci or the idea of the piano to Cristofori or the notion of moving pictures to the Lumiere brothers. It is patently absurd to think that creations of the human mind are always fully contained within a set of specific external material conditions and simply transferred from there as a whole in random fashion to available human carriers. However unpalatable it may be for some proponents of economic determinism, the only way to circumvent this absurdity is to admit that some significant measure of independent freedom and creativity operates in human thought.

As well, although Marx perhaps correctly perceived the dreary inhumanity and deprived material conditions of workers that no doubt characterized very early industrial capitalism in England during his time, he was by no means distinctive as a thinker in this regard and surely underestimated the capability

caring individuals to bring about needed reforms and ameliorations including industrialists themselves. He was unable to conceive of any potential benevolent corrections to such inhumane material conditions precisely because he reduced all of human nature to material economic needs and interests. Had he accorded full dignity and freedom to human thought, he would have noticed that human beings are more than simple economic automatons.

Instead, in true Prometheus Bound fashion and fully in line with the violence of his sword-dueling student days, he chose to solve problems through glorifying revolutionary violence. Workers were incited and call to arms to achieve a bloody dictatorship, at the end of which time he surmised a new moral species of human beings would emerge to achieve the highest levels of freedom and equality for all.

As we learned above, however, what actually occurred was another story altogether. For those who followed Marx's revolutionary guidance, only the small cadre of revolutionaries themselves became dictators, not the workers, even during Marx's time. In other words, the grand dictatorship dream proved to be for revolutionaries only, and once they were in political power, revolutionary dictatorships proved to be more than quite capable of renewing themselves indefinitely everywhere around the world in most cases and for a generation or more in other cases: North Korea (1949+); Vietnam (1954+); Laos (1953+); Russia (1917+); Chile (1932+); China (1949+); and Cuba (1959+) – to name but a few revolutionary political regimes that remained in power long after their revolutionary mandate was over. From the time they established themselves up to date across a wide spectrum of different regions, continents, cultures, and societies around the world, socialist-communist revolutions have tended to result in either one-party or one-man dictatorships or both.

Again, what is at fault in the revolutionary call to arms are basic irremediable flaws contained in the Marxist doctrine itself,

as pointed out above. The denigration of human thought, the deterministic-reductionist theoretical orientation, the denial of human freedom, the anti-humanist prescriptions for social ills, the contradictions of historical materialism, the unbounded surrealism, the extremist reactionary thinking, the zealotry and fanaticism, the literary chauvinism of adopting a Prometheus Bound view of social life, the lack of everyday common sense, the severe lack of critical reflexivity, and the unsound rationalism, are just a few of the logical defects plaguing this doctrine.

However, in terms of the present study, the persistent and peculiar role of rabid and rampant anthropological atheism permeating all aspects of Marx's theoretical artifice must be underscored for special attention. It is this atheism that led Marx to reject the Creator God of his birthhood and to feed a growing hatred of all religion as an opium of the people and an escape from the real world. Upon even momentary reflection, it can be recognized that religion performs many functions at all levels of human existence – individual, collective, organizational, institutional, cultural, and so forth.

Had Marx even cared to sit down to talk for a while openly and honestly with people of faith and inquire about why they hold the beliefs they do, he may have discovered that religion was nowhere near being the blindly addictive drug he purported it to be. Among other things, he may have discovered that religion provides people with hope and allows them to think for themselves, something socialists like Marx were not very good at accepting. He may have ascertained that religion offers people meaning in life outside of the hardships and trials they may face, outside of political control, and outside of societal control, something that socialists like Marx could not accept. He may have also realized that religion helps people to believe that the faith they hold has the power to influence peoples' behaviors in positive ways that address the injustices and social ills in the world, again something socialists like Marx could not accept. Instead, Marx chose to reject God and hate religion.

That's why the rejection of the biblical God and the hatred of religion are the central ingredients of Marx's socialist-communist doctrine that lie at the heart of all its logical defects. Solzhenitsyn said it well long ago:

“Within the philosophical system of Marx and Lenin, and at the heart of their psychology, hatred of God is the principal driving force, more fundamental than all their political and economic pretensions. Militant atheism is not merely incidental or marginal to Communist policy; it is not a side effect, but the central pivot. To achieve its diabolical ends, Communism needs to control a population devoid of religious and national feeling, and this entails the destruction of faith and nationhood. Communists proclaim both of these objectives openly, and just as openly go about carrying them out.” (Solzhenitsyn, 1983)

This fervent atheism led Marx to construct a theoretical edifice based on hatred of the world as is and centrally organized around a principle of violent social change at all costs, a world in which all notions of an almighty Creator God have been extracted and humanity is left alone self-created. When viewed from an atheistic position, that poem quoted earlier from Marx's early student years in Berlin becomes an ominous foreboding: “With disdain I throw my gauntlet...I will feel equal to the Creator.” Marx's doctrine surely lived up to this notoriety.

Marx's Promethean atheism misleads many people, scholars and novices alike, to believe that Marx ascribed to humanist philosophical principles when, in fact, the imperfections of Marx's humanism are pronounced and profound, as argued above. Marx will only appear to be a humanist to others who share the same doctrine. To those who don't share the Marxist atheistic doctrine, the humanism is a monstrous justification for the most horrid human atrocities imaginable. In fact, most conventional Hebrews and Christians are likely to view the

Marxist atheistic doctrine as downright diabolical and devilish, a camouflage portending the worst tyranny and despair. Perhaps that is why even the Greeks viewed Aeschylus's Promethean humanism as sheer lunacy.

In the end, Marx's atheism totally destroyed the life and promise of a highly learned man as well as his own family. The point about family ruination should be taken very seriously as a matter of historical fact, not fiction. Four of Marx's seven children died in childhood while three lived to adulthood as socialist activists. One daughter died of bladder cancer at 38 years old. Another daughter committed suicide shortly after learning from Engels' deathbed admission that Marx fathered a child with the longtime maid, as did the other surviving daughter a short time afterwards. Arguably worst of all, Marx's doctrine gave birth to tyrannical political regimes whose callous disregard for the sanctity and dignity of human life continues to escalate the toll of human suffering and death around the world.

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