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The Influence of
Ludwig Feuerbach and Max Stirner
on the Philosophical Writings of Karl Marx

by

L. Markus Wiltshire

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

Doctor of Philosophy

THESIS DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE:

HOUSTON, TEXAS

April, 1977
NOTATION

All numbers which refer to notes containing anything more than a bare reference to the work cited have been underlined. Those notes in particular should be followed in any careful reading of the text.

Those works from which extensive citations have been made are listed and coded below. Thus, in the following manner, the citations from these works have been incorporated into the text itself. "(GI 127)" for instance refers to page 127 in the edition of The German Ideology listed below.

All English translations from works either below or in the notes whose titles are listed in the German are my own.


Ego  Max Stirner, The Ego and His Own (New York: Benj. R. Tucker, Publisher, 1907).


VT  Ludwig Feuerbach, "Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie," in Ludwig Feuerbach's Sammtliche Werke (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1903).

All further references to the Marx-Engels Collected Works will be abbreviated as MECW.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to clarify the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach and Max Stirner on the development of Marx's philosophical writings. Such an inquiry should be of interest both in itself, insofar as we have an interest in simply understanding these early influences on Marx, and as a source of possible illumination for understanding other related aspects of Marx's thought.

The bare fact of this influence has been noted often enough; but its actual character has been left largely obscure. Past treatments of the subject have generally fallen into two mistakes. The first is the breaking up, or at least neglect, of the important continuum, or single thread of development which runs from Feuerbach through Stirner and then to Marx. So little has this influence been understood that even the historical ordering of their treatment has often, in otherwise excellent expositions of the period, been reversed. Stirner has been treated prior to Feuerbach. The reason for this, I think, is that Stirner was, when considered only from the perspective of the inherent importance of his works, the relatively more minor figure. Thus, he has been treated with other such lesser figures of the "Left Hegelians" as Arnold Rouge, Edgar Bauer, Bruno Bauer, and Moses Hess--treated as a mere
backdrop for the dominant figure of Feuerbach.

This willingness to sacrifice historical accuracy has, as I have suggested, been rooted in a second and related mistake. This is the belief that what was most important in the influence was a series of more or less autonomous, substantive (empirical, or normative) doctrines—for instance, Feuerbach's secular humanism, his unhappiness with theology, his use of the categories "alienation" and "species-being"; or Stirner's treatment of alienation and exploitation. This mistake is most fatal in the case of Stirner; for, as we will demonstrate, Marx regarded his substantive theses as just so much foolishness.

I will emphasize an important, continuous thread of philosophical concern which runs between these three thinkers. Most briefly, it is this question: "What is it to not think 'abstractly'; or, how is it that one goes without thinking 'concretely' instead?"

When Feuerbach launched his influential critique of Hegel, somewhat indirectly in *The Essence of Christianity*, and then quite explicitly in the "Vorläufige Thesen Zur Reform der Philosophie," his central charge was that Hegel had thought "abstractly." Stirner then set out to devastate Feuerbach in *The Ego and His Own* and he charged that Feuerbach himself, while right about Hegel, had remained stuck fast in his own abstractions. Marx
immediately set out to criticize Stirner. For, although he largely accepted Stirner's evaluation of Feuerbach, he believed that Stirner himself had made far more serious errors in his attempt to grasp the concrete object in thought.

Anyone even moderately familiar with the classical Marxist literature will be aware of the virtual obsession with the necessity of moving from thought which is "idealistic," "mechanical," "metaphysical," "abstract" on the one hand, to thought which is "dialectical," or "concrete" on the other. Feuerbach, who for Engels had dealt the "deathblow" to "Classical [i.e., Kantian to Hegelian] German Philosophy," who was for Marx the methodological "stream of fire" (Feuer-bach) through which all right thinking must pass¹--Feuerbach himself had claimed no more than to have shown the way to concrete things (Marx: "Feuerbach, who shows things as they are..."), for "abstrahiren" cannot get us at the truth about the real, concrete world, "but only to the realization of his [the one who abstracts] own abstractions."² Feuerbach had identified "theological thinking" with "abstract thinking," and thus concluded that much philosophical thought was only theological thinking in disguise. Theological thinking was for him also a belief in "ghosts," which, for now, we carefully place in scare quotes. ("Die Theologie ist Gespensterglaube.") Common,
everyday religion "has...its ghosts in the sensual imagination." It takes human predicates, sets them apart from man in the form of independent, external subjects, and imagines them sensually in anthropological form. Thus, the key to religious thinking was a grammatical mistake. But the subtlety of speculative theology, which included for Feuerbach the entirety of Hegel's philosophy ('The Hegelian philosophy is the last refuge, the last rational support of theology.') consists in the fact that its "ghosts" turn up merely "in nonsensual abstraction."

Marx wrote in the opening lines of his "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction" that "The criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism." Written two years after Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity (Engels: "With the publication of The Essence of Christianity, we were all Feuerbachians.") , one year after his Vorläufige Thesen, in the same year that Marx proclaimed Feuerbach to be the methodological Feuer-bach of all correct thought, this passage can only be read: "The criticism of abstract thought is the premise of all criticism."

It is true that Marx finally abandoned Feuerbach. Just how and why this occurred will be the subject of the first four chapters. We may note here, however, that on the one hand Marx saw Feuerbach as having failed, at a crucial juncture, in getting at the "concrete thing."
Feuerbach's thought, Engels wrote, had come to an untimely end, or rest, in the "cult of the abstract man." Thus it was only necessary, Engels went on, for Marx to inaugurate the further development of Feuerbach's standpoint beyond Feuerbach himself.\textsuperscript{3} The first part of what Engels says is true; the second is not. Marx did come to believe that Feuerbach's thought had dead-ended at abstract "man," at man who did not have "his feet firmly on the solid ground ..., exhaling and inhaling all the forces of nature,"\textsuperscript{4} at man who was really only "an abstract being squatting outside the world."\textsuperscript{5} But Marx did not merely move on with Feuerbach's method; for he believed that the problem lay in the very notions of "abstraction" and "concreteness" which Feuerbach had developed. It is the history of Marx's reflections on what it is to think "concretely," as formulated first under the influence of Feuerbach and as re-evaluated under the influence of Stirner, that will be the subject of Chapters I through IV. In the final two chapters, I argue that certain other issues in Marx's thought can be clarified through an appreciation of the importance which he gave to these reflections concerning what it is not to think "abstractly."

But prior to turning to the main text, it cannot be without point to repeat with some emphasis that we are interested in Marx \textit{qua} philosopher—not with the rightness or wrongness of his substantive economic or social theses.
It is often forgotten that Marx's academic training was in philosophy, with a dissertation written on Democritus and Epicurus. He had assumed, through the encouragement and support of Professor Bruno Bauer, that he would take up an academic career, lecturing on logic. These plans were cut short only when the Prussian authorities issued a decree forbidding Hegelians to lecture on all subjects but aesthetics. From here, Marx turned to editing what turned out to be a series of journals, and had his attention drawn more and more toward a study of the critical economic and political issues of the day. And we are aware of where these interests were finally to lead him.

However, this change in focus was not instantaneously completed, nor was it in fact ever completed. Prior to even beginning the serious plunge into empirical studies, Marx had determined that he would first have to "settle accounts" with German philosophy, that he would lay bare its central errors, and distill its most important truths. Engels grew so impatient with Marx's lingering philosophical concerns that in an 1844 letter (by which time Engels had completed his own sociological study of the English working class) he rather gently suggested that it was time for Marx to leave all of the "theoretical twaddle" behind. But Marx was not ready to abandon the "theoretical twaddle." He was, in fact, preparing to launch an attack on the latest product of the Young Hegelians, Max Stirner's The
Ego and His Own. This attack produced The German Ideology. And in the following year, 1847, Marx published a critique of Proudhon, with a lengthy section on "methodology," echoing many of the philosophical concerns from the Stirner critique.

From this point on, Marx's philosophical excursus become less frequent. However, he was at least convinced that his philosophical interests influenced all else that he was to write. And even into his fifties Marx still had plans to write a systematic exposition of his philosophy.

In 1858, he wrote to Engels:

If there should ever be time for such work again, I should greatly like to make accessible to the ordinary human intelligence, in two or three printer's sheets [32 to 48 pages], what is rational in the method which Hegel discovered but at the same time enveloped in mysticism. 6

Ten years later, at the age of fifty, Marx was still hoping to write this work. From a letter to Dietzgen:

When I have shaken off the burden of my economic labours, I shall write a dialectic. The correct laws of the dialectic are already included in Hegel albeit in mystical form. It is necessary to strip it of this form. 7

Marx's early years, the period of his most explicit philosophical concerns, was an extraordinarily vigorous era in German philosophy. I do not mean by this that it was, from our historical vantage, one of the most philosophically productive periods that we can look back
upon; for it clearly was not. But from the vantage of Marx and his contemporaries, Hegel's recent death (1831) had raised the fundamental question of which of his followers would acquire the recognized rights to his legacy—or of who would destroy it. Enthusiasm was general. Confrontations were being mounted along all fronts: theology, jurisprudence, political theory. The battle was serious, waged in the lecture halls, in books, pamphlets, and journals—and, when necessary, by the police. In attempting to situate Marx philosophically, it will not be without point to briefly recall the lines along which this battle was being fought. Using Hegel as the point of reference, three general trends can be distinguished.

The first of these groups is generally called the "Right Wing Hegelians." They were the defenders of Hegel's substantive conclusions. Insofar as they had anything like a genuine philosophy, they adopted Hegel's thesis that "the real is the rational," neglecting Hegel's crucial distinction between the real and the existent. They were, in short, hack defenders of the Prussian State and of the Junker privilege upon which it was based. They were themselves of such small significance that even their names can only with great difficulty be dredged from histories of the period. Even the Prussian authorities, as we will see, soon found their work useless.
By 1842, "Hegelianism" in Germany clearly meant the "Left-," or "Young Hegelians." For in that year, the Prussian State forbade the teaching of all subjects but aesthetics by Hegelians. Rather than focusing upon Hegel's substantive conclusions, the Young Hegelians attempted to push on for further results from the dialectical method. And in so doing, they invariably achieved results which were "critical," if not radical. Among this group were many of the most prominent intellectuals of their day: David Strauss, Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, Arnold Rouge, Moses Hess, and of course Engels and Marx. We will have more to say about this group. But first let us introduce the third group mentioned, those who were neither of the Hegelian Left or Right, but the anti-Hegelians.

In 1841, the Prussian authorities had sought to mute the increasingly troublesome Hegelians by importing into the university at Berlin the would-be Hegel-slayer Friedrich Schelling. The old Schelling promised that he was now ready to reveal to the world "his system." And the world gathered to hear it. The opponents of Hegelianism gathered to see the monster laid low. In an article, Engels describes the mood of the anti-Hegelians in the days of Schelling's opening sallies:

At the moment all the separate oppositions which contend with Hegel's philosophy for this dominion are obscured, blurred and
pushed into the background by the one
opposition of Schelling; all the attackers
who stand outside philosophy, Stahl,
Hengstenberg, Neander, are making way for
a fighter who is expected to give battle
to the unconquered on his own ground. 8

And there was excitement even among the Hegelians them-
selves:

Hegel's disciples. . ..welcomed Schelling's
arrival in Berlin six months ago and his
promise to submit to the public verdict
his by then completed system. . .. The
Hegelian school could only welcome the
opportunity to try its strength with a
famous opponent.

I cite one further, rather lengthy, passage, for it con-
veys the extraordinary excitement of the moment:

An imposing, colourful audience has
assembled to witness the battle. At the
front the notables of the University, the
leading lights of science, men everyone
of whom has created a trend of his own;
for them the seats nearest to the rostrum
have been reserved, and behind them,
jumbled together as chance brought them to
the hall, representatives of all walks of
life, nations, and religious beliefs. In
the midst of high-spirited youths there
sits here and there a grey-bearded staff
officer and next to him perhaps, quite un-
embarrassed, a volunteer who in any other
society would not know what to do for
reverence towards such a high-ranking
superior. Old doctors and ecclesiastics
the jubilee of whose matriculation can
soon be celebrated feel the long-forgotten
student haunting their minds again and
are back in college. Judaism and Islam
want to see what Christian revelation is
all about; German, French, English,
Hungarian, Polish, Russian, modern Greek
and Turkish, one can hear all sounds and
Schelling mounts the rostrum. 10
And if philosophy was in the air, and excitement general, philosophy was also taken with brutal seriousness. In a letter to Feuerbach, Marx wrote that

The entire German police is at [Schelling's] disposal as I myself once experienced when I was editor of the Rheinische Zeitung. That is, a censorship order can prevent anything against the holy Schelling from getting through.11

The occasion for this letter, dated 1843, was an invitation for Feuerbach to contribute a criticism of Schelling to a new journal which Marx and Rouge were organizing—in Paris, with the purpose of being beyond the reach of Schelling's philosophical phalanx.

Such, in schematic form, was the philosophical milieu against which Marx's intellectual life matured. The central charge of the Young Hegelians, against Hegel, against the Hegelian Right Wing, against the contending anti-Hegelians, was that they had misunderstood the relationship between thought and the real world. "The great question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy," wrote the old Engels in reflecting back upon German philosophy of the 1840's, "is that concerning the relation between thinking and being."12 It was clear to them that thought easily loses itself in abstractions. What was not so clear, what was the subject of much debate, was how thought could escape abstractions, how a genuine relation could be forged between "thinking and being," how
one could think "concretely." And it was to this debate that Marx devoted many hundreds of pages of his writings between 1842 and about 1848.

Why is it, then, that Marx has received so little attention from academic philosophers? Karl Popper, one of Marx's most severe critics, attributes the fact that "the history of philosophy takes so little notice of him" to "the accident that he was not a reactionary."¹³ Similarly, Sidney Hook called attention to the suspiciously high correlation between those who "acrimoniously reject" Marx's more strictly philosophical theses and those who disagree with his substantive social theories.¹⁴ It would, indeed, require some degree of naiveté to discount all such extra-philosophical influences on the development of philosophical thought, to pretend, as did a group of Marx's contemporary critics, that philosophy moves only through the "tranquility of thought," unmoved by the historical forces which touch more ordinary thinkers.

And yet there are surely other reasons why Marx's philosophical writings have received so little attention. It is simply true that, however much his earlier contact with philosophy may have influenced his later works, these works turned progressively away from explicitly philosophical themes. It is true that even the earlier works are often couched in polemics which, in the least, discourage the reader unwilling to spend no small amount
of time familiarizing himself with now obscure thinkers and their works. And many of Marx's philosophical remarks are wedged between long passages and chapters which have little direct interest for the philosopher. The situation is not helped by the fact that much of the most extensive treatment of philosophical themes in his writings has only recently been made public; and this situation is far worse still for the English reader. His *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* were unpublish ed for almost one hundred years, until 1932, with the first English edition appearing in 1959—a work thus newer to the English speaking world than Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. His initial break with and criticism of the Young Hegelian movement, published in 1845 (in the German) as *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism, Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*, was unavailable for many years, and made its first appearance in English only in 1956. His detailed critique of Hegel's political philosophy, *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, required 85 years to find its way into print, and appeared in English less than a decade ago. And what is by far the most important of these works (and the least read), *The German Ideology*, having been in Marx's words "abandoned to the gnawing criticism of the mice" in 1846 since he and Engels had "achieved their main purpose—self-clarification," was retrieved for human criticism not
until the German edition of 1932, and published in English only in 1964. Thus much of the relevant material here is yet relatively "new."

And if some of this material is relatively new in the sense indicated above, it is also quite contemporary in regard to its philosophical concerns. A number of years ago, Sidney Hook called attention to the important parallels between Marx's and John Dewey's philosophical theories. Anthony Manser has recently suggested that important common interests and theories between Marx and Wittgenstein are there for exploration. The philosophical relation between Sartre's works and those of Marx has, of course, been emphasized by Sartre himself. I would be pleased if a by-product of the present work would be a greater appreciation for the very modern sorts of concerns which often occupied Marx; and I have, in part pursuant to this end, occasionally drawn upon a relevant passage from Dewey, or Sartre, or some other modern philosopher as evidence of such basic common concerns. What seems most modern in Marx is his concern with language, and with how language may be a continual source of philosophical puzzlement and error. His caution that "Language becomes a phrase as soon as it is given an independent existence," could have been written "Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday." I do not wish to suggest that Marx's interests
and answers were the same as Wittgenstein's; I do wish to suggest that they were interestingly more similar to his concerns, and to the concerns of contemporary philosophy in general, than has usually been understood.

But we turn now to that which is not to be merely suggested, but rather demonstrated in some detail: the Feuerbachian-Stirnerian-Marxian connection and its broader implications for an understanding of Marx's thought, and the argument's opening sally which was Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*. 
NOTES
TO THE INTRODUCTION

1This metaphor, from an 1843 article which Marx wrote for "Anekdoa," "Luthur als Schriedsrichter zwischen Strauss und Feuerbach," is representative of numerous remarks which Marx made concerning Feuerbach during this period.

The passage reads:

And there is no other way for you to truth and freedom, than through the Feuer-bach. Der Feuerbach is the purga-
tory of the present age.

What is significant about Feuerbach, Marx writes in this article, is that he carries us "to the things."

2From an 1842 article in "Anekdoa," "Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie," which summarized and made explicit the methodology which he had used in The Essence of Christianity (1841), a work which had already attracted Marx's strong interest.

3Frederick Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the Out-

come of Classical German Philosophy (New York: Inter-


7Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 547.


Popper's two volume study of the enemies of the open society, the "historicists," identifies Marx as the one who developed the error in "the purest, the most developed and the most dangerous form." It can hardly be argued that his remark concerning Marx, re the history of philosophy, is a mere excess of devotion.


These remarks were made in the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* (1859).

The full extant text of *The German Ideology* is a large work of about 650 pages. Numerous editions have appeared under this title which are really little more than first relics of what once was a full body. In particular, the abridged editions do not reproduce the lengthy middle section, against Stirner, which was the occasion for the work. The dates given on page 2 refer to the publication of complete editions.


A. R. Manser, *The End of Philosophy: Marx and Wittgenstein* (An inaugural lecture, published by the University of Southampton.)
CHAPTER I

FEUERBACH'S TRANSFORMATIONAL CRITICISM

Surely there is something interesting in the fact that the most important contemporary influence on Marx came from the philosophy of religion, that the essence of Marx between 1842 and 1845 was The Essence of Christianity. The author of that work, Ludwig Feuerbach, had begun his university studies in theology, at Heidelberg, then changed to Berlin where, enthusiastically taken up with Hegel's lectures, he resolved to complete his academic training in philosophy. Having done this, he entered upon a brief academic career (1829-32) at Erlangen, lecturing on Descartes, Spinoza, logic, and metaphysics. In 1832, government authorities granted Feuerbach an early retirement (dismissal) for the publication of his Thoughts on Death and Immortality, in which he had argued that "theology could free itself from an unbearable dualism by negating itself forthwith."¹ Thus at the age of 28, Feuerbach withdrew into the seclusion of country life where he remained, with but one brief exception, until his death in 1872.²

Yet, despite his offense against the state's religious sensibilities, and despite even the charitable suggestion of one fellow Christian that his work merited
for him personal "annihilation," Feuerbach always conceived of himself as a deeply religious man. Only the inherent importance of religion itself gave importance to the fact that theology had distorted religion's true essence:

I by no means say (that were an easy task!): God is nothing, the Trinity is nothing, the Word of God is nothing, etc. I only show that they are not that which the illusions of theology make them... (EC xxxviii)

The idea of religion consumed Feuerbach's entire life. Toward the end of his productive career, he wrote that although his works could "be divided into two groups, those dealing with philosophy as such, and those concerned more specifically with religion or the philosophy of religion," a closer view would show that all of his writings had "strictly speaking only one purpose, one intention and idea, one theme. This theme, of course, is religion or theology and everything connected with it."4

Our interest in Feuerbach's philosophy of religion is limited to an understanding of the nature of its impact upon Marx. We wish to understand what it was in Feuerbach which caused Marx to refer to him as a methodological "stream of fire," as the "purgatory of the present age." In doing this, we will first set out a general overview of Feuerbach's religious theory, and then focus upon the philosophical concerns with the abstract/concrete
distinction which underlay these more substantive claims, and which were the focus of Marx's own interests.

Feuerbach's general thesis is rather easily summarized. Among the many places where he himself did so:

Religion is the relation of man to his own nature,—therein lies its truth and its power of moral amelioration;—but to his nature not recognised as his own, but regarded as another nature, separate, nay, contradistinguished from his own: herein lies its untruth, its limitation, its contradiction to reason and morality; herein lies the noxious source of religious fanaticism, the chief metaphysical principle of human sacrifices, in a word, the prima materia of all the atrocities, all the horrible scenes, in the tragedy of religious history. (EC, 197)

Again:

The essence of religion, its latent nature, is the identity of the divine being with the human; but the form of religion, or its apparent, conscious nature, is the distinction between them... (EC, 247)

And finally, in Feuerbach's most succinct and thus most quoted summary: "The secret of theology is anthropology." (EC, 27) Religion is a human product; and its material is man himself. Man's conception of God is his conception of his own "essence," objectified, and substantiated as a being outside of himself. This "essence" is more than a mere positive description, a factual rendition of his present self. It is the node at which the empirical existence of man, his pride in the present, and his longing
for the future are joined. The essence of man, insofar as it goes beyond that which I find now present and important in man, is "to me only faith in the historical future, in the triumph of truth and virtue; it has for me only a political and moral significance." (EC, xxiv)

If man's God is a universal God, a God of all men, this is only man's religious consciousness of the common nature which he shares with all men—-it is man's consciousness of himself, in Feuerbach's language, as a "species-being." If man's God is a triune God, this is man's religious consciousness of his own trifurcate nature. The "nature of man," for Feuerbach, is "Reason, Will, Affection." (EC, 3) Thus, the Trinity is "Man's consciousness of himself in his totality." (EC, 65) For the God of the Trinity is one of "intelligence...will...suffering." (EC, 65) If man builds places of worship, and calls these structures holy, this is only man's religious consciousness of the aesthetic reaches of his own nature: "Temples in honour of religion are in truth temples in honour of architecture." (EC, 20) And Feuerbach concludes the work returning to his discussion of the sacraments:

Eating and drinking is the mystery of the Lord's Supper;—eating and drinking is, in fact, in itself a religious act; at least, ought to be so. Think, therefore, with every morsel of bread which relieves thee from the pain of hunger, with every draught of wine which cheers thy heart, of the God who confers these beneficent gifts upon thee,—think of man! But in
thy gratitude towards man forget not
gratitude towards holy Nature! ...
Hunger and thirst destroy not only the
physical but also the mental and moral
powers of man; they rob him of his
humanity––of understanding, of conscious
ness. Oh! if thou shouldst ever ex
perience such want, how wouldst thou
bless and praise the natural qualities
of bread and wine, which restore to thee
thy humanity, thy intellect! It needs
only that the ordinary course of things
be interrupted in order to vindicate to
common things an uncommon significance,
to life, as such, a religious import.
Therefore let bread be sacred for us,
let wine be sacred, and also let water
be sacred! Amen.

(EC, 277-278)

The central feature of the Christian God was for
Feuerbach His association, in the religious mind, with
love. And, as we have seen through several examples,
the religious person will have a loving God insofar as
love itself is sacred to him. Surely love was sacred to
Feuerbach. I am aware of only one passage in the writings
of either Marx or Engels where Feuerbach is treated to
even a touch of the sarcasm and general raillery which
they turned upon most men with whom they came to disagree.
Engels, in the 1880's, wrote that Feuerbach's writings had
resolved themselves into "an invitation to join into an
orgy of universal love and reconciliation." From one of
these homilies:

And what wonders does not love work in
our social life! What faith, creed,
opinion separates, love unites. Love
even, humorously enough, identifies the
high noblesse with the people. What the
old mystics said of God, that he is the highest and yet the commonest being, applies in truth to love, and that not a visionary, imaginary love--no! a real love, a love which has flesh and blood, which vibrates as an almighty force through all living.

(EC, 48)

Thus, we have glimpsed what was for Feuerbach the "truth and power" of religion, the way in which religion "is the relation of man to his own nature." We have yet to show religion's dark side, its "limitation, its contradiction to reason and morality."

Feuerbach's charges against this dark side of religion can be reduced to three general categories. All of these derive from the single error of positing man's essence outside of himself, as an objectified, self-standing subject. And the first two are really the obverse and converse of a single difficulty. For simplicity, through most of the discussion below, we will treat the notion "God" as though "love" were the only predicate attached to God.

In the clearest form of the statement which expresses the objectified nature of God, "God is a loving God," a subject is posited which is a self-standing ground for the predicate "love." Whatever more this subject may be can be left unsaid, or unknown. But its presence lurks always, as does any subject, as an invitation to discover new predicates and to alter our opinion
of its old ones. What was intended as the subject of man's deepest regard is transformed into a merely contingent predicate.

Dogma presents to us two things—God and love... Thus love is made something apart... So long as love is not exalted into a substance, into an essence, so long there lurks in the background of love a subject who even without love is something by himself, an unloving monster, a diabolical being, whose personality, separable and actually separated from love, delights in the blood of heretics and unbelievers,—the phantom of religious fanaticism.

(EC, 52)

Feuerbach's argument is this simple: If love is God, if God can be, can mean nothing other for us than love (and justice, and the other predicates), if God is exhausted by these predicates, then the religious man's worship is complete when he has worshipped these predicates—there is no residue for worship in the dark substance known only "through faith." On the other hand, if the chief object of religious life is the veneration of the inscrutable substance "God," then our understanding of his predicates can never have more than a secondary, and contingent value.

In Christianity love is tainted by faith... Hence, in this contradiction with itself [i.e., in the worship of love, but at the same time the worship of something other than love], in order to retain the semblance of love, it falls into the most diabolical sophisms, as we see in Augustine's apology for the persecution of heretics...5

(EC, 264-265)
The love of God is either the same as the love of love (in which case we can, from a logical point of view, do away with the subject "God"), or it is at best a pretense of the love of love:

The love that has created the hereafter, that comforts the suffering with the thought of the hereafter, is the love that heals the sick after they are dead, that slakes the thirsty and feeds the hungry after they have died of hunger and thirst.

In short, it is no love at all; it is a theoretical picture of love.

The obverse: The worship of God as a subject is the worship of something other than the divine predicates. The reverse: The worship of God as a subject means that the predicates are not of themselves taken as wholly valuable, as "divine":

Atheism was supposed, and is even now supposed, to be the negation of all moral principle, of all moral foundations and bonds: if God is not, all distinction between good and bad, virtue and vice, is abolished. Thus the distinction lies only in the existence of God; the reality of virtue lies not in itself, but out of it.

The belief that God is the necessary condition of virtue is the belief in the nothingness of virtue in itself. (EC, 202)

Here, for Feuerbach, is the key to what he had called religion's "contradiction to morality."

The third class of charges against such religion was that it alienates man from his own essence—which
religion has set off in the form of a being which is not man, not of this life. The statement "Power is a divine attribute" clearly bears two very different readings:

(1) Power, the ability to control destiny, is a positive value for man. Thus, the worship of power is at the same time the demand that man become powerful. Or: (2) Power is an attribute of something other than man, which we call "the divine." It is this latter reading of the statement, run through with suitable variations for the many predicates of God, that Feuerbach identifies with religious alienation:

The negation of the next world has as its consequence the affirmation of this world; the denial of a better life in heaven implies the demand for a better life on earth; it transforms the hope of a better future from a concern of idle, inactive faith into a duty, a matter of independent human activity.8

But what was the point of attraction in Feuerbach's theory for Marx? Surely it was not merely Feuerbach's humanism, his demand that this life be improved for man. Although I suspect that Marx perceived in Feuerbach a level of sincerity in these matters which set him apart from many of the other "liberals" of his day--and thus saved him, as noted before, from the brutal, contemptuous humor with which Marx came to characterize most of his early associates--Feuerbach could hardly have been alone in these demands. Feuerbach's "vague sentimental
humanitarianism whose political expression was strong in eloquence but feeble in detailed analysis," as Hook succinctly describes it,⁹ could hardly of itself explain Marx's general enthusiasm for his work.

Feuerbach believed that he had discovered not merely a series of loosely related mistakes in the theological conception of religion, but rather that he had identified a single philosophical (at once grammatical and metaphysical) error which explained the theologians' mistakes, and which, when properly appreciated, provided "the key to the cipher" for a "correct and faithful translation" of religion's dark truths into the clear light of conscious understanding. (EC, xxxvi & xxxiii) Moreover, Feuerbach believed that he had shown that religion per se was a mere species of theological thought. Theological thought included, for him, in addition to common theology, the entire corpus of Hegel's writings in particular, and all of "speculative philosophy" in general. The essence of theological thought was found to be abstract thought. And insofar as Feuerbach had, in the course of his religious studies, honed down the necessary philosophical tools for cutting through these abstractions and getting at the real, concrete things which they darkly veiled, then he had also provided the "cipher" to all theological, abstract thought. Feuerbach called this methodology "transformational criticism":¹⁰
We need only to make the predicate into the subject, and, as subject, into the object and principle—thus only to invert speculative philosophy in order to have the undisguised, pure, bare truth. (VT, 223)

Recall Feuerbach’s discussion of "love." The theologian will make statements of the form "God is love." Feuerbach sees in this statement, first of all, a grammatical mistake.

The verb "to be," among its several functions, may be used to indicate a contingent relationship between a subject and a quality predicated of that subject. It is thus necessary for grammar to identify and keep clear about the various roles played by the elements in such a proposition. Ordinary language will do this, in the usual case, by first stating the subject, then the verb, and finally the quality predicated. For instance: "My load is heavy." Some propositions, like the one just given, and generally it would seem as a kind of poetic usage, allow themselves to be presented in the inverted order without apparent threat of lost sense or confusion: "Oh! Heavy is my load!" But this inverted order may also invite confusion. A less serious example than Feuerbach’s: "A good basketball player is tall." Inverted: "Tall is a good basketball player." Someone may then ask: "Is Tall also good at baseball?" "How tall is Tall?" In such a fashion, the predicate is taken up in the
imagination, posited as an independent subject which takes
on a life of its own.

Feuerbach explained theological thought in just this way. The ordinary person, finding love to be of extraordinary value in man's life, may express himself by sighing "Love is divine!" But the theological consciousness inverts this natural grammatical structure. "Love is divine" becomes "The Divine is love," or "The Divinity is love," or "God is love," and finally (in the form in which the contingency of the predicate "love" as an attribute of this new subject is given expression), "God is a loving god." Thus, to parody our questions about Tall: "Is God also 'good at' being wrathful?", etc. "How loving is God?" Thus, from the grammatical confusion springs a metaphysical mistake. The world is populated by a whole new realm of beings--"ghosts," or "abstractions," objectified subject-ifications, substantiated predicates.

Thus, Feuerbach treats "The Mystery of the Suffering God," of a God who becomes man in order to die for man as man, in the following manner:

According to the principles which we have already developed, that which in religion is the predicate we must make the subject, and that which in religion is the subject we must make a predicate, thus inverting the oracles of religion; and by this means we arrive at the truth. God suffers--suffering is the predicate--but for men, for others, not for himself. What does that mean in plain speech?
Nothing else than this: to suffer for others is divine; he who suffers for others, who lays down his life for them, acts divinely, is a God to man.

(EC, 60)

Sometimes the distinction obtaining between the subject and predicate, between the concrete thing and the abstraction, is described as that which obtains between genus and species. To predicate a quality of a subject is to ascribe membership of the subject within some generic class. Feuerbach argues that only the individual, not the class, is real. The individual is concrete. The class is an abstraction. As Hook correctly writes, this was a position which Feuerbach "never defended consistently." 11 Yet, in order to understand the developments which followed Feuerbach, it is necessary to get clear about what he did say.

God himself was "only a generic concept":

The difference between God's being and the being of sensuous things is merely the difference between genus and species of individuals. God is not more a particular being than color is a particular color, than man is an individual man... He is only a generic concept. 12

What I have said of human virtues and faculties applies to all universals and class concepts; they do not exist outside of things and beings, they are not distinct from, or independent of, the individuals from which we abstract them. The subject, that is, the existing being, is always the individual, the class is only a predicate or attribute. But it is precisely this predicate, this attribute of the individual, that nonsensuous thinking abstracts from
the individual and makes into an independent object. This abstraction is then held to be the essence of the individuals in question, while the differences between them are disposed of as "merely individual," that is, contingent, secondary, nonessential. Thus thought reduces all individuals to a single individual, or rather concept, and claims all substance for itself, leaving only the empty shell for the sense perception which shows us individuals as individuals in their multiplicity, diversity, individuality, and concrete existence. In other words, thought transforms what is in reality the subject, the essence, into a predicate, an attribute, a mere mode of the class concept, and conversely, turns what is in reality mere attribute or predicate into essence.  

Genus is indeed different from species, for in considering the genus we disregard specific differences. But this does not make the genus a distinct, independent reality, since it is merely the common head under which we subsume the many species. The generic concept stone cannot be said to transcend the mineral realm, though it is equally far removed from the concept of flint, limestone, or fluorite, and indeed designates no particular stone to the exclusion of others. Similarly God...  

I do not here wish to criticize this aspect of Feuerbach's thought; for this will be done in the third and fourth chapters. Let us now only attempt, insofar as this is possible, a positive understanding. Imagine three stones, one flint, one limestone, and one fluorite. Each of these particular, individual rocks is a concrete thing. Each of them is also a species of the genus, of the class "stone." "Stoneness" is thus a predicate of the concrete species; and thus, when taken in itself, is not itself concrete, but rather is an abstraction. Or: Imagine three
actions, one an act of loving, another an act of mercy, and another an act of justice. Each of these individual, particular actions is a concrete thing. Each of them may also be brought under the class, be a species of, "divineness." "Divineness" is thus a predicate of the concrete species; and thus, when taken in itself, is not itself concrete, but rather is an abstraction. In religion, the fact that God is "only a generic concept" is especially disguised by the fact that the concept itself is given a name. On the other hand, common religion, more than any other form of abstract thinking, testifies to its actual character by virtue of the fact that its "ghosts," or abstractions are given sensual embodiment. It is only this which distinguishes common religion from all other forms of abstract thought:

Common theology has its ghosts in the sensual imagination, speculative theology [by which he includes speculative philosophy] in the unsensual abstraction. (VT, 227)

Remember that for Feuerbach theology (and we do not speak here of its species, "common theology") is identical with abstract thought:

In theology we have everything twice, one time abstractly, the other time concretely. (VT, 225)

Abstraction sets the essence of nature outside of nature, the essence of man outside of man, the essence of thought outside of the thinking act. (VT, 227)
Theological thought is any thought which treats the genus as the essential ground and reality, and which, as such "has everything twice" insofar as it treats abstractions as a second (and primary) realm of being. "Common theology" is distinguished from this not by any logical features, but, we might say, by the stories which it tells about its abstractions. It gives them sensual embodiment, it conceives them as persons, with personal histories, etc.

Thus, the "moral of the fable," the central point of Feuerbach's writing, was that:

We should not, as is the case in theology and speculative philosophy, make real beings and things into arbitrary signs, vehicles, symbols, or predicates of a distinct, transcendent, absolute, i.e., abstract being; but we should accept and understand them in the significance which they have in themselves...

(EC, x1--emphasis added)

Feuerbach tells us no more than what we have already seen concerning how we are to distinguish between real beings and things, on the one hand, and abstract beings, on the other. In fact, he argues that, in the end, there can be no actual philosophical basis for these distinctions, that although it is possible to teach "ad captum," it is possible to demonstrate, to prove the reality of real beings and things only "ad ocules, ad tactum, ad gustum." (EC, x1). Thus, "Philosophy must not begin with itself, but rather with its antithesis, with non-philosophy."
(VT, 235) Or, again:

Look at nature, look at man! Here we have the mysteries of philosophy before our eyes.

(VT, 240)

And with apparent allusion to a legend about Democritus, which Feuerbach takes as allegorical truth about much philosophy:

I differ toto coelo from these philosophers who pluck out their eyes that they may see better; for my thought I require the senses, especially sight; I found my ideas on materials which can be appropriated only through the activity of the senses.

(EC, xxxiv)

Feuerbach's solution to the metaphysical problem of what counts as a "real being and thing" is philosophical only in this negative sense: The philosopher can indicate the ways in which thinking passes beyond experienced reality, generating spurious, abstract beings. That is, Feuerbach believed that thinking, or reason, or language somehow deceives us, causes us to forget what we really know. This original knowing is not the product of reason, the result of a deduction, or validated by the criteria of a metaphysical theory. The real, once we have critically evaluated the ways in which reason deceives us in these matters, is known by all men through common sense, or, we might say, through their common senses. The philosopher can demonstrate how reason leads us astray; but that it has led us astray cannot, in the end, be argued, but only
shown. This showing can only be made easier by philosophy's demonstration of the optical properties of reason's theoretical lenses.

Let me characterize Feuerbach's position in another way: "Let us not argue for the moment," he might have said, "about what is a real being, or what is a mere abstraction. For the present, I will accept your ontology, whatever that may be. For simplicity, let us assume that your universe is populated with a finite number of real entities, \( R \). I will show you how reason will deceive the unwary, causing him to multiply \( R \)--by taking predicates of members within that class, and positing them not as predicates, but as self-standing subjects." Feuerbach believes that once that "trick" had been clearly documented, the problem of what counts as "real beings and things" would take care of itself. By unmasking this trick of reason, and through the systematic "transformational criticism" of theology, we systematically right the wrongs of speculative theology, arriving at the concrete thing itself. And:

Philosophy is the knowledge of that which is. To think of things, and thus to know things, as they are--this is the highest principle, the highest task of philosophy. (VT, 232)

Feuerbach believes that he had demonstrated a natural tendency in human reason toward fetishism, which manifested itself in human activity as alienation from his
own world. And such an analysis could in principle be extended to wherever abstraction, fetishism, and alienation did its work. Feuerbach himself had hinted at the form which such an analysis would take for politics:

The negation of space and time in metaphysics, in the essence of things [i.e., abstraction], has pernicious practical consequences.... A people who cut time out of their metaphysics, who worship an eternal, i.e., abstract, timeless existence, who consequently cut time out of their politics, worship the unjust, non-rational, anti-historical principle of stability.

(VT, 233)

Man is the foundation of the state. The state is the realized, developed, explicit totalization of the human existence....

(VT, 244)

But the transformational criticism of speculative philosophy's theory of the state was left to Marx. It is to this that we now turn.
NOTES
TO CHAPTER I


2 Following the unsuccessful uprisings of 1848, the students of the university at Heidelberg invited Feuerbach to deliver a series of lectures on the philosophy of religion. From December of that year to March of 1849, Feuerbach presented thirty such lectures, in a public hall, attended by a wide range of professors, students, and the general public. These are published separately from his *Sämtliche Werke* as *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

3 In an English review of *The Essence of Christianity*, the Reverend William Maccal called for Feuerbach's annihilation: "Aye, annihilate; for this is not a matter in which we pretend to one morsel of tolerance." Cited in: William B. Chamberlain's *Heaven Wasn't His Destination* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1941), p. 16.

As Kamenka (see note #1, above) remarks, Chamberlain's work, as a serious study, is "in some ways more earnest than its title suggests." In any case, these two works constitute the complete bibliography of full length studies of Feuerbach in the English language.


5 I expect that it was no mere coincidence that, under the rubric of "diabolical sophists," an example from Augustine came to Feuerbach's mind. I wish to expand upon his brief allusion.

Augustine, for all of his homilies on love, hated everything real. No one could have more honestly spoken the words of Goethe's Faust: "Alles was ensteht, ist wert, dass es zugrunde geht." Everything real, everything sensual was not only rejected, but deeply tormented Augustine. In his own son, he could find "nothing of [himself] but the sin [of copulation]." (Confessions (C);
Bk. IX, Ch. XXX) Conquering the evil of sexual intercourse, the "pollution of the flesh" yet mocked him, confused him, taunted and revulsed him through wet dreams, the "lascivious motions of [his] sleep" which filled him with sorrow that "in some way [evil] was done in [him]." (C; Bk. X, Ch. XXX) Of all his contacts with the world, only "the allurement of odors" did not cause him much pain. (C; Bk. X, Ch. XXXII) Even friendship itself was a torment and unbearable distraction to the Saint's heavenly love: "O friendship all unfriendly! You strange seducer of the soul." (C; Bk. II, Ch. IX)

There were for Augustine "two kinds of love," from the lower of which "worldly society has flowered," "whereas the communion of saints is rooted in a love of God that is ready to trample on self"—and, as Feuerbach indicates, upon others as well. (The City of God (CG); Bk. XIV, Ch. 28) Augustine's love does not cause human suffering to give him even a theoretical pause. When it pleases him, Augustine justifies the suffering of men by their own free choice of evil. When it pleases him, Augustine justifies the suffering of men, whose lives on this reading are pre-determined, by the (justifiable) caprice of God, who "hath mercy on whom he willeth; and whom he willeth, he hardeneth." (Enochridion, Ch. XXV) More than once, the Saint proves that God's love and justice necessitate that men whose sins were "perpetrated in a brief space of time" must "be received into everlasting fire, there to be tortured for ever and ever." (CG; Bk. XXI, Ch. 11-23)

I know of no sophism more "diabolical" in religious literature than Augustine's version of the reconciliation of the concepts "loving thing (God)" and "thing which created gross human deformities":

A thing is wonderful only because it is rare. If whole people have been monsters, we must explain the phenomenon as we explain the individual monsters who are born among us. God is the Creator of all; He knows best where and when and what is, or was, best for him to create, since He deliberately fashioned the beauty of the whole out of both the similarity and dissimilarity of its parts.

The trouble with a person who does not see the whole is that he is offended by the ugliness of a part because he does not know its context or relation to the whole....

If some whole race should be born like that,
they would add a chapter to the history of rare curiosities.  
(CG; Bk. XVI, Ch. 8)

In Augustine's words: "If this bath be purification, what could be pollution?"

Feuerbach (EC; Appendix #19) also cites Luther's authority: "Rather than God's word should fall and heresy stand, faith would wish all creatures to be destroyed." And: "Faith and love are two things. Faith curses, love blesses...."


7Feuerbach here refers to his position, in contradiction to the religious view, as one of "atheism." Elsewhere he writes that "He alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being,—for example, love, wisdom, justice,—are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing." (EC, 21) In yet another place he writes that atheism "is the secret of religion itself." (EC, xxxvi)

I note this in order to illustrate Feuerbach's rather loose employment of language. The word "religion" itself is sometimes used as a designation for what is for Feuerbach the essential and positive core of religion, and, as such, distinguished from "theology," the theoretical falsification of religion. But it is also employed without such a distinction intended.


9Hook, From Hegel to Marx, p. 223.

10A more literal translation would be "reformatory criticism" (reformatorischen Kritik). The text, however, conforms to the standard translations, for "transformation," as we will see, more nearly captures the sense of Feuerbach's methodology.

11Hook, From Hegel to Marx, p. 231.

13Ibid., p. 122.

14Ibid., p. 18.
CHAPTER II

THE FEUERBACHIAN MARX

Whether man knows it or not [the essence of his self-consciousness] is externally realized as a self-subsistent power in which single individuals are only moments. The march of God in the world, that is what the state is.

--Hegel--

It is easy labor to demonstrate the thoroughly reactionary character of Hegel's political thought. Even Findlay, one of his more sympathetic readers concludes his discussion of Hegel's politics with the rather limp plea that it is at least "not vile."¹ Popper, apparently unconvinced in that matter, wrote that Hegel employed "borrowed thoughts... confusion and debasement of reason... with singleness of purpose though without a trace of brilliancy, to one aim: ... to serve his employer, Frederick William of Prussia."² Even in his own lifetime, Hegel apparently suffered no small embarrassment through that paragon of philosophical subservience, the Preface to his Philosophy of Right, wherein he argued against what we would call academic freedom (and justified "police action" against it), pleaded a moral obligation for philosophers to abide by the "trust" which the government has placed in them (definitionally, for Hegel, they
are trusted insofar as they are not quashed by police action), and, in general, insisted upon the inherent, or a priori rationality of the "completed fabric" of the state.\textsuperscript{3} In reflecting upon the "charlatan Hegel," Schopenhauer concluded: "Governments make of philosophy a means of serving their state interests, and scholars make of it a trade."\textsuperscript{4}

The bare fact of Hegel's "conservatism," however, is of only minor interest as opposed to a theoretical exposition of the methodological assumptions which underlay it. In the middle months of 1843, Marx set out to perform such an analysis in his \textit{Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right}.

I wish to demonstrate that this work, the \textit{Contribution}, was a virtual translation of Feuerbach's religious theory into a theory of politics. In passing through the Feuerbach, Marx acquired not only a general program and methodology, but even the language itself. This chapter, then, no less than the one before, has as its subject theology. We turn only from the God of religion to the God of the state:

\begin{quote}
The other-worldly existence of the political state is nothing but the affirmation of [our] own estrangement. Up till now the political constitution has been the religious sphere, the religion of national life, the heaven of its generality over against the earthly existence of its actuality.  
\end{quote}

(\textit{CC, 31})
Just as in common religion, in Hegel too "The correct method is stood on its head." (CC, 40) For "Hegel everywhere makes the idea [i.e., the predicate] the subject and turns the proper, the actual subject...into a predicate." (CC, 11) Thus, the "wholly abstract formal definition" turns up continually in his writing as "the concrete content." (CC, 17) To paraphrase Feuerbach, Marx believed that he need only turn Hegel off his head in order to have the undisguised, pure, bare truth.

For Marx, the "real beings and things" which are the subjects of political theory are individual people. These individuals, of course, enter into an unending variety of relationships with other individuals and things. Thus, we predicate of individuals, abstracting and grouping these relationships under some generic term, such things as a "family life," an "economic life," a "religious life," a "political life," etc. Of course, we do not mean by this that the single person has numerous lives; but rather that his single life has many aspects, that there are several rather basic classes of attributes which we predicate of individual, concrete, "real beings and things"—people. Hence: "The state is an abstraction. The people alone is what is concrete." (CC, 28)

The darkness remaining in that proposition is removed when we note the following ambiguity in Marx's use of "the state." Marx was very much aware that, for
example, the Prussian state and its armed might was no abstracted fiction. What then did he mean? Our lessons from Feuerbach will again prove helpful here: "God," for Feuerbach, was an abstraction. The Church, however, was no abstraction, but rather a concrete manifestation (in its historical form) of human alienation. We must imagine at this point that theology had not marked off these institutions with a distinctive word "church," but instead referred to them as "manifestations of God Himself," and, in briefer form, simply as "God." A similar situation, Marx believed, turns up in Hegel's political thought. Hegel sometimes speaks of the "state" as the historical manifestation—about which he generally disclaims interest. On the other hand, he speaks of the "state" as the idea of the state— but of an idea which has been made into an objectified subject, as something with a life of its own, which produces man rather than being produced by man. For Marx, man's political life is an aspect of, a "predicate of" the individual life of man. In this sense, "The state is an abstraction." For Hegel, man is a mere aspect of the state itself: "Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity."\

Again, truth can be gotten from Hegel only through "transformational criticism": Hegel writes, "The sovereignty of the state is the monarch." The grammatical
structure here is the same as "God is love." Inverted: "The monarch has sovereign power, sovereignty." (CC, 25) Rightly construed (in the second form), we have an empirical proposition. But Hegel above, as in general, "perverts the empirical fact into a metaphysical proposition" through making the predicate into the subject. (CC, 25) Hegel treats "sovereignty" as though it were an independent entity whose character is not in every case to be determined by a careful analysis of concrete social arrangements, but instead as something which stands beyond historical man, determining social arrangements through its "demands" (Hegel). The idea of sovereignty implies that it comes into existence only as subjectivity sure of itself, as the will's abstract and to that extent ungrounded self-determination in which finality of decision is rooted. This is the strictly individual aspect of the state, and in virtue of this alone is the state one. . . . Hence, this absolutely decisive moment of the whole is not individuality in general, but a single individual, the monarch.  

In this way, Hegel deduces the necessity of a monarch through the "demands" of sovereignty. Sovereignty cannot be thought to be an attribute of the people themselves, for the very notion of "the people" is, for Hegel, only a "wild idea."  

The central abstraction is that of the state itself.
Hegel distinguishes very sharply between the state, on the one hand, and the family and civil society (i.e., all non-political associations) on the other. The state is then described as the "external necessity" of all non-political associations. It is an autonomous ground, the source of development (Marx: the "active side"), and the measure of political rationality. In religion, God, a product of man's thinking, is projected into objective, autonomous existence, and treated by the religious imagination as the producer of man and nature. In Hegel, the state, necessarily a product or result of man's self-activity and social intercourse, is projected into objective, autonomous existence—as the producer of man.

Marx:

There can be no political state without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of civil society; they are for it a condition sine qua non. But the condition is postulated as the conditioned, the determinant as the determined, the producing factor as the product of its product.

(CC, 9)

For Hegel, wherever collision occurs between the laws and interests of the family and civil society, on the one hand, and the idea of the state, on the other, the former, through "external necessity," must give way to the latter. However, as Marx writes:

Hegel is not here speaking of empirical collisions: he is speaking of the
relations of the "spheres of civil law and personal welfare, the family and civil society" to the state. What is at issue is the essential relationship of these spheres themselves.

(CC, 6)

He is speaking of the concepts appropriate to the different spheres of the family and civil society. He clearly does not mean to suggest that by some philosophical necessity, actual, empirical confrontations between the state and civil society will be won by the former. He does mean that the "real," or essential nature of the elements of family and civil society are determined by the idea of the state.

In short, Hegel reasons as though the idea of the state has an independent, "external" history of its own. As it "marches through the world," it externalizes itself, "sundering itself into" real human relationships. Thus, for instance, the idea of the monarchical state demands that property relationships be governed by laws of primogeniture. As we noted just above, this does not mean that through some historical movement primogeniture may not be overthrown within monarchy. But it does mean that, should this occur, property relationships would no longer be "real," or "rational"; they would no longer conform to the essence of their "sphere" which is known through our idea of "the state" itself.

As with Feuerbach's concern with religion, Marx has two fundamental, but (they believed) closely related
concerns here. One is the fact of man's alienation: his political life is set over and against him. (Sovereignty, for instance, is made an attribute of something other than the people. We will examine this more carefully below.) The other is that theory aids and abets this alienation by systematically treating human predicates as though they were independent subjects.

Marx's criticism will become clearer as we examine the positive theses which he opposes to Hegel. A concrete analysis of political life, he believed, could lead nowhere other than to a political theory which abolished the dualism discovered in Hegel. Political life claimed by man as an aspect of his actual social relationships would be democratic life:

Hegel starts from the state and makes man the subjectified state; democracy starts from man and makes the state objectified man. Just as it is not religion which creates man but man who created religion, so it is not the constitution which creates the people but the people which creates the constitution.

(DD, 29)

Whereas Hegel discovers in the idea of the state the necessity of an authority which "determines the general" (i.e., establishes general rules, legislates), predictably treats this authority as an independent self-standing subject, discovering from its concept its general features, and then looks about to locate it somewhere as actualized—Marx writes that "As determining the general the citizen
is legislator." Whereas Hegel posits "the will of the state" in the monarch, Marx writes that "As the maker of individual decisions, as actually exercising his will (the citizen) is king." (CC, 25) It is rightly predicated of whoever determines general rules that "he legislates," Marx says. "Legislation," in this sense, is a predicate which may (in principle) be attached to any man or group of men. But once this predicate is taken up and mystically transformed into a unique subject, like asking "Where is God?" one may ask "Where is the state's rule making power?" --with the assumption that, as a subject, if it is located here it will not be located there, that we must find a place for its earthly reincarnation. All of this, to be sure, is mere "allegory"; but it is allegory with the "purpose of conferring on some empirical existent or other the significance of being the actualized idea." (CC, 40) Hegel begins with the given fact that the people are (were) powerless, that the legislative power (general rule-making power in its several manifestations) was estranged from them, and transforms this fact into a metaphysical maxim.

Perhaps most revealing of the essentially religious standpoint of Hegel's thought is the thesis that the state, like the God of religion, can be given no origin in time. That which is the ground must precede the manifestations--God, everything; the state, man. We have already seen that, for Hegel, the individual person achieves
"objectivity" only in the state. But he confronts the question of time more directly:

(A) question readily presents itself here: "Who is to frame the constitution?"
This question seems clear, but closer inspection shows at once that it is meaningless... It is absolutely essential that the constitution should not be regarded as something made, even though it has come into being in time. It must be treated rather as something simply existent in and by itself, as divine therefore, and constant, and so exalted above the sphere of things that are made. (emphasis added)

How is it that a fact (that the state's constitution had a beginning in history) becomes for a philosophical theory of the state a non-fact, a "meaningless" proposition? Hegel assumes two possibilities. The first is that an "agglomeration of atomic individuals" sets out to make themselves a constitution. But this is a contradiction, since the very concept of "agglomeration of atomic individuals" tells us that concerted action cannot be predicated of it, that it cannot act as a constituted body--i.e., it is meaningless. The other possibility "presupposes an already existent constitution." But a group with a constitution which exists for it cannot create a new constitution, where this implies acting outside of the old constitution, since acting outside of the old constitution would mean acting with no constitution which would mean acting as "an agglomeration of atomic individuals," etc. This supreme mystery, Hegel says, can
"only be left to settle. . .itsel".

Marx characterizes this problem, only somewhat differently, as the "riddle of all constitutions." That is, how is it that that which is law for the legislative authority can at the same time be a product of legislative authority? Noting that Hegel's abstract beginning does not allow him to answer this, he writes that for a real, concrete theory of the state which treats it always as a mere product of human activity, the "riddle" is indeed simple:

Democracy is the solved riddle of all constitutions. Here, not merely implicitly and in essence but existing in reality, the constitution is constantly brought back to its actual basis, the actual human beings, the actual people, and established as the people's own work.

(CC, 29)

The riddle is solved by locating the common ground of both forms of law in the people themselves.

The difference between Marx and Hegel at this point may be clarified by remembering three quite different, but equally common uses of the word "constitution" (or close cognates of that word):

a) "The American Constitution was adopted in 1789."

b) "America is constituted by fifty states."

c) "The American nation was formally constituted in 1789."
"b" could also be expressed, "The American constitution (i.e., structure or composition) includes fifty states."
"c" might also read, "In 1789 the world witnessed the constitution of a new nation in America." We thus have these three senses of "constitution":

a) A certain kind of legal document.

b) The structure, composition, or nature of a thing.

c) The act of composing a thing.

When Marx refers to a people's political constitution as a mere "abstraction," as a "predicate" of the people, he refers to sense "b". In this sense, we may refer to "The constitution of the people"—that is, the natural political aspect of their communal life, the "form" of a political system which is somehow appropriate to, or a reflection of their individual and social and economic activities and interests. But Hegel starts not with "The constitution of the people," but rather with "The people of the constitution." The constitution, the abstract predicate, is posited as the primary factor, as the "subject." The constitution—"a" comes into the world (for Hegel) ready made, having an ideal history rather than a profane history, sundering itself as the constitutional—"c" principle of "the family and civil society."

The essential problem for Marx, as for Feuerbach, is a dualism which projects a part of man's essence (in
theory, and consequently in practice) outside of himself. To paraphrase Feuerbach: "The richer is man's state, the poorer is man." And, as we will see in reference to Marx's much misunderstood thesis that with a genuine communist revolution the state would be "abolished," "Where man is everything, where man realizes his social essence within his own life, the state is nothing."

The modern state, for Marx, was a reflection of this theoretical dualism which treated the abstract as the really concrete, was itself a "practical illusion":

It is an historical advance which has transformed the political estates into social estates, so that, just as the Christians are equal in heaven, but unequal on earth, so the individual members of the nation are equal in the heaven of their political world, but unequal in the earthly existence of society. (CC, 79)

Not only [does the estate separate] the human being from his general essence, it turns him into an animal that is directly identical with its function. The Middle Ages are the animal history of human society, its zoology.

The modern era, civilization, makes the opposite mistake. It separates the objective essence of the human being from him as merely something external, material. It does not accept the content of the human being as his true reality. (CC, 81)

Thus, in the Middle Ages the serf who lived as an animal was also understood to be, or regarded as, an animal—that is, as a "kind of being" which corresponded to his actual existence. The "modern era," however, recognizes the
strictly human essence in each particular person, but as something which is abstracted from the individual and raised to another sphere of being. The common human essence is something recognized in both the beggar and the Lord, but not as a common essence which is to be actualized in civil life, in "true reality," in nature. The common essence obtains not in the natural, but in the super-natural: The State.

Thus, man must abolish the dualism which objectifies his political essence and sets it off as a being of another realm. In short, as Feuerbach wished man to become God, man must become the state:

In democracy the political state, which stands alongside this content [the actual life of the people] and distinguishes itself from it, is itself merely a particular content and particular form of existence of the people.... In democracy the state as particular is merely particular; as general, it is the truly general, i.e., not something determinate in distinction from the other content. The French have recently interpreted this as meaning that in true democracy the political state is annihilated. This is correct insofar as the political state qua political state, as constitution, no longer passes for the whole. (CC, 30)

"As particular is merely particular": Marx assumed that many functions carried out by the state would, of course, be necessary in any highly organized society. As a "particular" then, the state in a democracy stands "alongside" numerous other institutions (educational, economic, etc.),
carrying out its function among functions. But also "As general, it is the truly general": It is not something taken up and posited against, or in spite of, or simply without regard to what Marx summarizes as the "content" of the people. A gun pointed at a crowd has a "general existence" over the crowd, but has nothing to do with the crowds "own generality." A farmers' cooperative, as an institution, also has a "general existence" beyond the individual farmer; but insofar as it itself is contoured by the truly general economic needs, then it is a "true generality."\textsuperscript{10}

It is interesting to note that within the context of this discussion Marx offers what is really a succinct counter thesis to the Burkian-Hegelian interpretation of the French Revolution. For Burke, the violence of the period was inevitable given the intrusion into the body politic of large scale efforts to manipulate the state in accordance with the demands of external reason. For Hegel too, the intrusion of false ideas "afforded for the first time in human history the prodigious spectacle of the overthrow of the constitution of a great actual state and its complete reconstruction \textit{ab initio} on the basis of pure thought alone. . . . And the experiment \textit{[!] ended in the maximum of frightfulness and terror.}^\textsuperscript{11} For both Burke and Hegel, the state is an organized whole, embodying an
internal rationality which no single man can fully grasp, and only against which the otherwise abstract notions such as "freedom" are given real determinations. Marx agrees that the state must be viewed organically; but his practical conclusion from this is quite different:

If the constitution is not merely to suffer change; if, therefore, this illusory appearance is not finally to be violently shattered; if man is to do consciously what otherwise he is forced to do without consciousness by the nature of the thing, it becomes necessary that the movement of the constitution, that advance, be made the principle of the constitution and that therefore the real bearer of the constitution, the people, be made the principle of the constitution. Advance itself is then the constitution.

(CC, 57)

In short, the principle of conflagration is to be found in the schism between the "constitution" of the state ("a") and the "constitution" of the relevant social beings ("b"). Insofar as this is not the case, the constitution ("a") becomes the mere "illusory appearance" of ("b"). The principle of stability—insofar as the state is indeed organic, and insofar as "civil society" itself is in flux—can mean no more than the principle of conscious change.12

Marx's critique of Hegel, a manuscript of about 130 pages, was never completed. In the following year, however, he published another work in "transformational criticism," The Holy Family. It would be easy enough to trace out the main lines of argument in that work; however, for the
narrow purpose at hand, it would be repetition. The work differs only in that the subjects of his assault, as opposed to Hegel, were thinkers who had considered themselves to be the avant-garde of a critical, revolutionary philosophy. As the title suggests, Marx argued that they too were engaged only with the abstract, with the "heaven" of thought.

What is important for an understanding of the chapter which follows, however, is to note that this criticism of his erstwhile associates, the Young Hegelians, excludes any criticism of Feuerbach, that it is criticism from the Feuerbachian perspective. Marx writes here:

But who, then, revealed the mystery of the "system"? Feuerbach. Who annihilated the dialectics of concepts, the war of the gods that was known to the philosophers alone? Feuerbach. But in the next year, Marx was to be writing:

[Feuerbach] still remains in the realm of theory.

(GI, 58)

Precisely the opposite of what Feuerbach says took place....

Feuerbach [merely] resolves the religious essence into the human....

What had happened in these few months to cause the Feuerbachian-Marx to pass over into such radical opposition to Feuerbach--and, by implication, to his own previous work? Within days of the publication of Marx's book, The
Holy Family, a book by Max Stirner appeared which caused Marx to realize very fundamental errors in his methodological approach. He immediately set out to correct his errors in a new manuscript, The German Ideology. But before turning to that work, we must examine the book which stirred Marx to reject his own publication almost before others would have the opportunity to read it—surely not the smallest display of intellectual honesty which history holds for us.
NOTES
TO CHAPTER II


3. There can be little question that Hegel equivocates in this work on the meaning of "the real is the rational." He had in this formula a clever maneuvering point. With it, he satisfied the so-called "powers that be." He also could offer it as a palliative to those more interested in what might be. Heinrich Heine was one of these latter: [Hegel] liked me very much, for he was sure that I would not betray him; I held him then to be even servile. Once, when I was annoyed by the saying "All that is is rational," he smiled strangely and remarked: It could also be read: "All that is rational must be." (Cited in Dick Howard's The Development of the Marxian Dialectic)

But the spirit of Hegel's own political writings do not bear this reading. From the "Addition" to paragraph #268 of the Philosophy of Right: "The learner always begins by finding fault, but the scholar sees the positive merit in everything." The clear task of political philosophy, for Hegel, was to uncover the reason, the rationality of the existent. "To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight which reconciles us to the actual." (From the "Preface" to the Philosophy of Right.)


Marx never abandoned this sense of what an "abolished state" would look like. He did, however, add to the sense of the thesis once the notion of classes took up a prominent place in his thought. It is worth briefly noting this here; for it clarifies a further misunderstanding of Marx, and one central to any discussion of Marx qua democrat--this theory of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Any society divided into classes is by definition, for Marx, a society of objectively competing interests, a society (to borrow some modern language) of "zero-sum games." Thus in any such society there will be not only a "ruling class" (in Mosca's perhaps rather trivial sense), but also ruling interests. The "state" is therefore (again by definition) the objectified power of interests which are not general interests. Thus, Marx says that the "state" in this sense must be abolished. It must be the reflection of general interests. But general interests can dominate the political body only when the political body is itself of one class and not more, etc....

Marx also refers to this "state," since it is for him definitionally (so long as there are classes) the rule of one group of interests over another (regardless of its legal form), as a "dictatorship." This is clearly a quite special sense of that word. "Dictatorship of the proletariat" refers to a period when the group interests of the proletariat would dominate over the interests of other classes yet existing in the society.

This bears significantly on a further myth concerning Marx's thought, and a particularly strange one--the myth that Marx taught the need to make social change through violence. I say that this is strange, for it
must overlook: the chapters in Anti-Dühring (attributed to Engels, but collaborated on with Marx) on "The Force Theory" where such a view is ridiculed; Engels' remarks in The Condition of the Working Class that the more familiar workers become with communist theory "the less bloody" would be social change (since, as we saw in the text, the more conscious change becomes the less a man is "forced to do without consciousness by the nature of the thing"); and, most importantly, the entire current in Marx's thought which stresses "economic" and not "volitional" causes in history. The violence of terrorists Marx described as "bloody utopianism"--the attempt to achieve an ideal goal through will, violence. I am not intending to characterize here Marx's attitude toward social violence in any detail, and certainly do not wish to portray anything so simple as "He was against it." But, as the text should indicate, he was not "for it" either. It was Mao, but never Marx, who argued that "The whole world can be remolded only with the gun."

13 For example, in criticizing Edgar Bauer's writing on "love":

Herr Edgar changes love into a "goddess," a "cruel goddess" at that, by changing man who loves, the love of man, into a man of love; by making "love" a being apart, separate from man and as such endowed with independent being. By this simple process, by changing the predicate into the subject, all the attributes and manifestations of human nature can be Critically transformed into their opposite and estrangements. (MECW, Vol. IV, p. 21)


I have omitted an "if" from the beginning of the citation, and thus a quick glance at the text may convince one that I have violated Marx's sense. Thus it will be well to set out the full passage here:

Since therefore Feuerbach himself says this, it is reason enough for Jacques le bonhomme
[one of the images which Marx uses to humorously characterize Stirner—as is "Sancho," below] to believe him that people have esteemed love because it is "divine by and for itself." If precisely the opposite of what Feuerbach says took place... if neither God nor his predicates have ever been the main thing for people, if this itself is only a religious illusion of German theory—it means that the very same thing has happened to our Sancho as happened to him before in Cervantes, when four stumps were put under his saddle while he slept and his ass was led away from under him.

16 Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," #VI.
CHAPTER III

STIRNER'S (UNINTENDED) REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

At the entrance of the modern time stands the "God-man." At its exit will only the God in the God-man evaporate? and can the God-man really die if only the God in him dies? They did not think of this question, and thought they were through when in our days they brought to a victorious end the work of the Illumination, the vanquishing of God; they did not notice that Man has killed God in order to become now--"sole God on high."

--Stirner--

With this general thesis, the obscure German school-master Johan Caspar Schmit, alias Max Stirner, catapulted himself into the center of the German intellectual world. For months after its publication, the brightest lights of radical German philosophy--Feuerbach, Hess, Engels and Marx--were to circle about Stirner's The Ego and His Own. Today, he is generally recalled as a footnote within one of three contexts. The first is his relation with Nietzsche. Although the nature of this relationship is a matter of debate (from the thesis that Nietzsche never read Stirner, to the thesis that seems to imagine that he worked from a secret copy of Stirner), there is little disagreement as to the essential affinity between many of the major themes in their thought. The second context in which Stirner is now discussed is that of anarchism. He is often
characterized, although wrongly I think, as one of the forerunners of modern anarchism. And finally, he is discussed as an early influence on Marx. Insofar as these discussions almost invariably focus upon the relationship between Stirner's and Marx's substantive political theses, they miss the point. Marx never became engaged in those sorts of issues with Stirner (for he believed Stirner's political theory to be worthless, absurd), but instead with the philosophical foundations of his work. It is these that we shall here examine.

Stirner's clear target is Feuerbach and his "transformational criticism":

Feuerbach instructs us that, "if one only inverts speculative philosophy, i.e., always makes the predicate the subject, and so makes the subject the object and principle, one has the undraped truth, pure and clean." Herewith, to be sure, we lose the narrow religious standpoint, lose the God, who from this standpoint is subject; but we take in exchange for it the other side of the religious standpoint, the moral standpoint. E.g., we no longer say "God is love," but "Love is divine."

(Ego, 60)

But from this it also appears how thoroughly theological is the liberation that Feuerbach is laboring to give us. What he says is that we had only mistaken our own essence, and therefore looked for it in the other world, but that now, when we see that God was only our human essence, we must recognize it again as ours and move it back out of the other world into this. To God, who is spirit, Feuerbach gives the name "Our Essence." Can we put up with this, that "Our Essence" is brought into opposition to us—that we are
split into an essential and an unessential self? Do we not therewith go back into the dreary misery of seeing ourselves banished out of ourselves? (Ego, 40)

Stirner agreed that Feuerbach had demonstrated the abstract, mystical foundation of ordinary religion, of the "narrow religious standpoint." But, accepting Feuerbach's thesis that ordinary religion is a mere species of religious thought, he argues that Feuerbach had not shown the way out of the latter. Feuerbach does not get us at the concrete thing; he does nothing more than transport us from one world of abstractions into another. If "God" is an abstraction, surely "Man" is no less of one. It is nothing more than his own personal religious prejudice which causes Feuerbach to prefer one rather than the other. Man can be as alien to man as God. Feuerbach, for instance, would argue that the act of loving God, when rightly understood, becomes the act of loving Man (since God is only man's essence projected outside of himself). And Feuerbach thought that with this simple trick he had driven out the spirits and called man's mind back to its concrete foundations.

Feuerbach:

[The religious man] is thankful, grateful to God, but unthankful to man. Thus is the moral sentiment subverted into religion! Thus does man sacrifice man to God! The bloody human sacrifice is in fact only a rude, material expression of the inmost secret of religion. (EC, 272)
Stirner might have written: "In Feuerbach the religious sentiment is merely subverted into moral abstractions. Thus does man sacrifice man to Man." He did write:

Pure warm-heartedness is warm-heartedness toward nobody, it is only a theoretical interest, concern for man as man, not as a person. The person is repulsive to it because of being "egotistic" [used here as "particular," something "self-centered" in the sense of not conforming to any external idea of it], because of not being that abstraction, Man.... To pure warm-heartedness or pure theory men exist only to be criticized, scoffed at, and thoroughly despised; to it, no less than to the fanatical person [Luther, I presume], they are only "filth" and other such nice things.

(Ego, 32)

It is important to see this point clearly. Man, as an abstraction (not as this man), was for Stirner another "ghost," "spirit," "spook": The Feuerbachian "sees in you, not you, but the species; your essence or your concept; not the bodily man, but the spirit." (Ego, 225) The real, the concrete thing, for Stirner was the absolutely particular, unique, individual:

Man reaches beyond every individual man, and yet--though he be "his essence"--is not in fact his essence (which rather would be as single [einzig] as he the individual himself, but a general and "higher" yes, for atheists "the highest essence."

(Ego, 48)

Stirner says that this Man is something that "lives in us," but that can withdraw (most clearly at our death) "without himself ceasing." Isn't this, Stirner asks, the
very definition of a "spook?" The ordinary atheist simply fails to grasp "the breadth of the concept 'higher being'." Or, when Feuerbach had wished to protest that he was not an atheist, he wrote that the atheist was not the person for whom merely the subject "God" was nothing, but he for whom the predicates of God were nothing. "Quite right!" Stirner might have written. And with that, Feuerbach had confessed his own religious standpoint. For "true atheist," that is, for truly non-theological thinking, the predicates must themselves be recognized as abstract, "higher beings." Feuerbach did not understand that the logic of the concept "God" is precisely the same as that of the concept "Man."

But is it not true, someone will ask--is it not as clear as any possible truth that I am a man? Stirner will not quarrel:

I am indeed among other things a man, as I am, e.g., a Berliner, and the like; but he who chose to have regard for me only as a man, or as a Berliner, would pay be a regard that would be very unimportant to me. And wherefore? Because he would have regard only for one of my qualities, not for me.

(Ego, 227)

Stirner's concern becomes clearer when we pass on from "Man" to other concepts--he sees spooks everywhere. If he says that "I am my species, am without norm, without law, without model..." (Ego, 238), he would go on to say that "This action of mine is its species...," or "My
interests are their own species..." etc. But men seen in all of these things only their general, essential, abstract existence:

It is called "human" when one sees in everything something spiritual, i.e., makes everything a ghost and takes his attitude toward it as toward a ghost.... It is human to look at what is individual not as individual, but as a generality.

(Ego, 368)

Behind the thing [men seek] the un-thing.

(Ego, 50)

The "nature of the case," the "concept of the relationship," is to guide me in dealing with the case or in contracting the relation. As if a concept of the case existed on its own account, and was not rather the concept that one forms of the case!... Concepts are to decide everywhere, concepts to regulate life, concepts to rule. This is the religious world to which Hegel gave a systematic expression.

(Ego, 125)

If this act which I perform is the concrete thing with concrete and individual determinations, then do not tell me, Stirner says, to evaluate it according to some abstraction, an abstraction which captures my act only imperfectly, and speaks of much which has nothing to do with my actual, concrete action. You say that this action of mine is a case of "lying," you regard it only as a case of, an actualized instantiation of this "higher being": Lie. And regarding it as a mere instance of lying, having subsumed the concrete action into the purely abstract quality, the rules of the concept are to rule my actual
life: "Lying acts are not to be performed." Or: "Lying acts may be performed only under the range of conditions Y." Again, the abstract passes for the concrete.

The pretense that individual actions are some abstract determination is a game played by the strong against the weak:

If the welfare of the State is the end, war is a hallowed means [i.e., acts which could just as well be called "killing" or even "murder" are sanctified by what is to some the holy name of "War"]; if justice is the State's end, homicide is a hallowed means, and is called by its sacred name, "Execution," etc.; the sacred State hallows everything that is serviceable to it.

(Ego, 140)

Recent history would surely have provided Stirner ample fuel for this logical machine: During the recent war, government documents often referred to the "kidnapping" of men by the communist Vietnamese as a source of soldiers. A state which exerts such coercion through its control of prisons, a police force, the threat of ruined educational and occupational possibilities speaks of "drafting" soldiers. It is important to see that Stirner is not saying that there are no differences between the individual acts which are subsumed under such genuses as "kidnapping," "drafting," "murder," "execution," etc. To the contrary, since each of the acts is individual and thus different, we can divide them up in an unlimited number of ways, and
choose to emphasize whichever of the qualities that we wish the acts to become, the quality which it becomes for reason.

Some cases illuminate this more than others, although Stirner argues that it is true of all reasoning with general concepts (i.e., all reasoning). Consider the legendary figure Robin Hood. For some, Robin Hood was a "bandit," while for others he was, let us say, "an instrument of social justice." It is essential that one note that Stirner does not mean to argue that the person who sees Robin Hood as a "bandit" would be surprised if told that other predicates could also be attached to the "thing" in question. What he does say is that for reason he becomes the predicate, the abstraction "bandit." It is not a point concerning what people would say about a particular thing when somehow pressed to "say everything that might be said about a thing." It is a logical point that in order to plug a concrete "thing" into a syllogism, it is first reduced to a generality, an essence. So Stirner writes that if one steals from me, "it is only the thief, this concept of which that person presents a specimen, that I take an interest in." (Ego, 100) The person becomes one of his qualities; the person's other qualities become for reason only unessential determinations, differences which do not make a difference, unimportant predicates or aspects of the abstraction which has been posited as the
thing itself. In his essay "Who Thinks Abstractly?", Hegel had made a similar point, somewhat more colorfully (although he drew different conclusions from it):

A murderer is led to the place of execution. For the common populace he is nothing but a murderer. Ladies perhaps remark that he is a strong, handsome, interesting man. The populace finds this remark terrible: What? A murderer handsome? How can one think so wickedly and call a murderer handsome; no doubt, you yourselves are something not much better!4

Imagine an enraged mob storming the jail in which a rapist is held: "We know what to do with rapists!", someone shouts. For the mob, the individual within the cell has become nothing more and nothing less than an embodiment of the concept "rapist." Much more fancifully, we can imagine a crowd of enraged Skinnerians (enraged that the individual is about to be executed) storming the jail: "We know what to do with 'persons who have had inappropriate conditioning'!", someone shouts. The concrete person within the cell, Stirner argues, has been reduced to a "category" in both of these cases. And both groups may very well know what to do with their abstractions. The one group may very well know what to do with "rapists," while the other may rightly know what to do with "persons who have had inappropriate conditioning." But, Stirner asks, what has this to do with the unique, particular individual who is in the cell?
The implication of this, for Stirner, was, first of all, the banishment of all moral rules. If the individual is utterly unique, then only superstition could cause him to allow his life to be ruled by the demands of generality, of abstractions:

Moral people skimmed off the best fat from religion [i.e., one level of essentialism], ate it themselves, and are now having a tough job to get rid of the resulting scrofula.

*(Ego, 60)*

And out goes politics as well:

So then an egoist could never embrace a party or take up with a party? Oh, yes, only he cannot let himself be embraced and taken up by the party. For him the party remains all the time nothing but a gathering: he is one of the party, he takes part.

*(Ego, 313)*

That is to say, the party, the group, the association is always to be recognized as an abstraction. A commitment, or loyalty to a group or organization is by definition subservience to an abstraction. For, as the concrete thing is ever changing and taking on new forms of significance for me, at every moment I must reconstruct my attitude toward it as a concrete thing. The danger is that I will be captured by what Stirner calls, in addition to "abstraction," etc., a "Fixed idea." "What is it, then, that is called a 'fixed idea'? An idea that has subjected the man to itself." *(Ego, 55)* It is necessary to keep in
mind just how thorough Stirner is in this thesis. He does not simply offer the "common sense" caution that, lest we keep an eye on our associations, they may, unknown to us, for instance, change their goals. For even their "goals" are stated as abstractions, and thus will produce for us only further deception. If man, the individual, unique person is not to be deceived by abstractions, if he is not to be subjugated by the fixed idea, his appeal is only to a kind of intuitively guided assertion of his own power. Associations are only grasped in their concreteness when they are used by me, just as my own essence is known only through the exertion of my power. I am what I am, Stirner might have written, making his point tautologically. That is, my "concrete essence" is revealed in what I do. All else is to me alien, and of no concern to me:

All existing right is--foreign law [i.e., the imposition of the concept]...

(Ego, 242)

I decide whether it is the right thing in me; there is no right outside me. If it is right for me, it is right. Possibly this may not suffice to make it right for the rest; that is their care, not mine. Let them defend themselves.

(Ego, 24)

We come back to the question of what all of this had to do with Feuerbach, Marx, and their idea of "concreteness." We can characterize what Stirner did this simply: He showed that Feuerbach had not shown the way to what was,
on his own terms (transformational criticism), the "concrete things," but only to an emphasis upon a different group of abstractions. The following passage from *The Holy Family* will make this clear. Marx gives an example of how it is that a word begins its "speculative career":

If from real apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds I form the general idea "Fruit," if I go further and imagine that my abstract idea "Fruit," derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the true essence of the pear, the apple, etc.; then, in the language of speculative philosophy I am declaring that "Fruit" is the substance of the pear, the apple, the almond, etc.... My finite understanding supported by my senses does, of course, distinguish an apple from a pear and a pear from an almond; but my speculative reason declares these sensuous differences unessential, indifferent. [Or, in the language of our example, page 66 above, they become the same thing "for reason."] It sees in the apple the same as in the pear, and in the pear the same as in the almond, namely "Fruit." Particular real fruits are no more than semblances whose true essence is "the Substance"—"Fruit."5

The thrust of Stirner's response is that if the generic term is an abstraction and the species the "concrete," then we had best go on and note that every species is itself a genus.6 The drive toward the concrete will then be a drive further down through the species until we come upon that which is not a genus, until we bump hard against the individual, unique existent. With man, this can be nothing other than his "ego," Stirner argues. The
concrete person is this person and no other person. The concrete action is this action which you will not capture in general language because it is unique, not general. My interests cannot be described in the same language as yours, which are different from mine, without falsifying both. If this leads to an irrationalist position (which it does), this is the fault of the nature of the world, not of Stirner—Stirner would say. If my essence can be known only through my power, through what I do, then this fact will not go away, but can only be ignored through ideal-izing the concrete person.

Marx accepted much of what Stirner wrote (much more than he wished to admit), accepted it as largely accurate criticism of Feuerbach—but believed that Stirner had made far more dangerous mistakes in his search for the concrete thing. But in his criticism of Stirner, Marx alters his own views considerably, leaving us with what was to be essentially his final theses on these questions. We will examine his response to Feuerbach and Stirner, and his own positive conclusions in regard to these matters, in the chapter which follows.
NOTES
TO CHAPTER III

1 Stirner was clearly an an-archist, etymologically. But his similarity with people like Kropotkin, Proudhon, Goldman, etc. ends rather abruptly after that fact has been noted. Interestingly, the "anarchist" Stirner has recently (in John Carroll's preface to an abridged addition of the Ego), been characterized as a forerunner of fascism.

2 Discussions of Stirner in relation to Marx have been confused almost from the beginning. For whatever reason, Engels (in his Ludwig Feuerbach, published in 1886) treats Stirner as a figure who precedes Feuerbach, and thus could not have played a role in Feuerbachian criticism. In that work, he lightly passes Stirner off as one who "remained a curiosity." This is peculiar since in an 1845 article Engels had described Stirner and Bruno Bauer as the "only important philosophical opponents of Socialism" (MECW, Vol. IV, p. 241), and since he and Marx had written a 600 page criticism of Stirner's work--longer than Stirner's work itself.

But the impact of Engels' false start in developing a correct perspective here is evidence in the fact that even in Sidney Hook's generally excellent treatment of this period, From Hegel to Marx, Stirner is treated prior to Feuerbach.

The best example that I know of a study which really flounders about in the search for important connections between Stirner's and Marx's substantive social theories is David McLellan's The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (1969). McLellan dutifully notes that Stirner "played a very important role in the development of Marx's thought." Searching in the wrong place, however, he cannot find the connection. Thus the following surprise ending to the section which sketches out this "important role":

It is difficult to show any direct influence of Stirner on Marx here, the more so as Stirner's book was to a large extent an amalgam of current cliches. What the above passages show is that
the ideas of alienated labour and exploitation were by no means confined to Marx at this time, even among Germans. Both Stirner and Marx were probably much influenced by the ideas of Fourier.

3 Stirner's publisher, convinced that the Ego was a revolutionary political treatise indeed, took extraordinary measures to insure its wide distribution before the censors could have time to impound the work. Although there was in fact a brief interference with the distribution, the government rescinded the censorship when, on closer inspection, they determined the work to be "too absurd" to be dangerous.

R. W. K. Paterson (The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner, 1971) believes that this testified to the "characteristic obtuseness" of the Leipzig Kreisdirektion. On the contrary, Marx rightly argued that "Saint Max" offered no threats to anyone in this world. What remained to be proven was that these innocuous, silly doctrines could by reasonable men be avoided.

In short, it was precisely the absurdity of Stirner's conclusions which was the source of Marx's concern. For Stirner was right that Feuerbach's method of driving at the concrete thing, consistently carried out, produced those conclusions.


6 I refer the reader back to my three lengthy citations from Feuerbach on the topic of genus and species (p. 29). Two points are instructive: One is that (allowing for the revision which I will note below) Stirner could have written each of these. As the title and content of this chapter suggest, Stirner (as Marx understood) was most of all a Feuerbachian! Stirner was Feuerbach rendered consistent and programatically completed. Feuerbach's inconsistency, his hedge, is contained in these citations—and this is the second point. He equivocates on the meaning of genus, species, class, and individual. In the first of the three citations, he
explicitly treats "species or individual" as interchangeable terms. The genus is abstract; the individual is concrete. Here is Stirner a la Feuerbach. But Feuerbach's hedge, his break on transformational criticism which held it from the Stirnerian declivity and abyss, was his identification of the individual with the species. Stirner merely noted that the species is concrete only in respect to the genus; but in respect to the individual there is no distinction to be drawn between genus and species. Both collapse into the notion of "class." And as Feuerbach notes in the second citation, "the class is only a predicate."
CHAPTER IV

SELF-CRITICISM: THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY

On its face, the *Ideology* does not present itself as a philosophical work at all, but instead as the great divide between Marx-the-philosopher and Marx-the-social-scientist, as the work in which Marx thoroughly and quite explicitly rejects philosophy as a legitimate intellectual endeavor. We find here such statements as:

When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence.

(GI, 38)

When we conceive things thus, as they really are and happen, every profound philosophical problem is resolved... quite simply into an empirical fact.

(GI, 57)

And Marx, who had early aspired to success in poetry, could not resist the imagery:

Philosophy and the study of the actual world have the same relation to one another as onanism and sexual love.

(GI, 255)

These statements hardly seem geared to attract those intent upon doing philosophy.

Yet before judging too quickly here, one might recall similar statements which we find in more recent philosophical literature. According to the Wittgenstein
of the *Investigations*, philosophy can offer "no theses."
And in the conclusion to the *Tractatus*, philosophical
questions are described as a peculiar kind of nonsense:

> My propositions serve as elucidations
> in the following way: anyone who under-
> stands me eventually recognises them
> as nonsensical.¹

As Anthony Manser writes concerning this remark:
"Wittgenstein's argument could be put in the form: 'When
reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch
of knowledge loses its medium of existence'." And,
further: "It was because of the philosophical views that
he had come to hold about philosophy that Marx (like
Wittgenstein) could propound such a view."² Marx's
*Ideology*, despite his above remarks, is not a hard-nosed
dig into the empirical world. It is a philosophical
attempt to make sense of philosophy. And thus we will
wish to make sense out of what Marx meant by the above
statements, and why he came to hold such views. I suspect
that it was in part because Wittgenstein understood self-
doctor (as opposed to the philosopher's professional role
of doubter or critic of sundry other affairs) to go to the
very heart of the philosopher's task that he always dis-
couraged those with genuine interest in philosophy from
making of it an occupation. "The mark of modern philosophy,
and of any worthy of the name, is self doubt."³ We
needn't expect that Marx's theory of concrete thought will
rescue us from the problems of philosophy, to make it possible, in Wittgenstein's hopeful words, to "stop doing philosophy when we want to." Nor do I think that Marx really believed that he had done that. He clearly did believe, however, that he had discovered that a significant part of what had previously passed for the paradigmatically philosophical was instead paradigmatic nonsense. Let us examine his arguments.

* * *

I break Marx's post-Stirnerian treatment of the concrete into four aspects, or individual theses: The concrete is a property of thought; the concrete is a result of the thinking process; the concrete is a perspective on the whole, or totality; the concrete is concrete only within an interest-context. These four aspects, however (especially the latter three), are organically connected in such a fashion that they cannot in fact stand in isolation. That is to say, stating one raises issues which can only be resolved in the other. And thus the discussion really presents itself fully only when we reach the final thesis.
The Concrete as a Property
of Thought

The key to understanding what Stirner did is to see that he drew the abstract/concrete distinction between the noumenal-like thing and the thought of the thing. In so doing, he neglects to ask how the distinction might be drawn within thought itself, in fact rejecting the possibility that it can be drawn there. Stirner would have been more convincing if he had stated his central thesis briefly, and concluded with: "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical," and "What we cannot say clearly, we must pass over in silence." Of course, included under this latter class would be (for Stirner) all propositions, since no concept, as an abstraction, can get us at the concrete things themselves.

But Marx argued that "the concrete...appears in the process of thinking...even though it is the point of departure in reality." (emphasis added) That is to say that there are two quite different notions of concreteness, which must not be confused. The one is the "point of departure," the unique "thing" (object, action, relationship, interest, etc.) to which Stirner wishes to call our attention. The other is the property of an idea about things which is itself "concrete" and not "abstract." About this
latter notion, Stirner has nothing to say, insists that nothing can be said. And as a result of his disregard for this latter distinction, his own thought (as we will observe below) was no less abstract than was Feuerbach's.

The Concrete as a Result

Also contained in the above remark of Marx's is the thesis that concrete thoughts appear in the process of thinking. Let us review the full passage and material which surrounds it:

The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality. . .

It seems to be correct to begin with the real and the concrete, with the real precondition thus to begin, in economics, with e.g., the population, which is the foundation and the subject of the entire social act of production. However, on closer examination this proves false. The population is an abstraction if I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed. These classes in turn are an empty phrase if I am not familiar with the elements on which they rest. E.g., wage labour, capital, etc. These latter in turn presuppose. . .

"The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations": The concrete idea of a thing is an idea which "concentrates," or somehow includes within its meaning, a diversity of determinations or predicates
of the thing thought. We no longer deal here with two classes of thoughts, as in Feuerbach. It is no longer the case of having more or less ready-made concrete ideas (man, the people, love, etc.), and a spurious class of abstractions thrown out of them through a philosophical mistake (God, Sovereignty, the State, etc.). What we have, instead, are two polar opposites, between which actual thinking can move. One moves toward concreteness in the process of empirical observation, in the process of gathering the determinations into a concentration. Thus the concrete idea is a result, but not a result in the sense of something which is ever completed; and not in the sense of a result of something which, once acquired, is forever had. (Although I do not wish to pursue the comparison, it seems clear that one could be drawn here between Marx's thesis and recent philosophers who have argued that language is "theory bound.")

A distinction must be drawn between knowing the meaning of a word, on the one hand, and knowing how to give a word meaning, on the other. Marx gets at the distinction in this way: "'Personality in general' is either nonsense 'in general' or the abstract concept of personality. . .the concept of a concept, the abstraction of an abstraction." (GI, 102) One can have a general knowledge of the "concept of a concept," one can know how
one goes about giving a word use or meaning without in fact having or knowing a concrete meaning for the word. But the notion of "knowing how to give..." is generally absorbed into the former distinction.

Marx's example is the concept of "population." I begin with a bare "concept of the concept" of population. This is to possess the concept in its most abstract form. Of course, this is not nothing. As we have said, it entails the ability to go on with it, to give it a concrete sense. From the concept's concept, I know, for instance, that "population" is not a meaningful value for \( x \) in "\( x \) was written in Schoenberg's twelve-tone scale." One might say that I know the "essence" of the concept "population"—population as such. But this essence is the most general meaning, and thus the most abstract meaning. It does not get me at anything concrete. It is an "abstract moment" with which "nothing real can be grasped." (Marx) The economist of Marx's example is not interested in a population's abstract concept, but in the concrete concept of a population. Our understanding of the concept "population" in any actual, used proposition of the form "The population stands in relation \( R \) to \( Y \)," is concrete to the extent that we have identified within its meaning those determinations which are not general to the concept, but specific to the case:
Is it surprising that, if you drop little by little all that constitutes the individuality of a house, leaving out first of all the materials of which it is composed, then the form that distinguishes it, you end up with nothing but a body; that, if you leave out of account the limits of this body, you soon have nothing but a space—that if, finally, you leave out of account the dimensions of quantity, the logical category? If we abstract thus from every subject all the alleged accidents, animate or inanimate, men or things, we are right in saying that in the final abstraction, the only substance left is the logical categories. Thus the metaphysicians who, in making these abstractions, think they are making analyses, and who, the more they detach themselves from things, imagine themselves to be getting all the nearer to the point of penetrating to their core—these metaphysicians in turn are right in saying that things here below are embroideries of which the logical categories constitute the canvas. This is what distinguishes the philosopher from the Christian. The Christian, in spite of logic, has only one incarnation of the Logos; the philosopher has never finished with incarnations. 

Marx sounds very contemporary when he cautions that

"Language becomes a phrase as soon as it is given an independent existence." Language becomes more than a "phrase," more than mere "concepts of concepts" only to the extent that it achieves a signification which is not general, but specific to the special used case. The philosopher, for Marx (and this is definitional, and clearly pivotal for understanding his many remarks about "philosophy" during this period), is he who believes that the more he can strip away the "accidental" features of a thing, the closer
he gets to the "real thing" itself. The Christian has one such "pure" entity--God, who is the only "thing-as-such." But "the philosopher has never finished with incarnations": Presented with any category--God, house, population, violence, person, etc.--he wishes to get at the "pure thing," not as the concrete determination signified in a concrete usage, not as a concrete representation of the concrete thing "which is the point of departure," but as a "thing-as-such." Or, recalling his sexual imagery, concreteness develops in the process of the mind (or language) becoming fully engaged in that which is not mind (or language); the "philosopher," however, is he who dis-engages language from the particular cases of its use. One is reminded of Wittgenstein's "Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday."

In *Capital*, Marx described his method as one which "rises from the abstract to the concrete." The notion of rising from the abstract is interesting here. All thought is, for him, abstract in the beginning. It "rises out of" this abstraction only in the course of empirical investigations, which, while depending upon concepts, forever enriches, refines, "concretizes" the relevant concepts. From a strictly logical point of view, the concrete meaning of a word is forever changing, as either fresh thinking or notations of changes in the "point of departure" itself causes a revision of the determinations which have been
brought under the concept. And, again from a strictly logical point of view (the significance of the qualification will be made clearer below), each different use of the concept will have a different concrete sense, or meaning.

The Concrete and the Whole

Marx criticizes Feuerbach for treating religion as an atomic thing which remains what it is regardless of the political, economic, and generally social conditions in which it occurs. He argues that in order to know what religion is (and thus what "religion" means within that context) it is necessary to intellectually situate religion within the full context of its real existence.

Of course, the very language which we use threatens to mislead us here. To speak of "situating" a thing called "religion" in the midst of some other things generically grouped as the "social context" sounds like a mechanical instruction, like "Place the cat on the man." But for Marx our very idea of "religion" becomes concrete only as determined by the full range of relations in which it exists. We do not have the thing, and then its relations. A thing is its relations. To really understand the individual thing is to understand its relation to the whole of which it is a part. To return to Marx's example: We do not have "population," "classes," "wage labour," "capital," etc., as
individual entities which can be investigated on their own, that have some kind of independent existence, changing independently from one another. To in fact understand one is to understand the other, which ultimately depends upon understanding an entire economic system, which depends upon understanding whatever else to which this system may be related. Again, this is not to say that we must begin with cosmic understanding in order to assign meaning to the part. It is to say that the meaning of any concept which denotes a part becomes concrete only as it takes into itself the determinations of its (fluid) relationships. It is to say that a change in one meaning-ensemble radiates out in the form of changed meanings of other used-concepts.

Let us consider a different kind of example, a piece of language more of interest to normative discourse--violence. Let us assume that we can give some essential definition, \( E \), which we can accept as the meaning of "violence" (violence-as-such).\(^7\) Very well, Marx might say; but this is a concept by way of which "nothing real can be grasped." That is to say that in merely knowing that an action is a case of \( E \), we can draw no conclusions from it.

Since in its generality it captures no particular case of violence, it lacks all concreteness, all particular determination which it can gain only through bringing within its meaning the "accidents" present in this
particular usage. One may get at this by asking: "What kind of 'violence' is it?" Is it psychological violence, or physical violence? Is it defensive violence, or offensive violence? Is it criminal violence, or political violence? Is it premeditated violence, or violence of passion? Etc. This is not to suggest that there are, instead of one, a half dozen or so kinds of "violence." It is meant to draw attention to the fact that in order to answer questions of this kind, in order to begin narrowing in on the concrete meaning of a particular use of, for instance, "A violent act was committed," one's attention is drawn to an enormous range of relationships within which that act stands. And, as Marx notes in his population example, each of the "elements" which go into a concrete rendition of a particular used-concept is itself abstract if merely taken "as-such." That is, let us assume that we narrow in on the usage of "violence" in a particular utterance of "An act of violence was committed," determining that, in part, "violence" here refers to an act of political violence. But then this determination "in turn [is] an empty phrase if I am not familiar" with its concrete sense here.

One can, of course, protest that "I needn't know anything at all about psychology, or economics, or politics, etc. in order to know that this is a case of violence." There is a sense in which this is true (a sense
which we will explore more fully in the following section. The point here is only that this is not to grasp the concrete, particular sense in which this is a case of violence; it is not to know the kind of violence that this is.

I will give one final example in this section; for it is of special interest to a discussion of Marxist literature. This is the concept of the "proletariat." But first a citation from Sartre, which seems to me both correct and important:

The open concepts of Marxism have closed in. They are no longer keys, interpretive schemata; they are posited for themselves as an already totalized knowledge. To use kantian terms--Marxism makes out of these particularized, fetishized types, constitutive concepts of experience. The real content of these typical concepts is always past knowledge; but today's Marxist makes of it an eternal knowledge. His sole concern, at the moment of analysis, will be to "place" these entities. 8

Sartre says here that most Marxists, despite their chattering about the virtues of their methodology over "mechanistic bourgeoisie thinking," are themselves the most thoroughly bogged down in mechanistic, abstract thought. They approach the world with a bundle of ready-made concepts: the bourgeoisie, capitalism, socialism, property, class divisions, etc., etc. But these words, as Marx was very much aware, are not the names of timeless entities which mean today what they did over a century ago. One
can, of course, give a word like "proletariat" a general meaning like "factory worker" and (we assume for example that "factory worker" has a timeless, context-free meaning) presto, we find this entity everywhere. It was not so simple as that for Marx, who found the concrete meaning of the proletariat, as with all concepts, only through the web of its relations with other social categories, in the "unity of its (actual) determinations." This is not the place for social analysis, and the following implies nothing either positive or negative about modern social conditions; but it really requires no detailed investigations to understand that, if the term is to be used, the modern (US) "proletariat" is a very different item than it was in Marx's theory, that it is a different "kind" of proletariat, that it stands in a very different relation to such things as capital and property. The same could be shown with all of the other concepts central to Marx's substantive social theory.

For Marx, to become more concrete is to drive ever further into the "kind" of whatever concept that we are dealing with. Concretion is specification. But this notion of specification must not be confused with the physical concept of narrowing in on a thing, of drawing our parameters ever smaller and smaller—until we reach a point without dimensions, like Stirner's Ego. There is an important sense in which true specification is also
generalization. Narrowing in on the concept's signification of diversities which include relations of the thing signified to the entire context of its use. Thus, logically, the definition of an "absolutely concrete" concept would be an infinite set of propositions. Marx's own example, of "population," fades off into an infinite "et cetera."

The Concrete and the Interest-Context

Let us take up the discussion afresh with the case which concerns Marx throughout the Ideology, the case of "man." Real men stand within real, definite, and empirically discoverable social relationships. Again, language threatens to deceive us here. It is not the case that there are men, and then "later," or "accidentally" we come to predicate of them external relationships. Any understanding of what "man" is implies an understanding of a wide range of such facts about him. In the 6th "Thesis," Marx wrote:

Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.

Feuerbach, who does not enter upon a criticism [as critique, or analysis] of this real essence, is consequently compelled:
1. To abstract from the historical process and to fix the religious sentiment as something by itself and to presuppose an abstract--isolated--human individual.

2. Essence, therefore, can be comprehended only as "genus," as an internal, dumb generality which naturally unites the many individuals.

Just as there is no case of violence-as-such, or population-as-such, so there is no case of man-as-such. The concrete idea of a man depends upon the "unifications of the diverse" attributes, and prominent among these are his social relations. Of course, it is possible to "naturally unite" anything through a "dumb generality."

If I wish to show that all men have a common essence, clearly I can do this. I can show them all to be "the same" through the production of some "dumb generality"--a generality which, in some important way, does not "speak" of the concrete thing. Just as I can so unify all "violent acts" under some general essence, show them all to be "essentially" the same, and dispose of them "as-such," so is it possible to do this with man. Marx writes (clearly with immediate reference to Feuerbach): "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like." (GI, 31) But this ability to unify diverse things is only virtuosity in "word magic." (GI, 493) Philosophers, Marx writes, easily become engaged in the mere search for a word "which,
as a word, ceases to be simply a word, and which points, in a mysterious superlinguistic manner, the way out from language to the actual object it denotes." (GI, 495) The concrete determinations are abolished, and the real things are swallowed up into the general concept.

For example, the "True Socialists" against whom Marx argues in the second volume of the *Ideology* wished to emphasize this "humanness" or human essence which overrode all individual distinctions. Quoting from their literature:

All quibbles about names are resolved in humanism; wherefore communists, wherefore socialists? We are human beings?

(GI, 514)

Well, is it true that "we are all human beings?" Of course, it is insofar as one can unify any group under a "dumb generality." We could go on:

Wherefore human beings, wherefore beasts, wherefore plants, wherefore stones? We are bodies!

(GI, 514)

And we could go on, generating ever higher essences. (Wherefore bodies. . .?) The point is that it is easy to believe that by bringing an action under the concept "violence," or bringing a class under the concept "proletariat," or bringing a living thing under the concept "man" (or a fetus under the concept "person!") that one
has resolved something more than a question of language itself.

This issue is not easy to state clearly; thus, I will attempt a number of different approaches:

(A) We have raised the general issue above by asking what kind of an X a particular thing is. Granting the general point that any group of things can be subsumed under a general category, we go on to note that any item subsumed under such a category can be regarded as a particular kind of that thing. Granted that we are all "human beings" (under whatever criteria which one chooses to mark off this group), we can sub-divide downward into classes and particulars of kind. So I grant you that a fetus is a person, you must grant me that it is a particular kind of person, and thus that laws (moral or physical) which apply to one kind do not of necessity apply to the other kind. What is a mistake, Marx writes, is to believe that one has "abolished the difference with a name."

(B) Marx refers to a certain kind of reasoning as a "miracle apparatus." These apparatus can be indefinitely complex, I assume. But let us consider the simplest variety here, the single proposition (non-tautologically interpreted) "The proletariat is an exploited class." Such a proposition becomes a miracle apparatus by removing it from the theoretical context in which its concrete meaning
is to be found (or, in the language above, in which the kind of proletariat, and the kind of exploitation is given sense). But the proposition comes to have a kind of life of its own, by which persons come to feel that entities can be plugged into (Sartre: "placed" within) it. Thus: U.S. factory workers are a "proletariat." The proletariat is an exploited class. Ergo...

There are, of course, more ordinary examples. One can develop a miracle apparatus for "violence." One develops a whole theory about violence—for simplicity, ours will be only this: "Violence is wrong." Or: "Violence undermines social stability." (A proposition, by the way, whose generality is very much doubted in modern sociological literature.) One then discovers an action which can rightly be brought under the generic term "violence" and plugs it into the apparatus.

Or, one can have a well-developed theory about the appropriate way to treat "persons" and, scooting a fetus under that concept, it can run through the system's syllogisms just as do all things which have been brought under that class.

(C) At other times Marx refers to this as a "one-sided characterization." In the Grundrisse, Marx examined Bastiat's theory of wages. Bastiat had argued that wage labour, since it represents fixed income, is a good thing.
Marx:

What relation is not good [I assume that this is meant to read "What relation cannot be shown to be good, or bad. . ."], if it is reduced to a one-sided characterization. . .? All opportunist chattering, all apologetics, all philistine sophistry rests on this sort of abstraction.9

In terms of B above, one can develop a "miracle apparatus" of fixed income, showing it (and thus whatever particular case one plugs into the concept) to be a good thing. Again, a particular kind of wage distribution ("wage labor"—as it concretely turns up at some particular time, within the context of certain social conditions, etc.) is reduced to an abstraction, to a one-sided characterization: In reading Bastiat, "in place of wages, put: fixed income."10

And, of course, one can reduce a particular action to the one-sided abstraction of violence-as-such, etc....

(D) The problem is to actively grasp the difference contained in an identity—the identity between one thing and another (which are brought together under a generic term), and between one thing and itself (through time). It is necessary that:

.. their essential difference is not forgotten. The whole profundity of those modern economists who demonstrate the eternity and harmoniousness of the existing social relations lies in this forgetting.11

For a clear understanding of the arguments of the chapter
which follows, note well the emphasis which Marx places on these issues: "The whole profundity of..." Or, in the citation from C, above: "All opportunist chattering..." A concept becomes concrete only as it draws within its meaning the differences, the particular determinations of the case. And the concrete case is an "ensemble" of relations, and thus an ever changing thing:

[Concrete ideas of social relationships is] the abstract ideal expression of these same social relations. Thus the categories are no more eternal than the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products. 12

But then, has the notion of the concrete been again lost for thought, as it was with Stirner? If the meaning of a "truly concrete" idea is utterly specific, and its meaning is forever in flux, then how can it be grasped in thought, or for thinking? Marx is aware that clearly we must end the process of specification somewhere; but where this will be is a question which cannot be set out as a general rule, but must be determined (and this, of course, is quite general) against the backdrop of human interests:

The question whether human thought can achieve objective truth is not a question of theory but a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality, power and this-sidedness of his thought. The dispute concerning the reality or unreality of thought—which
is isolated from practice—is a purely scholastic question.\textsuperscript{13}

It is a "purely scholastic question" to ask, for example, whether (in the absence of a context) the notion of "human beings" possesses "reality," whether it is concrete or a mere abstraction. Likewise, it is a purely scholastic question to ask (in the absence of a context) whether it is an abstraction to speak of "violence" without, for instance, distinguishing its character as political or merely criminal; or whether it is an abstraction to speak of a "person" without, for instance, distinguishing its character as either a fetus or (what word do we have here?) a "post-natal person." One cannot imagine why, upon hearing the thesis "Persons are not made of stone," that one would find it important to draw the distinction between fetal-persons and other sorts of persons. On the other hand, it requires little imagination to think of a wide range of cases where a failure to mark off that distinction would leave one's thought hopelessly abstract concerning the issues at hand. The question of whether a fetus is a person cannot be answered for all times, for all interest-contexts. It is similar. It is different. It can be brought under the concept of a person, remaining a difference within an identity. In \textit{Anti-Dühring}, Engels thus wrote that philosophers have long "racked their brains" attempting to determine "where
life begins"--that is, where the concept of a "person"
first takes hold. Marx himself wrote:

The difference between the individual
as a person and what is accidental to
him, is not a conceptual difference but
a historical fact. The distinction has
a different significance at different
times. . . . It is not a distinction
that we have to make for each age ["for
all ages," "once and for all"], but one
which each age makes for itself from
among the different elements which it
finds in existence. . . .

(GI, 87)

It may be instructive to note a passage not from
Marxist literature, but rather from the writings of John
Dewey, in which all of the above elements are contained:
the abstract character of all concepts when taken from
one point of view, the infinite variety of what we have
called "absolutely concrete" concepts, the continual danger
of regarding conceptual distinctions as having "real" or
"timeless" existence "in nature," the place of interest in
making concepts functional.

To classify is, indeed as useful as
it is natural. The indefinite multitude
of particular and changing events is met
by the mind with acts of defining,
inventorying, and listing, reducing to
common heads and tying up in bunches. . . .
But when we assume that our lists and
bunches represent fixed separations
and collections in rerum natura, we
obstruct rather than aid our transactions
with things. We are guilty of a
presumption which nature promptly punishes.
We are rendered incompetent to deal
effectively with the delicacies and
novelties of nature and life. . . . The
tendency to forget the office of distinctions and classifications, and to take them as marking things in themselves is the current fallacy of scientific specialism. . . . This attitude which once flourished in physical science now governs theorizing about human nature. . . . But in fact [Dewey's immediate target are those who speak of primary instincts] there are as many specific reactions to differing stimulating conditions as there is time for, and our lists are only classifications for a purpose.14

The classification which is of central importance to Marx in the Ideology is "human beings," or "man." Marx argues that from the perspective of social theory, there are different kinds of "man," that the concept "human being" or "man" is hopelessly abstract. There is a good bit of talk in Marx about "classes." In the beginning, this must be seen as a conceptual distinction, as a distinction within the genus—-with the same "reality" as the distinctions "pears" and "apples" within the generic notion "fruit." One can protest, of course, "But they are all still men." And this is true, to be sure—-just as a doctor, weary of distinguishing between the great variety of illnesses, despairingly declares that in the future he will treat every case merely as "the sickness"; or, just as a farmer, overcome by the rush of modern information concerning the aspects of farming, determines to treat everything merely as "the crop." One can imagine cases where any of these concepts contain the requisite
concreteness. One morning a foreman asks: "Where is Rollo?" Someone responds that Rollo has a cold; someone else that he has a stomach virus; and a debate ensues. "Never mind," the foreman breaks in, "if he is sick, he is sick. We will all have to work harder today." But within the interest-context of a call to the doctor's office, such a disregard for the concrete distinctions of the case would be bizarre.

Marx argues that the same is true, in social theory, for the concept "man." Man, as a concrete thing in social thought, is knowable only through a detailed study of his social relations. Thus if, as we saw, "Men can be distinguished by...anything that you like," Marx goes on to say that "They themselves begin to distinguish themselves...as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence"--as soon as they begin gathering themselves into real groups, with real and distinctive objective interests, with real and distinctive organization of their lives.

Out of the many local corporations of burghers there arose only gradually the burgher class. The conditions of life of the individual burghers became, on account of their contradiction to the existing relationships and of the mode of labour determined by these, conditions which were common to them all and independent of each individual. (GI, 68)

On the other side of this interest in driving down into
the concrete determinations of the concept "man," Marx also asks what it would be to abolish the distinctions within the concept. He is very much interested in the general notion of "man"—but not one which is merely posited by thought. Thus, for instance, one does not find in the *Ideology* (or anywhere else in Marx’s writing after this time) the notion of man as a "species-being"—which turns up with frequency in his Feuerbachian period. It is not the case that men, as a species, have an essential, common nature of which they must become conscious. It is the question of man objectively constituting himself into a species, into "world-historical, empirically universal individuals." (GI, 46) The kinds of men do not become Men through an act of consciousness, through a definition, through joining into a loving "orgy of universal reconciliation." (It will be remembered that for Feuerbach love, the consciousness of man’s shared essence as a species-being, "unites. . .identifies the high noblesse with the people.") What unifies the kinds of men into Men is the actual empirical act of unifying themselves, of abolishing the real, objective determinations which distinguish them. Thus (and Marx is not here, I hope that it need not be said, disparaging the growth of industry):

If in England a machine is invented,
which deprives countless workers of
bread in India and China, and overturns
the whole form of existence of these
empires, this invention becomes a world-historic fact... From this it follows that the transformation of history into world history [into a history of Man] is not indeed a mere abstract act on the part of the "self-consciousness," the world spirit, or of any other metaphysical spectre, but a quite material, empirically verifiable act, an act the proof of which every individual furnishes as he comes and goes, eats, drinks and clothes himself. (GI, 60)

Individual kinds of men come to share a common human "essence" as an objectively shared general existence appears in their lives. This is what interested Marx in the proletarian class. He believed that he saw developing there not just a further class (with perhaps special virtues, or special moral claims against social injustice, etc.), but a "class" which by becoming a "world-historical, empirically universal" essence would (be definition) abolish classes, make it possible to speak meaningfully of a concrete human essence. And it was only then, Marx believed, that a genuinely human intercourse could be established.

The Idea of a "Thing" and the Idea of "Identity"

Thought which is concrete and not abstract is thought which carries "zu den Dingen." But what are "the things?" As we have seen, for Marx a thing includes as a part of its thingness the relations in which it stands.
(A physical analogy seems appropriate here: The atom has been pictured in physical theory as a kind of autonomous entity which happens to interact with other such entities; it has also been pictured as a kind of fiction denoting the intersection of forces within a unified force field.) For Marx, a fully concrete concept of a thing would have a definition of infinite extent. For insofar as a thing can change while my concept of it remains unchanged, to this extent my concept is abstract. (And we speak at an "absolute," or "logical" level--without regard, for now, for the question of purpose, or interest-context.) "Things" are forever in flux--both Marx and Engels regarded Heraclitus as one of the high points in Greek philosophy. Let us examine some of the rather extreme cases which Marx uses to illustrate the point:

A railroad on which no one rides, which is consequently not used up, not consumed, is only a potential railroad (or a railway on which no one travels) and not a real one. . . .

A garment becomes a real garment only through the act of being worn; a dwelling which is not inhabited is really no dwelling. . . .

The hunger that is satisfied with cooked meat eaten with fork and knife is a different kind of hunger from the one that devours raw meat with the aid of hands, nails, and teeth.15

In the first case, Marx gives three ways of speaking of
the issue, presumably all meaning the same thing. The
most direct is the form of a bare tautology: "A railroad
on which no one rides is a railway on which no one
travels." Or, one can also say that it is not a "real"
one (not a "real railroad on which one travels"), or only
a "potential" one (with a change of a feature or so, it
becomes an "actual" railroad), or a "railroad on which one
travels." It is to say: "Note this difference!" A change
in a single predicate changes the thing itself—if the
thing is to be grasped by the concrete concept, by a con-
cept which includes within its definition the changed
predicate. Thus, while remaining at this level, the con-
crete concept is caught up in a swirl of change in which
its meaning is continually shifting. "Really concrete
thought," like a microscope so powerful that the act of
picturing distorts the pictured thing, thus seems to lose
the object for thought. For it is incomparable to all
other things, and, through time, even to itself.

But still we have a notion of sameness, or identity.
Since no two things (or the single thing compared with it-
self through time) are "really," or "absolutely," or "in
God's eye," or "logically" identical, or just alike, or
the same as one another, it becomes clear that what will
count as identity, what we will with perfectly good sense
mean by identity in ordinary language will depend upon our
interests. In Engels' language, we postulate an "abstract
identity" between things which are logically distinct ("no two things are the same things" is, I assume, a logical, trivial truth), and treat them in reason as identical.

Trotsky wrote that "Every worker knows that it is impossible to make two completely equal objects. . . . A certain deviation is allowed [which is] called tolerance. . . . For concepts there also exists 'tolerance'. . . ."¹⁶ It is clear that our criteria for counting two axles as "just like one another" will differ in the case of go-cart construction from that of forging axles for the wheels of a C-5 cargo transport. No objects are "completely equal"; but we work with them as though they were completely equal insofar as their differences are unimportant for our particular purposes at hand. This notion of "tolerance" is, then, very much like Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblance." Two different activities can both be called "games," not because they both conform to some independent standard of games-as-suchness, but because they resemble each other in certain ways, or because they vary from one another within a tolerance, such that they may for certain purposes be considered as identical, be reasoned about as though they were "the same."

The concrete concept, for Marx, is a living thing,
it is always tentative, its meaning must always be "regrouped," rediscovered as the cases change, as the world around the case changes, as thought itself progresses. Criticizing Proudhon, Marx writes that in his thought "the categories [concepts] are deprived of all spontaneity; the idea 'ceases to function'; there is no life left in it. It is no longer posed or decomposed into categories." Let us see how these themes run through Marx's more substantive writings. This should help to clarify its significance for him.

The Poverty of "Philosophy"

In the year following the writing of the Ideology, Marx published his book against Proudhon with the title The Poverty of Philosophy. We have noted already something of what constituted this "poverty." But let us look more closely. Proudhon's work carried the title The Philosophy of Poverty. Marx wrote in summarizing his objections: "The deficiency of the book is indicated by its very title. The question was so falsely formulated that it could not be answered correctly. Ancient 'property relations' were swallowed up by feudal property relations and these by 'bourgeois' property relations. Thus, history itself had practiced its criticism upon past property relations." 17 Proudhon, because he had failed to
give a concrete rendition of such pivotal concepts, "could not get beyond the answer which Brissot, in a similar work, had already, before 1789, given in the same words: 'Property is theft'." Far from pouncing upon such a "radical" notion, Marx declares it meaningless. Any sense-filled thesis concerning property must begin by rendering that notion concrete—and, for the case of property, this entails a detailed analysis of a society's political economy, of the actual productive and social relations which the concept "property ownership" has at a particular time.

Marx's critique of Ricardo also begins with the title of the latter's major work, *The Principles of Political Economy*. In short, Marx says, there are no such things as the "principles of political economy-as-such." It would have been a great methodological advance if Ricardo had rightly conceived of his work as a description of economic principles obtaining in a particular place at a particular time, within certain social and technological conditions. Instead he, like Smith and others, believed that he was discovering the "real," "natural," eternal principles of political economy-as-such. If I might appeal, certainly not for authority but for example, to a far lesser figure than these two giants of classical economic theory, William Buckley once wrote that "Conservatism is the tacit acknowledgment that all that is finally important
in human experience is behind us; that the crucial explorations have been undertaken, and that it is given to man to know what are the great truths that emerged from them." And then we recall where Marx wrote that "The whole profundity of those modern economists who demonstrate the eternity and harmoniousness of the existing social relations lies in this forgetting" of the fluidity of even the concepts themselves. Thus it is not merely the truth of the "great truths" which must be subjected to scrutiny, but their actual concrete meaning. For instance, another modern conservative writes that, "foremost" among such great truths as were mentioned above is "[Man has the] right to the possession and the use of his property." (I assume that it is clear that we are not engaged in a moral or social critique of modern property relations. We raise merely logical points which, of themselves, can carry us to no substantive conclusions.) At this point, Marx would raise a very modern-sounding point often raised by "linguistic" philosophers: "What do you mean by 'property'?" etc. He could easily demonstrate that, once "property" is given concrete sense, we find that we have not one sense, but many, that "property" in 1976 America, for instance, often means something quite different than it did in 1776 America, etc. As a general (timeless, non-contextual) proposition, "Man has the right to the possession and the use of his property," is abstract and
thus meaningless in the same fashion as is "Property is theft." The truth of either proposition can be judged only within the context of a broad social theory in which their meaning is grounded.

The Manifesto is a virtual pedagogical handbook for such arguments.20 Having been accused of wanting to "abolish property," Marx returns to this subject. He responds that there is no such thing as "property" to be abolished. (Paraphrasing one of his remarks concerning Stirner, Marx might have said that nothing needed to be done with "property"--except perhaps a "critical elucidation.") "Property," where this means an ever-changing complex of relationships is continually being abolished and recreated:

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of all property, but the abolition of bourgeois property.

The French revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favor of bourgeois property.

The abolition of existing property relations is not a peculiar feature of Communism. All property relations in the past have been continually subject to historical change.

Similarly, Marx responds to the charge that he would abolish the "family." This example in particular should have intuitive clarity for our own age. It requires no special knowledge of economics or other social discipline, it is a rather "common sensical" proposition now that
latter day industrial society is "abolishing the family" of an earlier period—insofar as it frees women from household chores, alters the roles of the male and female, increases the ease and hence frequency of parental partner changes, encourages women to find full-time employment, socially organizes and supervises more of the activities of children, brings more of previously "personal" relationships under formal legal control (the emergence of "children's rights," etc.), and so forth. The "family," by its very nature, is no abstract and essential and static "thing," but rather is an "ensemble" of social relationships which are ever in flux. Thus, it is a false picture to believe that the "great truths" about the family have all been established in the course of history—at least not the "great truths" about this kind of family. Again, to paraphrase Marx, "history itself has performed its criticism on the 'family'."

Marx goes on in the Manifesto to respond similarly to the charges that he would abolish "freedom," the "state," "culture," the "Fatherland," etc. The point being to call attention to the concrete conditions against which concrete meanings must take hold, the dynamic nature of those conditions, and hence the necessity of "spontaneity" within our use of the concepts themselves.
Feuerbach and Stirner: 
A Summary and Conclusion

Just as all other German philosophers of the mid-nineteenth century can probably be read as respondents to the thought of Hegel, so also can Marx. I have, however, emphasized the mediation of Marx's response through the writings of his contemporaries Feuerbach and Stirner. Their chief objection to Hegel, like Marx's own, was that his thought had somehow become lost in abstractions, losing contact with the "concrete things" of the real world. Thus, Feuerbach, Stirner, and Marx each set out to discover how one goes about not thinking abstractly, but "concretely" instead--how one goes about forging an adequate relationship, in Engels' words, between "thinking and being."

The concern with the abstract/concrete distinction had been prominent in Hegel's own works. He had argued that all ideas, except the purely ideal idea of the Absolute which would be fully concrete, are abstract. There was, however, a movement within language which is a progression from the more abstract to the more concrete. In particular, the first two terms of each triad were for Hegel relatively abstract, and the final term, the negation of the negation, as a progression toward concreteness, was relatively concrete.

Two consequences followed: Thinking begins with ideas which are relatively the most abstract. Concreteness
is a result, something that happens to ideas in the course of thinking. The importance of this might easily be overlooked. Hegel was aware that this thesis so completely inverted the common wisdom on the matter that he suggested in his essay "Who Thinks Abstractly?" that he might be misunderstood to be writing satire. For the concepts of the "man in the street" are generally taken as paradigms of "concrete notions," while the ideas of a philosopher like himself are taken as supreme cases of "abstract thought." But Hegel insisted, quite in agreement with Stirner on this point, that the abstract thinker is he who "clings to...one predicate" (Stirner's "fixed idea"). With much humor, he examines the common man's method of reasoning, shows the way in which it often proceeds by subsuming things under such fixed ideas, or one-sided predicates, and argues that here we find abstract thinking par excellence.

The second consequence which followed was a certain kind of skepticism. This admission that all concepts are abstractions, when taken seriously, carries with it an awareness that, in Hegel's words, "I cannot say what I merely mean." 21 There is a poem by Robinson Jeffers about a man with a wooden tongue, whose sole desire is to articulate a sound which can be understood. For Hegel, language itself speaks with such a tongue which is always too broad and too inflexible to conform to "what I merely
mean." As thought becomes more concrete, it more narrowly approaches, but never fully arrives at, that which is "merely meant."

Yet, regardless of his concern with the issue, Hegel's posthumous critics had a general sense that his thought had become a paradigm of abstraction, that it had somehow (even if the correct nature of this "how" was not clear) lost contact with the actual world, that it had become thought thinking about abstractions which were its own creation. Feuerbach's solution to the problem of how one thinks not about mere abstractions, but "concretely" instead, was, as we have seen, superficial, and proceeded by simply overlooking the more serious problems which Hegel had raised. In particular, instead of regarding abstractions as a property of all ideas, he treated thought to an overly neat bifurcation into two distinct realms: the abstract, and the concrete. Within the narrow area of his immediate interest (theology), one could draw up a pair of tables, one listing "concrete" notions, and the other abstractions, or reifications. Foremost in this Table of Reifications would be the concept of "God," while that of 'man' would head up the list of concrete notions. Marx, during his Feuerbachian period, was similarly given to such categorical divisions: "The state is an abstraction. The people alone is what is concrete." (p. 56, above) Nowhere
after 1846 will one find similar statements in any work of Marx's.

Feuerbach's appeal surely derived from what had at first appeared as an intrinsic union forged by him between a liberal (or "progressive," or "humanist," or at least "man centered"--none of the above terms are quite adequate) ideology and the method of transformational criticism. Whether one looks toward the intensification of the social crisis, punctuated by the great upheavals which swept the continent within a half-decade of his major writings, or to the philosophical literature of the time, Feuerbach's thought headed up a rather long period in European history where the individual, the masses, the "existential" and the social problem come into an increasing prominence. Whereas the decades ending about 1830 bring to mind such figures as Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, twenty years later we are confronted with the world of Feuerbach, Stirner, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer. Feuerbach was fortunate in having thought the right thoughts at the right time. We could speculate about what might have become of his work had he been born two or three decades earlier. We need not speculate to note that the direct influence of his thought, with a few exceptions within theology, perhaps, was to be measured in years, and not decades. If the historical vantage shows
Feuerbach's impact to have been in some ways superficial, he had, nevertheless and if only for a brief period, touched the nerves of his time.

There was, of course, some loose sense in which Feuerbach signalled a turn toward the "concrete"—to man, rather than to God; to the earthly fare which is of interest to the man aware that "Der Mensch ist was er isst," to the suffering of the common man; to the citizen, rather than the state. And, quite importantly, this general humanism came garbed in a logical/methodological theory which purported to give a philosophical justification for such interests. His method of transformational criticism was thought to neatly account for earlier theoretical-and-hence-practical errors by demonstrating a simple delusion which thought practices upon itself. And this was, of course, the tendency of thought to invert subject and predicate, hypostatize the latter as an entity which was not only real, but the most real. He attempted to demonstrate these errors in theology, and suggested that such mistakes were common to theorizing about a wide range of subject matters. If man had been more concerned about an idea, God, than about Man, this was due to a confusion which philosophy could explain. Somehow, in a way that Feuerbach never made clear, thinking, when rightly in touch with the senses and common sense, begins with ideas which are fully "concrete." Having thus re-inverted Hegel's
beginning, Feuerbach could in this sense go on to declare himself "the philosopher of the common man." What required explanation was not how we achieve concreteness in thought (for such ideas are simply given somehow naturally or intuitively to the man who allows himself to be taught ad oculos, ad tactum, ad gustum), but rather how it is that thought becomes displaced from its unproblematic Eden, how it is that thought errs and thrusts out of itself ideas which are abstract and deceptive.

We observed Marx's efforts to apply Feuerbach's theses to Hegel's philosophy of the state. Hegel had, Marx wrote, reified the political aspect of man's life, and gone on to treat this abstraction, ghost, or hypostatization as an entity with a life of its own, as the fundamental reality which created man in its own image. By exposing this delusion through transformational criticism, man's attention was to be called to the concrete realities of political life--man and his "concrete" social relations. Marx himself had so summarized this task in an 1843 letter to Rouge:

The reform of consciousness consists only in making the world aware of its own consciousness, in awakening it out of its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions. Our whole object can only be--as is also the case in Feuerbach's criticism of religion--to give religious and philosophical questions the form corresponding to man who has become conscious of himself.
Hence, our motto must be: reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analysing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form. It will then become evident that the world has long dreamed of possessing something of which it has only to be conscious in order to possess it in reality.\textsuperscript{23}

In Marx's famous letter to his father (1837), he had written of the troublesome "opposition of what is and what ought to be, which is characteristic of all idealism."\textsuperscript{24} In Feuerbach's work, as summarized by Marx just above, Marx believed that he had discovered a resolution of this opposition. The correctness or truth or justification of a generally humanistic ideology—or, more particularly in regard to Marx's own critique of Hegel's political philosophy, the "truth" or justification of a democratic state—did not take the form of recommending or imposing certain values external to "what is" (reform would not be effectuated "through dogmas"); it instead took the form of exposing or explaining the presence of such values in the presently accepted or existing, but metaphysical/abstract "consciousness that is unintelligible to itself." The world already "possessed" the appropriate "ought," but only in a "dreamlike" way—that is, as a "theological" worship of abstractions which falsified the real content. Transformational criticism was to burst these ghostly phantoms, illuminating their true content, and their actual reference
to the "concrete" things mystically contained therein.

Yet, in the end, the chief interest in the study of Marx's critique of Hegel must be the insight which it gives us into Marx's own political values. For the effort to demonstrate the "truth" of democracy through a criticism of abstractions is unsatisfactory, as is the effort to demonstrate the "truth" of man's concern for man through a criticism of religious abstractions. Stirner demonstrated that such an enterprise reduces itself to a plea to exchange one set of abstractions (i.e., categories, ideas) for another. It reduces itself finally to the categorical injunction: "Contemplate and have your highest regard for Man, not for God." Or: "Contemplate and have your highest regard for the people, not the state."

Stirner merely carried Feuerbach's method to its conclusion, showing that at each stage thought, according to Feuerbach's own theses, came to rest only at a new level of abstractions. Given Feuerbach's definitions, he had demonstrated the "theological" (i.e., abstract) character of religious thought. Given the same definitions, Marx had demonstrated the "theological" character of Hegel's political theory. Stirner applied this method to all thought; hence Marx wrote in the Ideology that Stirner's achievement had been to "canonise [the world] en bloc and thus dispose of it once for all."
Marx's response to Stirner was, first, that he had indeed succeeded in his critique of Feuerbach, but only through having become thoroughly Feuerbachian himself and, as such, performing the necessary *reductio ad absurdum*. In Marx's imagery, Stirner, like Sancho Panza, had "four stumps put under his saddle while he slept and had his ass led away from under him"—he had refuted Feuerbach's position by accepting it, thus leaving himself in the end with no horse to ride. Secondly, now lacking the purported philosophical explanation for man's political and religious alienation, he substituted a (broadly) sociological account. The theories of religious and political life which minimized interest in daily, common realities of life were taken to result not from philosophical/religious errors (as both Feuerbach and Stirner believed), but instead from a social reality which they rightly reflected. Thus, their "criticism" was, in the end, a function of practical activities, not of philosophical speculation. But the question still remained of how one goes about thinking not about abstractions, but "concretely" instead. For Marx's criticism of Feuerbach was not that he had treated abstraction as a problem for thought; he agreed still that thinking can somehow become disengaged from the world. It was in the *Ideology* and not his earlier Feuerbachian works that he cautioned that
"Language becomes a phrase as soon as it is given an independent existence." His criticism of Feuerbach, like Stirner's, was that he had failed to break out of the autonomous world of abstractions, having merely substituted one group of abstractions for another. Although his method was different, Feuerbach had, like Hegel, attempted to escape abstractions merely through the activity of thought thinking about thought.

The influence of Feuerbach does not disappear from Marx's writing after the Ideology. But it is everywhere transformed into something new. As we saw, in Marx's work on Hegel's political thought, he rather uncritically takes up Feuerbach's notion of man as a "species-being" which in the Ideology is transformed into a "world-historical, empirically universal individual." Marx also acquired the notion of "alienation" from Feuerbach's religious philosophy, and uses it frequently during the Feuerbachian period. But this notion, as used by Feuerbach, clearly depends upon the notion of the species-being--man's essential nature is alienated from him through the grammatical/metaphysical error. Thus, in rejecting the "abstract" notion of the species-being, one would expect that Marx would have to reject the notion of alienation (or estrangement) as well. And he does this, quite clearly in both the Manifesto and the Ideology:
"This 'estrangement' (to use a term which will be comprehensible to the philosophers). . ." (GI, 46) Again, however, it is not merely rejected, but transformed through giving it a concrete content. After this period, "alienation" in Marx always refers to the empirical phenomenon of human creations coming to have an independent life over and perhaps against the interests of its creators. In these and similar ways Feuerbach's influence is retained but given a new form in Marx's later works.

Marx believed that he had discovered in Feuerbach and Stirner two sides of abstract thought. Feuerbach, in fact unwilling to go to the things, to continually "pose, and decompose, and recompose" his concepts against the "actual concrete point of departure," remained at a level of rather sterile generalizations about "man" and "love" and "suffering," etc. But if Feuerbach's thought had leveled off at a generality which lacked determinate content for thought, Stirner was interested in a level of specificity which lacked determinate content for thought. In the first case, the actual determinations of a thing were swallowed up by a general category, and thus differences became indifferent for thought. In the second case, the actual determinations of a thing, through Stirner's epistemological reductionism, were declared to be unrealities for thought. Every
assignable determination was swept away as a mere "ghost." And thus, insofar as Stirner refused to quit speaking, and insofar as he had no interest in concrete determinations, his thought was abstract. In particular, his "Ego" was the barest of abstractions, and (as we saw) a particularly monstrous one at that:

[Stirner's] Ego is no real Ego, but only the Ego of the equations...in formal logic, in the theory of judgements, figures as Gaius.

(GI, 310)

As the truly classic case of what was to Marx a "philosopher," Stirner (like the thinker who, stripping a "house" of all determinations believed that he "was getting at its core"—page 80, above) believed that he was getting at the "real man" by stripping away everything "accidental" to it.

In the Ideology, Marx first attempts to set out a theory concerning what it is to think concretely which escapes both sides of abstraction represented in Feuerbach and Stirner. I will summarize his conclusions through the following Eleven Theses on Marx.

I

The object of thought (a thing, action, event, state of affairs, etc.) is logically identical with the totality of its predicates.

It is not something which somehow lies "behind" its predicates, "squatting outside"
its predicates. It is, instead, the "ensemble" of its predicates.

II

As a necessary consequence of the first thesis, the study of any single object of thought is the study of the whole from the perspective of that object.

The study of, for instance, capital, labor, production, distribution, or property are all studies of the totality, society, from these differing perspectives. One may begin with a relatively abstract definition of "property"; but what this property is is finally known only through an analysis of the full range of productive and social relationships which men enter into in the society studied.

One can begin with a relatively abstract definition of an action, such as "murder," or "taking hostages," or "taking a human life"; but an ethical inquiry into the nature of what this act of hostage taking, etc., is finally depends upon an analysis of the full human context (political, social, economic. . .) in which the action turns up.

III

A further consequence of the first thesis is that the object of thought is in a continual flux.

If, for instance, this table on which I write is the ensemble of its predicates, and not something squatting outside of them in fixed rigidity regardless of the changes within its predicates, then in so far as the list of statements which are truly predicated of the table continues to change, the "table" itself continues to become "something new."
IV

The principle source of this flux is to be attributed to changes in material circumstance, not to the internal movement of purely conceptual development.

V

It is a logical truth that everything that can be distinguished is different.

Absolute identity is a logical relationship only. In the real world, nothing is, strictly speaking, "the same as" anything other than itself. The confusion of this logical relationship with a factual one is what Dewey called the regarding of class distinctions as having existence in rerum natura. Different things are analogous; they are never the same.

VI

But thinking necessarily treats different things as though they were the same, positing an "abstract identity" where in fact there is difference.

VII

Such abstract identities are, however, never good or bad in the abstract. This thing and that thing are both "men," or are both cases of "violence," or cases of "owning property" only within the context of some interest, some purpose. As moral theorists have written about the concept of the "good" itself, we may say that for a classification to be good it must be good for something.

The question of whether thought can achieve a concrete representation of its object, Marx wrote, is a "purely scholastic question" when asked in the abstract. The question is, he wrote, a "practical" one.
Dewey wrote likewise: "Nevertheless there is a genuine objective standard for the goodness of special classifications. One will further the cabinet-maker in reaching his end while another will hamper him. . . . The necessity of execution supplies objective criteria. Things have to be sorted out and arranged so that their grouping will promote successful action for ends."

VIII

Language, depending upon abstract identities, tends to call our attention away from novelty and change.

IX

Theses VI and VIII, together with reason's demand for internal coherence, consistency, gives thought a tendency to settle for, or even demand, merely "abstract consistencies."

(We will explore Marx's apparent concern for this, as well as the Eleventh Thesis, below, in some detail in the chapter which follows.)

X

In so far as the objects denoted by concepts are in flux, the truth-value of propositions containing those concepts must be continually re-established.

XI

Language contains an essentially conservative bias in so far as it tends to hold things static, to make difference indifferent, to reduce the unique to a general category, to call attention away from novelty and change.
NOTES
TO CHAPTER IV


2A. R. Manser, The End of Philosophy: Marx and Wittgenstein. This monograph, Professor Manser's inaugural lecture at the University of Southampton, is an excellent introduction to some of the common themes running through Wittgenstein and Marx. The passages cited are found on pages 7 and 5.

3Ibid., p. 4.


5Ibid., pp. 101 & 100.


7The assumption is made only for the purpose of example. In fact, the word is used across a range of meanings from one pole which is essentially a physical category (from the Latin violentia-force, or vehemence; thus the sense of someone thrusting about violently, or of a tea-pot boiling violently, or of someone having a violent personality or using violent language) to another which is essentially moral (from the Latin violatus—to violate, injure, dishonor; thus we speak of doing violence to someone's mind, or of the violence of ghetto life on the poor).

Marx, Grundrisse. . . , p. 890.

Ibid., p. 889.

Ibid., p. 85.

Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 189.

The 2nd of Marx's "Eleven Theses on Feuerbach."


Marx, Grundrisse. . . , pp. 91 & 92.


Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 196.

It would be beside the point immediately at issue to explore the actual development of, for instance, property relations. We are interested in the nature of Marx's criticism, not its details. However the "fluidity" of a concept like "property," or "property ownership" is perhaps not as common-sensically obvious as with certain other concepts; and in so far as one has no sense of the detail, one will miss the general nature of the argument as well.

As an extraordinarily brief (and thus crude) example of what Marx has in mind, the dominant form of feudal property is stripped of its elaborate social- contractual relationships as it moves into the capitalist period, and the dominant form of capital property has now become distinctively more liquid and alienated from management relationships than in the time of Marx. The non-Marxist economist A. A. Berle, in his The American Economic Republic and other works, takes as his arguments' premise the unique character of modern property relations, and thus the unique character of what it now means to "own property."


Korsch, however, does not trace the roots of this concern back to their logical or epistemological origins. He generalizes the problem as the need for "historical specification"; "Marx comprehends all things social in terms of a definite historical epoch." (Karl Marx, p. 24) Whether an historical epoch provides a necessary or sufficiently narrow context depends upon the nature of the "thing" and our interest in it.

A more accurate description of this methodological concern is provided in Bertell Ollman's essay "Prolegomenon to a Debate on Marx's Method" (*Politics and Society*: Summer, 1973);

Marx's main criticism of bourgeois ideologists is that they deal with abstractions, and are neither concerned with the relations which link these abstractions to the totality, making them both relative and historically specific. However, Marx too deals with abstractions--of necessity. All thought and study of the totality begins by breaking it down into manageable parts. . . . Marx, unlike the bourgeois ideologists he criticizes, is fully conscious that he abstracts the units he then proceeds to study (rather than finding them ready made), and is also aware of their necessary links with the totality.

(emphasis added)

What is unclear to me is how a conceptual mistake can be made a defining feature of a social class. It seems to me that at this point philosophy and sociology become
confused, with help to neither.

But what I take to be an unnecessary confusion on Ollman's part is hardly peculiar to him. Sartre: "The bourgeoisie class, it seems to me, may intellectually be defined by its use of the analytic turn of mind, the initial postulate of which is that compounds necessarily are only a pattern of simple elements." (From the introductory essay to the first edition of "Les Temps Modernes") Lukacs: "The Marxist method, the dialectical materialism knowledge of reality, can arise only from the point of view of a class, from the point of view of the struggle of the proletariat." (History of Class Consciousness--Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1972)


I am aware of the fact that in 1850 Nietzsche was a babe of six, and Schopenhauer a gentleman of 62 with his chief works many years behind him. But as Schopenhauer himself wrote, the roses strewn in his path were "only white roses"; and these were first strewn in the era of which we speak. And if Nietzsche was a mere child, he was a child of his time, unlike Feuerbach or Marx who, educated as Hegelians, were men of maturity in the childhood of their age.


Marx believed that the capitalism of his day represented such a case of "concrete alienation" (and I do not wish to imply that the concept's meaning was for him coextensive with, exhausted by "capitalism"). I mention it here as a clarifying example.

In The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck captured Marx's latter sense of alienation quite exactly. The Oklahoma farmers, unable to make their mortgage payments because of drought, were being chased from their land by armed men. A farmer suggests shooting one of these men, but is told that it would do no good since he is not responsible, but is merely following orders from the land bank. The suggestion is then made to go to the land bank. But it is merely following orders from a distant bank, which is
itself merely following the (economic) laws which it must if it is to exist. Steinbeck then, in the voice of the narrator, discusses this "monster" which destroys people— that is, a "thing" which is produced by men, but which comes to have an independent existence which no man or group of men in fact control.
CHAPTER V

"CONCRETE THOUGHT" AND ITS RELATION TO CERTAIN ISSUES WITHIN DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

We are now prepared, in this and the chapter which follows, to demand more particular results from the historical/exegetical inquiry with which we have been occupied. There is an intrinsic interest in simply getting clear about Marx's reflections on abstraction and concreteness. But is there an extrinsic interest as well? It is a reasonable hypothesis that Marx's interest in and conclusions concerning these issues—which occupied him not peripherally, but as a central focus of his attention to which he devoted many hundreds of pages of writing; which occupied him not briefly, but over a period of at least four years—may have value for clarifying other, perhaps more esoteric themes within his thought. The general form of the argument in both of the remaining chapters is that there are indeed a series of issues within his thought which can be clarified through giving adequate attention and significance to this concern with the problem of abstraction and concreteness. In short, certain theses have long been attributed to Marx in a form which, in this writer's opinion, are either unclear (the
thesis that "the end justifies the means"), or wrong (the belief that the essence of Marx's dialectic is some kind of triadic movement), or just plain nonsense (the belief that Marx "denied the laws of formal logic"; and a certain thesis concerning the "revolutionary" nature of Marx's dialectic). My claim will be that (a) most of these theses have been ascribed to Marx through interpretations of certain rather abstruse remarks which turn up in his writings, and thus have this much of a genuine textual basis; (b) the interpretations, as noted above, are inadequate; and (c) the reinterpretations which I offer have the merits of, firstly, being senseful in themselves, and, secondly, agreeing in spirit and detail with Marx's sense of the importance of, and proper resolution of the abstract/concrete problem.

* * *

Anyone who is familiar with the general body of Marxist literature will have noted by now two equally important facts. The first is that our discussion of Marx's theses on what it is to think concretely has significant points of overlay with past discussions of Dialectical Materialism. This ought not to be surprising. For Engels once wrote that "To think dialectically is only to think concretely." And in what was perhaps his
briefest characterization of his method, Marx himself described it as merely a process for rising "from the abstract to the concrete."¹ In the present chapter, we will make explicit some of the more important implications of Marx's reflections on concrete thought for a correct understanding of certain issues within Dialectical Materialism—where that term refers us to Marx's own methodological theory.

It is equally clear, however, that the remarks on concreteness cannot begin to account for all that has come to be associated with the notion of Dialectical Materialism. Thus, it must be emphasized that it is not our purpose to generate from the remarks on concreteness a "new theory of Dialectical Materialism." Nevertheless, there are important relationships here; and these remain to be explored.

I will argue that there are at least two issues generally associated with Marx's dialectic which can be greatly clarified through an interpretation consistent with his reflections on abstraction and concreteness. These are:

(1) the sense that can be given to the claim that Marx's dialectic somehow violates the laws for formal logic; and
(2) the sense that can be given to the claim common in Marxist literature that Marx's dialectic constitutes an "algebra of revolution."

There is a third issue which we will take up just below. This is the question of the relation between the triadic method and Marx's dialectic. The consideration of this third issue is justified not by the fact that our earlier discussions of abstraction and concreteness will directly illuminate it. It is, instead, that the expectation that any discussion of "dialectics" will be a discussion of a triadic movement is so widespread that, unless this issue be confronted directly and disposed of clearly, our interpretation of the dialectic as the "algebra of revolution" and of the "laws of dialectical logic" within Marx--our interpretation of these issues as interpretations of the "dialectic" will be seriously obscured, or undermined. And then there is simply the interest in correctly understanding this issue which is so basic to any interpretation of Marx.

**Marx and the Triadic Method**

It has become a textbook truth that "dialectics" refers us to a method of reasoning which proceeds according to some triadic pattern. There is nothing unusual in
Popper's claim that "Dialectic is a theory which maintains that something—for instance, human thought—develops in a way characterized by the so-called dialectic triad: thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis."² Did Marx have such a dialectic?

In pursuit of this question, I take as my stalking horse an essay recommended under the heading "dialectic" in the 1972 edition of The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "The Hegel Legend of 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis'" by Gustav Mueller.³ His argument lends itself to a quite straightforward summarization: A legend has grown up, believed almost universally, but "prominently illustrated" in W. T. Stace's The Philosophy of Hegel, that Hegel's dialectic can be summarized as a method which moves from thesis to antithesis to synthesis. This legend "was spread by Karl Marx"; it is, in fact, "Marxism superimposed on Hegel." (emphasis added) The pernicious roots of this legend are to be read, for instance, in "Chapter II, Paragraph 1" of Marx's The Poverty of Philosophy. Marx spread the legend; he did not originate it. This denial of creativity of Marx is taken as important by Mueller:

The few passages in Marx's writings that resemble philosophy are not his own. He practices the Communistic habit of expropriation without compensation. Knowing this in general, I was also convinced that there must be a source for this "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis," and I finally discovered it.
Mueller's discovery was a book published in 1837 by someone named H. M. Chalybäus which had characterized Hegel's dialectic in this fashion (although wrong, it was a "brilliant hunch," Mueller writes), and that the book was discussed at the Hegel Club of which Marx was a member while he was a student at Berlin. Thus: Marx took up the thought ("brutal simplifications" being, after all, his "specialty"), and fooled Stace et al. with this "deadly, abstract machinery." Mueller cannot resist mentioning an unrelated "minor legend" (about Hegel's political thought) which was "innocently taken for granted" in Tsanoff's history of philosophy that similarly had its origin in a "vicious Marxist smear." Mueller's philosophical world is blissfully divided between the good guys and the bad guys, between the innocent and brilliant sometimes-dupes, and the simplistic and vicious plagiarists.

That such material was printed in the mid-1950's should surprise no one. That it is considered leading scholarship in the field in the early 1970's should give pause. Yet, our chief interest here is in Mueller's conception of the dialectical triad as "Marxism superimposed on Hegel." Is this the essence of either Marx's or Hegel's dialectic?

Let us turn to the supposed evidence concerning Marx, to that crucial "Chapter II, Paragraph 1" of The
Poverty of Philosophy:

Here we are right in Germany! We shall now have to talk metaphysics while talking political economy. And in this again we shall but follow M. Proudhon's "contradictions." Just now he forced us to speak English, to become pretty well English ourselves. Now, the scene is changing. M. Proudhon is transporting us to our dear fatherland and is forcing us, whether we like it or not, to become German again.

It is extraordinary indeed that Mueller extracted his thesis concerning Marx's relation to Hegel and concerning his own dialectic from that! But if we assume that Mueller meant by "paragraph 1" the entire "section 1"--a section of about twenty-five pages, on "the method of the metaphysics of political economy," which does in fact deal with the thesis-antithesis-synthesis issue--even if we assume this, the situation is not much improved for Mueller. The passage which introduces Marx's relevant discussion is this:

If we had M. Proudhon's intrepidity in the matter of Hegelianism we should say: [Pure reason] is distinguished in itself from itself. What does this mean? Impersonal reason, having outside itself neither a base on which it can pose itself, nor an object to which it can oppose itself, nor a subject with which it can compose itself is forced to turn head over heels, in posing itself, opposing itself and composing itself--position, opposition, composition. Or, to speak Greek--we have thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. For those who do not know the Hegelian language, we shall give the consecrating formula: --affirmation, negation and negation of the negation.
First of all, assuming with Mueller that Marx was introduced to this language of thesis, antithesis, synthesis through Chalybäus' book, far from having considered it a pivotal new insight into Hegel's method, Marx here explicitly ridicules it as a pretentious, "Greek" formula for what is obvious at a school-boy level of reading Hegel. And this is the second point: The triadic movement (in distinction from the language in question) simply is prominent in Hegel's thought. To reduce it to this triadic movement is, to be sure, hopelessly simplistic. But it is, nevertheless, virtually omnipresent in Hegel. He himself sometimes summarized his "deductions" in the form of "affirmation, negation, and negation of the negation," and the surface of his argument, at least, proceeds according to this form, with but the rarest of exceptions, throughout. It is Mueller, not Marx, who suggests that the mere jargonized characterization of this veneer was a "brilliant hunch."

The third point to be made is that, whatever the role of the triadic movement in Hegel, it is quite absent in the thought of Marx; and the expectation that any discussion of Marx's theory of "dialectical materialism" must include a discussion of such a triadic movement is a false one. The claim that "The legend of Hegel's dialectic [as a series of triadic movements] is Marxism superimposed
on Hegel," is one that not even a surface reading of Marx could justify. And Mueller's essay—although he claims that Marx (1) forced the triadic movement into the idea of the dialectic, and then (2) exchanged the "categories of economic movements" for the movement of "pure ideas"—offers not a single example of the triadic movement playing a part in Marx's thinking.

The reason that Hegel's dialectic required something like the triadic movement is the very reason that triplicity plays no role in the thinking of Marx. The Hegelian system purports to be self-moving—thought unfolding itself, ideas developing into ever more complex forms. The source of this conceptual development does not lie outside of thought, or in a reflexive relation between thought and "matter" (i.e., "things" external to thought, such as institutions, social relations, etc.). The source of the development is said to lie within the concepts themselves—in a "negation," or "antithesis" which is somehow a part of the idea. Attempting to think the concept of pure Being, Hegel writes in beginning the exposition of his system, requires that we think of something which is neither here nor there, which is qualitatively undetermined, which has no boundaries; but this is the concept of Nothing. Thus, Nothing, as the "negation" of Being, is found in the very concept of Being. Hegel
resolves this apparent "contradiction" in the idea of Becoming, and moves on in such a fashion to ever higher determinations of thought.

The dialectic as a self-determination of conceptual development is, however, just what Marx finds most objectionable in Hegel—a philosophical onanism, he writes. For him, the dynamic element of the conceptual flux derives not from an internal "negation," but rather from the movement of the "thing" which we attempt to capture for thought. If the concept of "property," for instance, is a dynamic notion, this "movement" arises not through the efforts of pure thought to grasp it, and the one-sidedness and contradictions which show themselves within it, but rather through the concept's concrete reflection of a reality which is itself in flux—because the social thing which we call "property" is itself changing. To recall our citation from Marx, above, it is because the concept is for him determined or "composed" by an external "subject" that it is not required to "turn head over heels," undergoing such a triadic development. Thus, far from being the essence of Marx's own dialectic, such triplicity is quite extraneous to it. 7

Why, then, call it a "dialectical" method at all? The "dia" of dialectic means, in part, to "split in two," to break up. Whatever more they may mean, for Marx the
"laws of dialectical reasoning" in the least (as we will observe in the section which follows) direct us to the importance of splitting concepts in two, to driving on into the "distinctions of the manifold." And we have seen that for Marx this splitting is also a relating, since the "thing," as ensemble, is identical to its relationships. Moreover, this dialectic is a materialistic dialectic insofar as (contrary to Hegel's idealism) the primary motive force of the conceptual development is not the abstract movement of reason (of merely logical "one-sidedness"), but rather the continual revision of concepts in the effort to grasp the changing and diverse "things" themselves. This meaning of "dialectic" is not novel. Even in Hegel, Stace writes, "The term 'dialectical', ordinarily used to express the entire deductive process of the Logic, is (sometimes) used to signify specially... the breaking down of the absolute distinctions set up by the understanding." 8

Marx and the "Denials of Laws of Logic"

According to Popper, "When in logical difficulties," the dialectician believes that he can answer his opponents with the claim that his "contradictions...are quite legitimate." He goes on to "refute" dialectics through the argument (which, regardless of its general
acceptance, seems quite doubtful to this writer) that "if two contradictory sentences are admitted, any sentence whatsoever must be admitted." Whatever the merits of that argument, it is clear that reason cannot admit contradictions, and that dialectics so defined is an utter absurdity.

That Hegel did not, however, argue that contradictions "are quite legitimate" is clear, as Stace rightly notes, since it is "this very law which compels us to pass from the second to the third category of each triad." We attempt to "think" something, or to state a theory or definition clearly, and we find ourselves, says Hegel, confronted with contradictory propositions which must be resolved through further movement into the system. Hegel's theory of truth, in fact, is a theory of consistency. Having no external object against which to measure itself, a proposition is judged for adequacy, or truth, only against the measure of reason itself, which is a demand for internal coherence:

We must however in the first place understand clearly what we mean by Truth. In common life truth means the agreement of an object with our conception of it. We thus presuppose an object to which our conception must conform. In the philosophical sense of the word, on the other hand, truth may be described, in general abstract terms, as the agreement of a thought-content with itself. . . .

The study of truth, or, as it is here explained to mean, consistency, constitutes
the proper study of logic.\textsuperscript{11} \textit{\textsuperscript{(emphasis added)}}

Popper is not to be faulted for criticizing the treatment of consistency in "dialectical theories"—where that term refers us to the writings of certain persons who have considered themselves Marxists or Hegelians. For it would be easy to list such persons who have believed that Marx and Hegel (correctly) "denied the laws of logic." But these persons go unmentioned in his essay. He is to be faulted for writing a section on the "Hegelian Dialectic" which merely \textit{asserts} that for Hegel "contradictions do not matter," which (excepting the unrelated "That which is reasonable must be real.") contains not a single direct reference to Hegel's works, and which, similarly and with equal lack of evidence, attributes such a view of contradiction to Marx. As Hegel once wrote about philosophy in general, we might write of Hegel's own work, and that of Marx which followed: "No other art or science is subjected to this last degree of scorn, to the supposition that we are masters of it without ado."

Yet, it has been Marxists themselves who have generally been most interested in attributing some such view of contradiction and other fundamental logical laws to Marx. It would be helpful to turn to those passages in Marx's works which have been cited as evidence for the claim that his logic was "quite different from the
prevailing logic of the bourgeois world,"\textsuperscript{12} that Marx had rejected formal logic, demonstrated its errors, and replaced it with a "new" logic. But where is this evidence? In one of the more recent works on the subject, which one might assume would incorporate the best evidence amassed over the past century and more, George Novack writes one hundred and forty pages on The Logic of Marxism and its relation to formal logic without once citing relevant textual evidence from any of Marx's works. The work is peppered with snatches of Hegel, of Engels, and of Trotsky. And while it is not my interest here to evaluate his treatment of those men, the significant point is that Marx's own works offered up not even a suggestive, exploitable thesis for Novack's work.

Nevertheless, we are confronted with the fact that Marx's dialectical method is claimed, by Engels and many others, to have demonstrated errors in three laws of Aristotelian logic. Let us identify these laws, and attempt a senseful explanation of what such a claim might have meant for Marx himself. Marx is said to have denied:

1. **The Law of Non-Contradiction**
2. **The Law of Identity**
3. **The Law of the Excluded Middle**

We can "deny" the law of non-contradiction by
making statements of the following form: "A fetus is a person; and a fetus is not a person." "Property is theft; and property is not theft." "God exists; and God does not exist." Such Marxian antinomies, however, clearly resolve themselves through the addition of a prime to one side of the proposition: "A fetus is a person; and a fetus is not a person'.' This is to say that the appearance of contradiction depends upon an unspecified ambiguity. But the point of this "denial" of the logical law is precisely to call attention to the ambiguity lurking within language itself.

By emphasizing the preposition, I mean to distinguish between merely external ambiguity, or, we might say, ambiguity brought to language through simple verbal or grammatical errors, and ambiguity which is coextensive with abstraction. And, for analytic purposes, we can distinguish two different kinds of the latter: synchronic ambiguity, and diachronic ambiguity. The first refers to the various concrete meanings of a concept, or kinds of things signified by a word, at a single period of time. For instance, under the concept person we may have, at a period of time and depending upon the interest-context, fetal-persons, irreversibly-comatose-persons, etc. On the other hand, a single thing, and thus a concrete conception of it may come to "differ from itself" through time. The
single person may, for instance, pass through the various "kinds" of persons mentioned above. Or "property" becomes a different kind of thing through history. Or the "family"..., etc. This Heraclitean flux I call diachronic ambiguity.

Thus, the "denial" of the law of non-contradiction turns out to be a kind of insistence upon consistency—a real, concrete consistency, as opposed to an abstract, illusory, merely verbal consistency. An extreme example: Suppose that I go to a rancher and purchase five horses, unseen and without further specifications. I receive five horses, wooden, usable for carpentry. The rancher shrugs at my protests: "You asked for five horses, and here they are." "Haven't you heard of dialectical reasoning!?" I shout at this Aristotelian bunko-artist. "Don't you know that this is both a horse, and not a horse?" And just as we would not accept such treatment from a horse trader, we should not accept it from a philosopher, or social theorist. And we have seen that Marx's emphasis is upon the difficulty of not accepting such merely verbal consistency in thought. But we leave this issue for now, returning to it, with more serious cases, below.

The denial of the law of identity is merely a different way of expressing the above, although a good bit more peculiar to the ear: "It is not the case that all
persons are persons." Etc. That is to say, for instance, that some "persons" are fetuses, that there are different kinds of persons, that not all "persons" are "persons!"—that the identity of the language is not to obscure the unending variety of "things" which are included under the concepts but which are themselves quite different from one another. Again, it is a maxim which reminds us to maintain for reason the difference contained within the identity. And again, all mystery is resolved with a prime.

The denial of the law of the excluded middle, toward the same end, expresses the significance of statements of the form: "A fetus is neither a person nor not a person." "The wage-earning class of a modern industrial society is neither a proletariat nor not a proletariat." "The present U.S. economy is neither capitalism nor not capitalism." And this, of course, is merely a way of insisting that both the similarities and dissimilarities be kept in equal view.

What in Marxist literature goes beyond such an interpretation of the "denials" of formal logic is, at its worst, simple confusions about what logic is, and at its best, a number of theses which really have nothing to do with logical or conceptual questions at all. The opposite side of these "denials" is the "laws of dialectical logic." By examining one of these, it will be clearer
what we leave out of the traditional interpretations. According to Engels, there are three: The Law of the Transformation of Quantity into Quality; The Law of the Interpenetration of Opposites; and The Law of the Negation of the Negation. I will examine the first, seeing what sense has been given to it, on the one hand, and what sense can be given to it, on the other.

The Law of Transformation of Quantity into Quality is taken from Hegel's *Science of Logic*. In that work, Hegel had argued that quantity and quality are two aspects of a single thing: "Quantity is a moment of measure and is connected with quality."\textsuperscript{13} And thus, as different "moments" within a unity, there was a "transition from quality into quantity and \textit{vice versa}."\textsuperscript{14} I cite the context of this last quotation; for it shows that here, in Hegel's *Logic*, we have the entirety of the (misconceived) "Marxist" theory of a \textit{revolutionary} logic:

It is said, \textit{natura non facit saltum}; and ordinary thinking when it has to grasp a coming-to-be or a ceasing -to-be, fancies it has done so by representing it as a \textit{gradual} emergence or disappearance. But we have seen that the alterations of being in general are not only the transition of one magnitude into another, but a transition from quality into quantity and \textit{vice versa}, a becoming-other which is an interruption of gradualness and the production of something qualitatively different from the reality which preceded it. Water, in cooling, does not gradually harden as if it thickened like porridge,
gradually solidifying until it reached the consistency of ice; it suddenly solidifies, all at once.

Marxists (and I do not speak of Marx here) applied this analysis as a "law" to all phenomena. They have argued that dialectics proves the necessity of revolution—quantitative changes in social development (like the quantitative changes in the temperature of water) must eventually be transformed, must eventually take the "qualitative leap" (a term also taken from Hegel) across the "nodal line" (Hegel).

This, of course, is to confuse different senses of the "qualitative leap." On the one hand, we have something like qualitative leaps \underline{between concepts}. Among Hegel's several examples is the adding of seeds into a cluster. At some point we have a "heap." This heap is not something added to the cluster in addition to the individual seeds. But somewhere along the way we have a heap whereas before we did not. Or at some point (to use another of Hegel's examples') "frivolity or thoughtlessness is exceeded and something quite different comes about, namely crime."

On the other hand, we have something like qualitative leaps occurring \underline{between things} or states of affairs. But whether, and how, and the extent to which this concept is appropriate to thinking of physical things is a question
for observation to resolve, and clearly is different for different things. It seems somewhat an accurate description of what happens when water freezes, more accurate in certain other chemical reactions, but not at all accurate for a wide range of other changes (for instance, the thickening of porridge!). It is obvious, in any case, that a logical or conceptual point can of itself tell us nothing at all about whether a given process will develop in a "revolutionary" or merely "evolutionary" manner. If this is the "revolutionary" or "critical" aspect of the dialectic about which Marx spoke, then it was silly indeed.

Now, what is correct about this law of transformation of quantity into quality is that it calls attention to the fact that "quantitative" changes are taking place within the apparently static "quality." This is to say, for instance, that although an economic system over long years maintains the same "quality" (e.g., "capitalism"), it is continually undergoing "quantitative changes"—changes which do not count as changes within the quality itself, until some point of "transformation" has been reached. Again, these qualitative changes or differences can be conceived not only as occurring through time within a single thing, but also as existing across space between different things. Also again, where or when these transformations occur will depend upon an interest-context.
All of this, of course, is not too startling. Nor does it exhaust what Marx had to say about concreteness, but rather the significance of the "denials" and special "laws" must be interpreted in view of those larger theses. What it does do, and this seems to have some importance, is to serve, not as logical rules in any ordinary sense, but as a set of maxims which continually call our attention to the need for specification, or concreteness—to the danger of language "going on holiday," or becoming a "mere phrase," etc. It reminds me very much of one of Kant's "principles of pure reason" (which he too called a "law"), the "law of specification":

Empirical specification soon comes to a stop in the distinction of the manifold, if it be not guided by the antecedent transcendental law of specification, which, as a principle of reason, leads us to seek always for further differences, and to suspect their existence even when the senses are unable to disclose them.\textsuperscript{15}

This "law" is important since the very nature of reason itself compels us to treat different things as though they were the same. Unless reason treats diverse and thus different things as though they have a "hidden identity," "we should have no reason at all, and without reason no coherent employment of the understanding."\textsuperscript{16} The special import of the law of specification is a reminder not to lose the "distinction" within the "hidden identity."

I am fearful, however, that some may find the above
theses (however correct on their own terms, and however modest their claims in relation to the whole of Dialectical Materialism) to surely miss Marx's intentions. It may, then, be not without point to call upon the authority of at least one Marxist, Leon Trotsky, who has given a similar interpretation to these issues. (The passage has been edited, as indicated, in part for brevity, and in part leaving out material which seems to me incorrect; but the excluded material does not affect the sense of that which is included.)

At first glance, it could seem that these "subtleties" are useless. In reality they are of decisive significance. The axiom "A" is equal to "A" appears on the one hand to be the point of departure for all our knowledge, on the other hand the point of departure for all the errors in our knowledge. To make use of the axiom "A" is equal to "A" with impunity is possible only within certain limits. When quantitative changes in "A" are negligible for the task at hand then we can presume that "A" is equal to "A". . . . To determine at the right moment the critical point where quantity changes into quality is one of the most important and difficult tasks in all the spheres of knowledge including sociology.

Every worker knows that it is impossible to make two completely equal objects. In the elaboration of bearing-brass into cone bearings, a certain deviation is allowed. . . . [Trotsky goes on to say that this allowable deviation is called a "tolerance," and that there is an analogous tolerance in our use of concepts.]

Vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers'
state, etc. as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals equal to morals, etc. Dialectical thinking analyzes all things and phenomena in their continuous changes, while determining in the material conditions of those changes that critical limit beyond which "A" ceases to be "A". . .

The fundamental flaw of vulgar thought lies in the fact that it wishes to content itself with motionless imprints of a reality which consists of eternal motion. Dialectical thinking gives to concepts, by means of closer approximations, corrections, concretizations, a richness of content and flexibility; I would even say a succulence which to a certain extent brings them close to living phenomena. Not capitalism in general, but a given capitalism at a given stage of development. . .

Dialectics does not deny the syllogism, but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally changing reality. . .

All of this, as we see, contains nothing "metaphysical," or "scholastic," as conceited ignorance affirms.17

This seems to me a generally correct sketch of what Marx himself would have written concerning this aspect of his dialectic.

Marx and the "Algebra of Revolution"

Among all of the nonsense which has been written under the heading "Dialectical Materialism," probably none has been more consistently repeated, and probably none has been more responsible for the poor repute of that term than a certain thesis concerning the "revolutionary
nature" of "Marx's philosophy." To my knowledge, the trouble really began with Plekhanov—Marx certainly never offered this theory of the dialectic's "revolutionary" character, and I do not know where Engels did. But Plekhanov wrote:

Many people confuse dialectics with the doctrine of development; dialectics is in fact such a doctrine. However, it differs substantially from the vulgar "theory of evolution," which is based completely on the principle that neither Nature nor history proceeds in leaps and that all changes in the world take place by degrees. Hegel had already shown that, understood in such a way, the doctrine of development was unsound and ridiculous. . .

Herzen was right in saying that Hegel's philosophy, which many considered conservative in the main, was a genuine algebra of revolution. With Hegel, however, this algebra remained wholly unapplied to the burning problems of practical life. . . [In] Marx's materialist philosophy [this] "algebra" manifests itself with all the irresistible force of its dialectical method.18

Thus, Plekhanov saddled Marx with the absurd thesis that philosophy had proven the necessity of political revolutions. By analyzing the concepts "quality," "quantity," and "measure," Hegel is reported to have done just this. That Plekhanov saw no differences between Hegel's and Marx's dialectic other than the topics to which they were "applied" need not detain us here.

But this theme concerning the nature of the revolutionary aspect of the dialectic has been often
repeated. Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, written as the textbook of Marxism for Soviet intelligencia, essentially repeats this theme.\(^{19}\) Stalin repeated it in his widely-read *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.\(^ {20}\) Cornforth repeats it.\(^ {21}\) And most recently it reappears in Novack's *Pragmatism versus Marxism* (1975):\(^ {22}\)

[The Darwinians] could not see that continual modifications, at a certain point in their accumulation...suddenly produce qualitative discontinuities in the evolutionary process. This revolutionary side of the movement of things was formulated in Hegel's dialectical law of evolution that quantitative changes, piled up by slow and small degrees, become in the end qualitative transmutations—and that this transition proceeds by abrupt leaps and in no other way.

Aside from being merely foolish, this interpretation of the dialectic's "revolutionary" nature depends upon (1) a quite selective reading of Hegel which intentionally neglects certain of his examples, (2) the play upon a certain ambiguity in Hegel's relevant passages (this and the first point were discussed in the previous section), and (3) insofar as the view is attributed to Marx, simple allegations without the slightest textual evidence which has been or can be cited.

We must come back to the fact, however, that Marx in fact did believe that there was something "revolutionary" in his methodology. He described "rational dialectics" (i.e., dialectics as conceived by him, rather than the
"mystified" form which had been developed by Hegel as a "scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors. . . . [It] is in its essence critical and revolutionary."23 By "revolutionary," Marx does not mean "unique." That is, he is not boasting of having developed a "revolutionary (unique) doctrine"; he is instead claiming that "rational dialectics" has some kind of "revolutionary consequences." That he made this claim, Plekhanov and others have been right in noting. I will, however, argue for an interpretation of the meaning of this claim which is at considerable variance with the standard, and, I think, nonsensical view which derives from Plekhanov.

The summary of what I shall argue is this: Marx believed that his dialectic was "critical" only insofar as it is neutral. That is to say, language itself has a built-in conservative bias insofar as it tends to hold things static, to make difference indifferent, to call attention away from novelty and change. The dialectic is, as a set of maxims, a continual assault on, a counterpoise to the conservative bias. Just as for Kant the law of specification had significance only when viewed against the law of aggregation (which "directs" reason to gather diversity into unities in which differences become indifferent), so the dialectical maxims are "critical"
only against the conservative bias of language (and hence thought) itself.

But first, this important issue: I wrote just above that the dialectic will be "critical" insofar as the world itself is "critical." It seems to me that we can, even if only roughly, divide the world into three realms of criticability:

(A) The Natural Sciences: The "entities studied by the natural sciences are, by and large and at least relatively speaking, extraordinarily stable, fixed in their character, and thus in their interactions with one another. Perhaps the paradigm here is the chemist's table of elements. It is not clear to me, then, what importance the dialectical maxims might have here.

(B) The Social Sciences: Surely one of the most striking differences between the study of the social and natural sciences is that, in the former, we deal with much more fluid concepts. We have observed a number of examples; but let us look again.

Any methodological text of comparative politics, for instance, will raise the issue of the special difficulties in such a field of generating language which is both general across systems and concrete enough to have significant theoretical value. If one is doing a cross-cultural institutional analysis, then the
commensurability of even what seems the clearest terms, such as "parliament," "executive," "party system," etc., is extraordinarily difficult to demonstrate. And thus the applicability of causal relationships discovered within one system will have, in the ordinary case, only approximate applicability to another. This I have called the synchronic ambiguity of a word such as "party system" when construed over a range of systems.24

But the "elements" of a single political system also change through time. I have referred to this as diachronic ambiguity. We have viewed this above in the examples of "property," "family," etc. And the same is true of the examples of the above paragraph. Such "elements" are, of course, undergoing constant change.25 Just when these changes, these differences become great enough to make a difference and thus to be registered as such in thought, when the "quantitative changes make a qualitative difference" in our conceptual apparatus is a question which cannot be answered outside of the interest context.

(C) Moral Theory: The paradigmatically moral "entities" (and thus concrete conceptions of them) have appeared to more than one philosopher to be as different from those of the social sciences as these latter are from the concepts of the natural sciences. In short, it has been argued that
every such case must (insofar as time and other practicalities allow) be treated as utterly unique. But these realms of criticability are, of course, not without significant rough edges. Let us look at two cases which clearly reach across moral and social theory.

In a self-consciously "Marxist" exposition, Sartre examines the general character of human emotions. His argument is essentially this: It is a mistake, and a common one, to regard human emotions according to the paradigm of a chemist's table of elements. The person is regarded as having a certain repertoire of feelings: love, hate, jealousy, compassion, etc., which come into combinations of varying sorts and degrees, react in certain ways, etc. But this is mistaken. For what the "emotion-entity" is, and thus what a concrete conception of it will be, depends upon grasping in thought a whole network of relationships.

We cannot admit that a human affection is composed of molecular elements which juxtapose without modifying one another. . . . [Thus] we refuse to believe that a homosexual's love has the same character as a heterosexual's. The secret, forbidden character of the former, its aspect of black magic, the existence of a homosexual freemasonry, and this damnation to which the invert is aware of dragging his partner with him: it seems to us that all these facts influence the whole sentiment. . . .

Sartre is not making a factual claim: "'Homosexual love' is characterized by a 'secret, forbidden
character. . .', etc." It is rather the conceptual point that, if, and when, and where it is the fact that a "loving relationship" is characterizable in such terms, this is not something contingent to the thing and its concept, but rather it "influences the whole sentiment"—it determines what the emotion is. We can express this in the language found in Marx: An emotion is its relations. It is not something "squatting outside" the world, but is the "ensemble" of the relations in which it turns up in the real world. A loving relationship with a secret, forbidden character is only a "potential" loving relationship, or not a "real" loving relationship, or "a loving relationship with a secret, forbidden character." Or, in the language of the "denials": Homosexual love is love; but it is not love. Homosexual love is not love. "Homosexual love" is neither love nor not love. Or, in the language which I have introduced, one must be aware of the synchronic ambiguity within the notion of "love." And, of course, we could go on: One must be aware of this ambiguity within the notion of "homosexual love" as well.

On the other hand, there is an important diachronic ambiguity within the notions of love and homosexual love. Clearly, the latter notion, for instance, refers us to very different phenomena in the general case of what we understand as "homosexual love" in Classical Greece, on the one hand, and, say, "homosexual love" in a Fire Island
discotheque, on the other.

Let us consider one further case in the general area of moral and/or social theory. But rather than an emotion, let us consider a desire. A politician notes that he, "as of course all thoughtful men," wishes that everyone who wants work will be able to find employment. What we inquire about here (and this is important to get clear about) is not the sincerity of such desires (we assume, for the case, that the desire is sincere, and even passionate), but rather about the concrete meaning of the utterance.

To paraphrase Sartre:

We cannot admit that human desire is composed of molecular elements which juxtapose without modifying one another. Thus we refuse to believe that the "desire for full employment" of an adherent to the Chicago school (of economics) has the same character as the "desire for full employment" of, say, an adherent of Galbraith. The commitment to minimal government intervention of the former, its acceptance of the free market trade-off between inflation and unemployment, its restrictions on what counts as legitimate means of providing jobs; it seems to us that all these facts influence the whole sentiment.

The point is that there need be nothing "the same" about these desires other than, as in the horse trading and homosexual cases, the sameness of language. Thus we might say of the "Chicago boys," as they are called, that they "neither desire full employment, nor do not desire full employment"—where this is meant as descriptive of a desire, and does not say that they are simply uncommitted. And,
of course, even the appearance of sameness is abolished with a more complete description: Whereas on the one hand the two individuals seem to have the same desire, "full employment," on the other hand they clearly have different desires, one "full employment under conditions-\(x\)" and the other "full employment under conditions-\(y\)." And it would be easy enough to run through the entire mawkish catechism of universal human desires ("All reasonable men, of course, desire peace," etc.) and to demonstrate the really different desires which are swept under the "hidden identity."

The "critical" aspect of the dialectical maxims can perhaps best be seen in their relation to the question of causal relationships. For clearly the question of consistency is central here. If I discover that "\(x\) causes \(y\)," then it must still be shown (although for some purposes we clearly just take our chances) that "\(x'\) causes \(y\)." As we have suggested, the importance of such a caution is at least minimized in the natural sciences, becomes greater in the social sciences, and becomes far greater still in moral thought (at least for any teleological moral theory--but, as I will argue, these maxims have a separate but equal import for deontological theories). Even if history has indubitably proven, for instance, that "Private property is a necessary condition of any free society,"
one may still wish to ask, "But is private property' compatible with a free society?" Thus, the "eternal truths" of social theory, insofar as its language is concrete, are themselves "criticized by history" (Marx) insofar as the central concepts take on new meanings, and demand reverification. Again, the dialectic is "revolutionary" not because it "scientifically proves" for us any social or moral theses at all, but rather because it undermines, creates a certain skepticism towards a certain kind of appeal to the "wisdom of the ages."

Finally, I wish to suggest that Marx provided an alternative to a certain general picture, or metaphor, which runs through a particular kind of conservatism in social philosophy. The metaphor which he critiqued depended, in Feuerbach's words, upon the "negation of space and time in metaphysics, in the essence of things." Or, in Marx's words, it is a picture the "whole profundity" of which "lies in this forgetting" of the distinctions revealed when thinking is concrete and not abstract.

I begin by citing examples of such a picture in conservative literature from Plato to the modern day. I will then characterize the position in more general terms, and conclude with what seems to be Marx's response to it.

In *The Laws*, Plato wrote:

I say that in the state generally no one has observed that the games of childhood
have a great deal to do with the permanence or want of permanence in legislation. For when games are ordered with a view to children having the same games and amusing themselves after the same manner, and finding delight in the same playthings, the more solemn institutions of the state are allowed to remain undisturbed. Whereas if sports are disturbed and innovations are made in them, and they constantly change, and the young never speak of their having the same likings, or the same established notions of good and bad taste, either in the bearing of their bodies or in their dress, but he who devises something new and out of the way in figures and colours and the like is held in special honour we may truly say that no greater evil can happen in a state; for he who changes the sports is secretly changing the manners of the young. . . .27

(emphasis added)

Montaigne:

It is a very great doubt, whether any so manifest benefit can accrue from the alteration of a law received, let it be what it will, as there is danger and inconvenience in altering it; forasmuch as government is a structure composed of divers parts and members joined and united together, with so strict connection, that it is impossible to stir so much as one brick or stone, but the whole body will be sensible of it.28

Hume believed that his skepticism must significantly moderate the bold claims for reason found in Enlightenment theory, and thus, for social inquiry, would leave nothing so prominent as the role of "habit" and "custom" in compensating for the "narrow bounds of human understanding."

"The happiness and prosperity of mankind" he compared to a great vault, where each stone has been carefully placed, and no stone is conscious of the intricate relations of
forces and counterforces which prevent the structure from tumbling into a dusty, or bloody heap.

In an earlier chapter we have already noted that both Burke and Hegel interpreted the French Revolution as an instance of reason's interference in (to quote Hegel) "the completed fabric of the state."

And finally, to cite a lesser but contemporary figure, in an essay in defense of the American party system a rather notorious conservative scholar of the modern era, Edward Banfield, prefaced his substantive remarks with a special section ("Difficulties in Planning Change") which clearly illuminates this general position:

Before entering into these (substantive) matters, it may be well to remind the reader how difficult is the problem of planning change.

Such relationships constitute systems: they are mutually related in such a manner that a change in one tends to produce changes in all of the others. If we change the party system in one respect, even a seemingly trivial one, we are likely to set in motion a succession of changes which will not come to an end until the whole system has changed. The party system, moreover, is an element of a larger political system and of a social system. A small change in the structure of operation of parties may have important consequences for, say, the family, religion, or the business firm.

Banfield concludes the paper with a further special section, "The Danger of Meddling," which includes:

To meddle with the structure and operation
of a successful political system is
. . . the greatest foolishness that men
are capable of. Because the system is
intricate beyond comprehension, the
chance of improving it in the ways in-
tended is slight, whereas the danger of
disturbing its working and of setting
off a succession of unwanted effects
that will extend throughout the whole
society is great. 29

The general picture lying behind all of these
theses is this: The social order is composed of numerous
"parts" (games, political parties, etc.). Each part is
finely tuned to the life of the whole; and thus tampering
with the single part, however "rational" it may be from the
narrow perspective of the part, risks sending unexpected
fissures running out into all other parts of the social
whole.

Marx opposes to this general picture one of his own.
If society is, to use Hume's metaphor, a vault, it is a
vault composed of the most troublesome of stones. The
static quality of the building blocks presupposed in the
metaphor which runs from Plato to Banfield makes intuitive
sense for us only so long as we remain in the realm of
abstractions, only so long as we negate "space and time in
metaphysics, in the essence of things." But if we instead
think "concretely," if we infuse social things with space
and time, if we reach down into the "succulence" of a
vocabulary which brings the concepts "to a certain extent
close to living phenomena," if we understand that "things"
do not exist "squatting outside the world" as things apart from the "ensembles" of social relationships in which they in fact exist, then what appears to be the appropriate metaphor changes entirely. The individual building blocks grow larger and smaller, contort in shape, and alter in composition and strength. The "parts" themselves continue to become "new things." And thus one who wishes to survive under such a vault must scurry hither and yon readjusting, reinforcing, creating the new even in order to retain something of the old (the outer shape and dimension—to remain within our metaphor). Such was surely the sense of Samuel Eliot Morison's claim that Franklin Roosevelt was "the most effective American conservative since Alexander Hamilton."30

In what sense, for instance, is the game of "javelin throwing" the same activity for a 20th century American as it was for a 4th century B.C. Spartan? In what sense is the act of "believing in God" the same for us as it was for a 12th century Roman? And we have already asked such questions about "owning property," "family life," and so on. Marx argues that such social "parts" continually become "new things" do what we may, and thus that the kind of conservatism represented in Hume et al. finally rests upon a false metaphor. Even intelligent conservatism requires a rather active policy of social change.
NOTES
TO CHAPTER V


4 Despite Mueller's discovery of the Chalybäus book and its "brilliant hunch," the language of "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" was quite familiar to all educated Germans of the 19th century, since it was quite prominent in the writings of Fichte. And that Mueller's concern is in part merely a verbal one, this question of language used, we shall note below.

5 "In the first section, in which determinate being in general was considered, this had, as at first taken up, the determination of being. Consequently, the moments of its development, quality and something, equally have an affirmative determination. In this section, on the other hand, the negative determination contained in determinate being is developed, and whereas in the first section it was at first only negation in general, the first negation, it is now determined to the point of the being-within-self or the inwardness of the something, to the negation of the negation."


6 Mueller cites considerable evidence that Hegel did not use the language "thesis, antithesis, synthesis" (except once, we are told). If he had read the Marx-passage to which he refers (the part which we cite in particular), Marx himself would have told him that this was not Hegel's language. Of course, one would hope that it was not just the idle question of language ("thesis" or "affirmation," for instance) that so agitates Mueller. But
his "evidence" adduced through the perusing of several indexes sometimes indicates that it is.

Yet the situation becomes even more difficult for Mueller when he does address the more substantial question of "this 'triplicity' as a method or logic of philosophy." For at this point the relevant texts are clearly distorted in his presentation to an extent that, without questioning his good faith or intentions, I must note that we are offered truly counterfeit goods. Let us read Mueller's characterization of Hegel, and then the passage from the Phenomenology of Mind to which he refers.

Mueller: After saying that [the method of triplicity] was derived from Kant [Hegel], calls it a "lifeless schema," "mere shadow" and concludes: "The trick of wisdom of that sort is as quickly acquired as it is easy to practice. Its repetition, when once it is familiar, becomes as boring as the repetition of any bit of sleight-of-hand once we see through it. The instrument for producing this monotonous formalism is no more difficult to handle than the palette of a painter, on which lie only two colours. . . .

How can Mueller's account falsify Hegel in a passage which is to the largest extent a citation from Hegel? He sets the long passage up so that the "it" continually appears to refer us to something which it in fact was not intended to do.

Hegel: Now that Kant, by instinct, has re-discovered triplicity, albeit still dead and still uncomprehended, and it has subsequently been raised to its absolute importance, and with it the true content has been presented and the Concept of science has emerged, it is equally obvious that we must not consider scientific that use of this form which reduces it to a lifeless schema, really to a phantom, and scientific organization to a table.

Kant "rediscovered" the method of triplicity. It was with him, however, "still dead and still uncomprehended." Kant had an insight, made a discovery which he failed to
carry through. It was, however, "subsequently" carried through--by himself, Hegel means--and "raised to its absolute importance!"

Hegel warned that "uncomprehended" this triplicity does reduce itself to a "lifeless schema," etc. And a lengthy section follows in which he criticizes Fichte and others for having done just this; it is from this section that Mueller's longer citation comes. The "it" of this citation is, then, not the triplicity, but rather the "uncomprehended triplicity."

There is an analogous element in Marx's social theory which (while I suppose one can refer to it as a "dialectical" element in his thinking) is clearly an empirical and not a philosophical thesis. Avineri, for instance, writes that "The dialectical point is that [the] emergence of newer forms [of social relations] is derived from the immanent logic of the initial premises" of the social model. (The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, Chapter VI) Although the language of "immanent logic" and new social relationships deriving from "premises" etc. may be misleading, I assume that Avineri means the following, which is correct. Marx believed that the social thinker interested in understanding the phenomenon of change should primarily study developments internal to the system studied. Change was not to be studied so much through military conquests, or, more generally, disfunctions within the system, but rather through the "proper" functioning of the system. For instance, the Capitalist system, in the normal, healthy course of its development would produce the elements which finally would alter it.

This, as stated, is analogous to Hegel's internal, "dialectical" development of concepts. It is not pace Mueller, a dialectic of economic "categories."


The standard proof of this runs:

1) \(P \& \neg P\)
2) \(P\)
3) \(\neg P\)
4) \( P \lor S \)

3) \(-P\)

5) \(S\)

The trick is in the move between the assumption that we know the truth-value of \(P\) in \(PvS\), and the assumption that we do not. If we do not know the value of \(P\) to be \(t\), then we cannot move from \(P\) to \(PvS\). That is, we move to \(PvS\) because we know \(P\) to have the value \(t\). But in the deduction, the value of \(P\) is then made indeterminate, and determined by \(-P\). The person who attempts to "believe a contradiction" would not argue \([(P \lor S) \land \neg P \rightarrow S]\), but rather \([(P \lor S) \land (-P \land P) \rightarrow (?)\)]. Of course, we don't know what would be implied here. The person who wishes to "believe a contradiction" in the sense here relevant does not simply believe now one thing and now another; he wishes to believe both at the same time. The logician, in describing that "belief" (the problem is that we just don't know what the having of such a belief could even mean) cannot then take the contradiction apart, as it were, and use the "parts" independently.

Again: If I assert \(P\&Q\), then these propositions can be separated and treated separately in a deduction. But in so separating the propositions of a contradiction, which consists in a union of propositions, I have in fact, however covertly, abolished the contradiction.

There is, in any case, something peculiar about an argument which can only convince those who need no convincing. The attempt to prove the elementary rules of logic by logic to those who reject logic must be an ill-founded project.


16 Ibid., A649 & A651.


24 This particular "ambiguity" is so extreme that it has more than once been suggested that the United States does not have a party system of government—a clear case in which most political scientists would readily intuit the truth of the "denial" of the law of non-contradiction: "The U.S. has a party system; and the U.S. does not have a party system."

Similarly, the concept of a labor union appears rather clear on its face. But no one is quite sure whether the corporatist labor organizations of Brazil, for example, are labor unions or not. Of course, in exemplifying the point, we choose extreme cases. But the cases need not be extreme.
Locke, for instance, wrote that re-apportionment in the light of social changes "cannot be judged to have set up a new legislative but to have restored the old and true one." This is illustrative in more than one way (although it is included at this point for item "B"):

A. At a certain point, the "old and true" legislature ceases to exist. In order to conserve the old in some fashion, one must change the old (the boundaries); for the old has now become something new, something different than what it was.

B. The "quantitative changes" (shifts in population, economic centers, religious and racial groupings, etc.) occur continually.

C. This is perhaps the clearest example of the role of the interest-context in determining the point in which the conceptual "leap" will be taken, the point at which new features of the situation will cause the representative body to be seen as an unrepresentative body.


CHAPTER VI

THE CONSEQUENT TREATMENT OF ENDS
AND MEANS IN MORAL THEORY

Marx wrote very little concerning morals. And it is far from my purpose to construct the "Marxist" moral theory which he did not himself provide. It is clear, however, that those who have been most influenced by Marx have often shared at least certain moral concerns in common. It is my interest in the present chapter to select just one of these, the rejection of the thesis that "end does not justify the means,"¹ and to render it intelligible through attention to Marx's concerns with abstractions and concreteness. I will argue that the Marxist treatment of the end-means question is not a merely fortuitous perversion, nor will it be explained away psychologically as a characteristic of single-minded ideologues. It is, instead, explainable as a result of their concerns about thinking "concretely."

And this further point before beginning: no claim is made here that the arguments which follow are unique to Marxism. To the contrary, I shall be interested in showing that they are not, that philosophers at least as different as John Dewey and E. F. Carritt, arguing in a similar way here while disagreeing about so much else even within ethics, have taken these issues to be of central moral and

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philosophical importance.

I begin by calling the reader's attention to two brief passages from Merleau-Ponty's *Humanism and Terror*, which, as I will explain through the pages which follow, appear to me as an instructive point of reference for the concerns which will occupy us.

Marxism rejects the option between Machiavellianism and an ethical standpoint, between the viewpoints of 'at all costs' and the 'let justice be done though the heavens may fall'. It does so because he who acts morally becomes immoral as soon as he loses regard for the nature of his acts... .

Our critics cannot handle... .torments or doubts. They bravely repeat that an innocent is an innocent, a murderer is a murderer.²

Merleau-Ponty writes that Marxists reject the standpoint of "let justice be done though the heavens may fall"—his characterization of the thesis that the end cannot justify the means—because he who acts morally becomes immoral as soon as he loses regard for the nature of his acts. . . . "

This does not, he goes on, commit the Marxist to the apparent alternative, that the end justifies the means. He writes instead that the "categories of 'ends' and 'means' are entirely alien to Marxism." We will discover the meaning of that claim.

But what of the caution that one "becomes immoral as soon as he loses regard for the nature of his acts."

What does this mean? And why does he find this crucial
enough to enter it as an important "Marxist" moral concern? Would anyone claim to disagree that moral seriousness requires that one "have regard for the nature of his acts?" Shall we conclude that Merleau-Ponty, having lost regard for the nature of his words, merely stumbled here over an infelicitous phrase? We do know that Humanism and Terror was no primer, but a serious address to the French intellectual community, a part of the intense debate and reassessment of moral and political traditions which followed the close of the Second World War.

What we observe in this citation is the by now familiar Marxist caution against thinking not about the "things," against losing regard for the "things," but instead having regard only for abstractions—in this case, abstract moral categories. Merleau-Ponty, like Sartre, like Trotsky, like numerous other thinkers who have been impressed with Marx's thought, believed that a defining feature of Marxist moral thinking is its assault on moral abstractions. What does it mean to think about the actual subject of moral reflection, the concrete action?

**Ends and Means**

The issues surrounding the ends-means controversy are among the more interesting in moral thought. The ends-means distinction is one that, in its ordinary usage, is internally confused; in spite of this, however, it is
taken in ordinary thinking and perhaps in most philosophy to be the node at which moral and amoral thought divide.\textsuperscript{3} The thesis that "good ends cannot justify bad means" is heralded by a ubiquitous choir of moralists; but it is believed by no one, as will be shown. The belief that the "end justifies the means," almost universally attributed to Marxists, is regarded as sufficient evidence for the fact that moral thought has been abandoned--so proclaimed by pious souls who, without a blush, rush on into the most brutal calculations of ends and means. Although our interest in this peculiar moral distinction is primarily a logical one, we will examine it from a more broadly moral and ideological perspective as well.

\textit{(Moral Practice)}

Although its proof would be of an empirical nature, I believe that the following can be with some confidence maintained:

The vast majority of adult persons, including those who claim to disagree with the "end justifies the means," would agree with the following propositions.

a) A man who \textit{lies} in order to protect the secret hiding of a friend from his would-be murderers is not to be morally condemned.

b) A man who \textit{breaks} his promise to dine with a friend in order to help evacuate children from a disaster area is not to be morally condemned.
c) A man who pushes an old woman to the ground in order to keep her from being shot by a crazed rifleman is not to be morally condemned.

Those who cry out most loudly against the immorality of an "end justifies the means philosophy" are often ready to kill, to burn, to destroy--to make war--for the end of a "free world," etc. One might then assume that they would approve the telling of a small lie toward the same end.

One cannot object that these cases are too extreme to be fair. As soon as it is agreed that some ends are of such great importance that they justify the doing of some moderate evil, then the entire character of the discussion has been changed. The question of whether the end can justify the means is no longer at issue, but rather whether some particular end can justify some particular means. And it seems clear that it is often disagreements of this kind, disagreements concerning the importance of certain "ends" and "means," which are disguised in the form of the different issue of whether ends-as-such can justify means-as-such. The rather common moral posture which, on the one hand, condemns a particular case of disobedience to law on the grounds that good ends do not justify bad means, but, on the other hand, recognizes that some past governments have been so oppressive as to justify revolution--such a posture can be rendered consistent only by assuming that the first thesis reduces itself to this: This end
does not justify this means.

The only persons who even give a real show of rejecting the calculation of ends in their moral judgments are those who, for instance, reject violence come what may, who condemn lying regardless of the human costs of telling the truth, who would condemn a small theft of food regardless of certain starvation. Although I suspect that such persons are extraordinarily rare, they are occasionally to be encountered in the "real world." And among philosophers, there is at least the noteworthy case of Kant. In his argument with Benjamin Constant, Kant wrote that it is wrong to lie to potential murderers regardless of the bloody consequences to one's friends. The death of my friend, in such a case, is not a "consequence" of my truthfully identifying his hiding place to his murderers, Kant writes, but instead is a mere "accident": "To be truthful (honest) in all declaration, therefore, is a sacred and absolutely commanding decree of reason, limited by no expediency."

We will return to this case of Kant's in the section concerning descriptive relativism; but here, I limit myself to two observations about such extreme positions generally. The first is that there is something admirable here insofar as an attempt is at least made to embrace consistently the thesis (that ends do not justify means)
which is used to bludgeon Marxists and others. For any other position, this maxim, this heart of morality, is also the heart of a transparent hypocrisy. The clear intersection of these two in the ends-mean controversy is one of its more interesting features. Nevertheless, and this is the second point, even the "come what may" moralists are unable to in fact root out the weighing of ends from their moral deliberations. This will be made clear in the sub-section which follows.

(The Conceptual Issue)

"Ends" are necessarily carried into the very concept of the "means." Although it is generally thought wrong to "tell a lie," it is something different to "act in a play" (in which one may utter propositions which are not true), or to "tell a bed-time story," etc. But these distinctions cannot be made without implicit reference to ends. The point was clearly made by E. F. Carritt:

Those who have said that we can judge an "action" right or wrong without considering "consequences" have in fact always considered some consequences of our bodily movement, though they arbitrarily confine the name "consequences." For instance, some have held that we know it is wrong to lie and neither need or should consider the consequences. But in calling my "action" a lie I have already considered some consequences of moving my tongue, namely, that there are persons within hearing who will be misled by what I say. Otherwise to tell a fairy story, even to
oneself, would be a lie. And if I must go so far into the future as to consider whether anybody may be deceived by my words, it is hard to see why I should not go further and consider the consequences of the deception, as for instance that it may prevent a crime or a disaster. 5

The significance of Carritt's use of scare-quotes ought not to be lost here. It is clear why he uses them to mark off "consequences"; for he tells us that what that word is sometimes used to mean is not the consequences, but rather an arbitrary sub-class of the consequences. But why does he in the same way mark off "action?" Again, because that word is often used to mark off not the action (the concrete point of departure which Merleau-Ponty also believed easily lost for moral thought), but rather an arbitrary sub-class of predicates.

It is an "arbitrary" feature of language that we do not go on and, for instance, have different words descriptive of "untruths told to prevent crimes," etc.—just as we mark off between "lies," "fairy tales," "play acting," etc. Or, going the other direction, we note that the appearance of consistency is often maintained by the critic of the "ends justifies the means philosophy" by covertly smuggling his ends into his means, the description of the "action." For instance:

a) Murder is always wrong (regardless of the end); but execution is something else.
b) The use of violence is always wrong; but a government's use of force to maintain order is something else.

John Glenn Gray has argued that force is in part distinguished from violence in that the former is a "means to the achievement of communal ends." Having thus gotten the "ends" already into the "means," he can write that violence is never justified, that even the state is never justified to "meet violence with equal violence," but that it may "employ all the force necessary to restrain a rioting band of citizens." 6 All that is unique in Gray's thesis is its unusually explicit character.

Merleau-Ponty was aware that his discussion of the ends-means issue had earlier been argued by Trotsky. 7 In his essay "Their Morals and Ours," Trotsky wrote that "dialectic materialism does not know dualism between means and ends," and spoke of a "dialectic interdependence of end and means." 8 He meant by this something similar to what Carritt wrote, above. What is the actual end of my action? Surely the end of an action is not some arbitrarily specified (it will be remembered that Kant was forced to mark off between "consequences" and "accidents") and perhaps distant state of affairs at which the present action somehow "aims." It is the over-all outcome, the full-blown circumstances of the case, the story to be told about the world now that a given action is a part of it. A part of
the "end" of a war fought "to end all wars," a part of the outcome, a part of what has happened, is that a war has been fought, etc.

And just as the "means" "dialectically interpene-
trate" the "end," so does the end dialectically inter-
penetrate the means. Again, we might paraphrase Sartre:

We cannot admit that the human action is composed of molecular elements which juxtapose without modifying one another. Thus we refuse to believe that a "lying act" which has as its end the prevention of a brutal and senseless murder has the same character as a "lying act" which has as its end the brutal and senseless killing of a person. It seems to us that these "ends" influence the character of, or the essence of the whole action.

In 1919, Trotsky issued a decree authorizing the taking of hostages, relatives of enemies of the regime. Stalin also used a hostage system. Were these "the same" actions? Trotsky was criticized: "The detention of innocent relatives by Stalin is disgusting barbarism. But it remains a barbarism as well when it was dictated by Trotsky." And he responded: "Here is the idealistic [abstract] moralist in all his beauty! ... .parity is supposed where in actuality there is not even a trace of it."¹⁹

The latter statement is clearly too strong; but what is correct in Trotsky's response is that the critic, by (rightly) subsuming the two actions under the same concept, has not shown that the two were "the same" kinds
of action. As we observed in the previous chapter, the dialectical maxims are meant in part to caution against the demand for a merely abstract consistency. The critic accuses: "Trotsky defends the decree that he enacted in 1919 authorizing the hostage system, but he condemns as abominable that system when it is applied by Stalin. . ."¹⁰ (emphasis added) "Well," he might have gone on, "is the hostage system justified, or is it not? No contradictions, please!"

Only the moralist can sustain himself on such ethereal fare. Can one imagine a sociologist attempting to explain the burgeoning Italian "hostage system" (kidnapping for personal gain, etc.) and the Palestinian "hostage system" (with its political character, willingness on the part of its perpetrators for personal sacrifice, etc.) as "the same thing?" "They are both 'hostage systems' aren't they?" he insists. Yes. And they were both "horses," weren't they? (page 130, above)

I wish to emphasize the agreement concerning the very practical importance of and proper resolution of this issue between Marxists such as Trotsky, on the one hand, and pragmatists such as John Dewey, on the other. For in an earlier chapter (page 95, above) I have already suggested their agreement concerning the importance of issues concerning concreteness which I am now arguing entail a set of moral concerns. Fortunately, this task of
comparison is made easier since Dewey published a response to Trotsky's "Their Morals and Ours." In his essay, "Means Ends," Dewey wrote:

The relation of means and ends has long been an outstanding issue in morals. It has also been a burning issue in political theory and practice. Of late the discussion has centered about the later developments of Marxism in the U.S.S.R.... [The discussion] has brought cut into the open for the first time, as far as I am aware, an explicit discussion by a consistent Marxian [Trotsky] on the relation of means and ends in social action.

Dewey goes on in the essay to speak of Trotsky's "sound principle of interdependence of means and end," in fact taking issue only with whether Trotsky's writings do not themselves stumble upon the "end" of a "proletarian revolution" which has itself been set up, in violation of the "sound principle," as an abstraction. And it is hardly remarkable that Dewey thought this principle sound, for he had argued it, and insisted upon its central importance and practical philosophical consequences often enough himself. In Human Nature and Conduct, for instance, he had written that "there is something abnormal and in the strict sense impossible in means... totally disestablished from its ends." He goes on to say that the means does not "exist" (Dewey's emphasis), except "in abstraction," when disestablished from its "ends." This is another way of saying, I assume, that the "ends" of an "action" are a
part of what that action is. Or, to paraphrase Marx's remark on the concept of "man," an action is the ensemble of its consequences.

And thus it is also not surprising that for Trotsky and Dewey and Merleau-Ponty, much of Kant's moral thought is a virtual paradigm of what cannot be said (meaningfully, with substantive content) in ethics. The discussion never moves to the point where Kant would desire it to move, to the merits of considering ends in moral decisions; for the entire issue is regarded as bogus from the beginning. It is bogus because the actual, concrete action is its consequences; and, as such, "Every concrete experience in its totality is unique; it is itself, non-redundicable." (Dewey)\(^{13}\) And, within this context, the problem with Kant was that "he developed in German thought a curious contempt for the living variety of experience."\(^{14}\) Merleau-Ponty uses the term "Kantian" as a synonym for one who is "rationalistic" in his ethics, and both as synonyms for one who has "stopped thinking in context."\(^{15}\) Trotsky wrote in regard to Kant's Categorical Imperative: "In spite of the fact that it occupies a high position in the philosophic Olympus, this imperative does not embody anything categoric because it embodies nothing concrete. It is a shell without content."\(^{16}\) More strongly, we might write that it is an invitation to think about shells
without content. 17 What does a "promise" require of me? "A brief, critical elucidation," to paraphrase Marx. For "promises," "promises-as-such," do not exist. When I characterize an action as a promise, I suggest certain features of the action which deserve further exploration, I offer a tentative hypothesis about how the action is to be treated, I call attention to a general character of the action which then awaits to be tailored by that which is not general, but specific and unique. Thus it makes no difference whether we accept or reject Kant's Categorical Imperative, or his thesis that moral values are "intrinsic" to the action, or his claim that "all practical principles of right must contain rigorous truth (and thus) they can never contain exceptions." It makes no difference since, every case being unique, every case can be "universalized," as MacIntyre writes, "with sufficient ingenuity." 18 We shall exercise some of this ingenuity on Kant's argument against Benjamin Constant in the section which follows. What is important to note here is that an effort to approximate real consistency, as opposed to a merely verbal, abstract consistency, "far from implying a rejection of all consequences, is a demand to survey consequences broadly." 19 What this means, in practice, is that moral thought, insofar as its subject matter is human action, and insofar as a concern with the character of the concrete
action is also a concern with ends, consequences—moral thought is integrated with economic, political, scientific thought, etc. Moral thought is not an autonomous realm where principles are generated then merely to guide practice in these other areas. Serious moral reflection is quite literally "unthinkable" except when fully engaged in the facts and the theories of these merely "practical" disciplines.

Let us consider one case from recent philosophical literature. The case, chosen rather offhandedly from abundant possibilities, is taken from an article by H. J. McCloskey, "An Examination of Restricted Utilitarianism." McCloskey writes:

While I am no admirer of the U.S.S.R.—on moral grounds—I am nevertheless disposed to believe that the very great advances in that country since the Revolution and the alleviation of human misery over such vast areas of the world would not have been possible without the aid of some such institution [of what Rawls termed "telishment," or, for the most dramatic case of what is here meant, the Russian "show trials of the 1930's]. Its utilitarian justification seems now to be diminishing, and the Russians appear to be acting as good utilitarians should, modifying the institution as the principle of utility requires. I may be wrong in the belief that such an institution had a utilitarian justification in the U.S.S.R.; at least it is arguable, but it is not seriously
arguable that such an institution was morally unjustifiable [sic]** in Russia whatever the empirical facts prove to be. . . .

I am quite uncertain as to the solution of the empirical question, and I suggest that if we are honest with ourselves we all must admit to such uncertainty; yet I, and I suspect most other people, am not uncertain in the same way about the moral wrongness of telishment, and this surely is significant. It suggests a direct insight into the obligatoriness and disobligatoriness of certain kinds of activities--direct insight that can give us the assurance in our moral judgments that we have, but which we could not have if they were dependent upon the findings of an empirical enquiry.

To recall Merleau-Ponty, "Our critics cannot handle these torments or doubts." For Dewey also, this philosophical Quest for Certainty (to use the title of one of his works, although the theme turns up again and again throughout his writings) depended for its appearance of success upon the treatment of conceptual classifications as "fixed separations and collections in rerum natura."
But I wish to consider McCloskey's thoughts in detail, first getting quite clear about what is not presently at issue for us.

** This double negative is confusing. But within the full context of McCloskey's argument (see the paragraph which follows) this must be read to mean that no serious moral justification is imaginable. If the "that" is read in the sense of "whether," then either "justifiable" or "unjustifiable" would carry the same sense into the proposition.
We are not interested in the particular debate concerning the merits of utilitarianism. Nothing in what we have written entails that theory. And although I suspect (nothing in the present discussion turns upon this suspicion) that among those philosophers who have shared concerns similar to those with which we here deal, utilitarians would be rather well represented, neither Carritt (an intuitionist), nor Dewey (an "instrumentalist-pluralist?") nor Marxists in general have considered themselves utilitarians.

We should also note that talk about the justification of institutions can be translated into talk about the justification of actions. Asking whether the institution of telishment is justifiable is to ask whether the act of "telishing" is justifiable, etc.

What does interest us in the McCloskey case is his belief that we can have knowledge of the (moral) character of the act of telishment independent of "the findings of an empirical enquiry." But if what we have argued is true, these consequences which would be the subject of an empirical enquiry are constitutive of the act itself. To paraphrase Merleau-Ponty, McCloskey escapes from his doubt, gains his absolute assurance, by "bravely repeating that an act of telishment is an act of telishment." The character of the "action" which he judges is painted in with a few
broad strokes. He gives us the concept of "telishment" which has leapt right out of space and time—not this telishment, or that telishment, but telishment-itself.

Now to paraphrase Marx (page 80, above):

Is it surprising that, if you drop little by little all that constitutes the individuality of a case of telishment, leaving out first of all the social and economic and political and military context which distinguishes it, you end up with nothing but an institution geographically located; that, if you leave out of account the special locale, you end up with nothing but the logical category? If we abstract thus from the subject all the alleged accidents, we are right in saying that in the final abstraction, the only substance left is the logical category. The metaphysician who makes this abstraction, thinking that he is making an analysis, and who, the more he detaches himself from the thing, imagines himself to be getting all the nearer to the point of penetrating to its moral core, gains, forsooth, a "direct insight" and "assurance" which passeth all ("empirical") understanding.

And we might add: "Language becomes a phrase as soon as it is given an independent existence." Merleau-Ponty, familiar enough with such moral literature, responded to McCloskey more than a decade before the latter published his thoughts on "telishment": "It is necessary to start by placing the Moscow Trials in the revolutionary Stimmung [a quite descriptive German word meaning "pitch," "disposition," "mood," or even "tune"; but to be brief and prosaic: "context"] of violence apart from which they are inconceivable. Only then does the discussion begin."
I emphasize again that we are not criticizing the criteria which McCloskey uses to evaluate "the action." What we question is what it is that he evaluates. The "object" of moral reflection, the concrete action, is available to the intuitionist (as Carritt emphasized) just as it is to the utilitarian--or to the believer in divine inspiration, or whatever. There may be something in the utilitarian or, more broadly, instrumental theory which seems to compel this kind of concern with the living variety and specificity of "the nature of one's acts"--and this may, I think, count as an independent although inconclusive argument for such theories; but there is no reason why any evaluative criterion should be incompatible with such a concern for the concrete act.

The Marxists' emphasis upon the infinite varieties of concrete ethical experiences, their insistence that actions are the full ensembles of their consequences, their consonant interest in relating ethical discourse to (necessarily problematic) economic and political and historical data and theories in an effort to understand these consequences and thus the actions--is clearly what is most characteristic about their moral theory. It touts no "direct insights" into eternal moral verities; for it can discover no eternal actions about which such knowledge might apply. There is instead for it an "ambiguity of
history" (Merleau-Ponty) which locates itself in the ambiguity of language--to recall Trotsky, in the "succulence" of the (concrete) moral vocabulary.

Marx wrote that the moral theory of "liberalism" served as its "spiritual point d'honneur," its "solemn complement" and "general basis of consolation and justification." He meant by this, I think, something quite similar to the point which we earlier observed him making against Bastiat in asking "What relationship cannot be shown good (or bad) when it is reduced to a one-sided characterization?" Reducing the act of locating my friend to his murderers to an act of "truth telling" is a rather extreme case. But reducing the Moscow Trials to a case of "telishment" is no less extreme or fantastic--and certainly, from a logical perspective, no less so because we might suspect that in the end we would agree with McCloskey's condemnation.

Descriptive Relativism:

MacIntyre quite correctly wrote that "It is often impossible to distinguish two separate phenomena, moral uncertainty and uncertainty as to the meaning of evaluative predicates." The analytic distinction, in any case, can and needs to be made clear. For it is uncertainty of the latter kind which has been the continual concern of Marxists, and that we here mark off with the label
"descriptive relativism." Such relativism is at least compatible with a dogmatism in regard to the criteria of evaluation, and probably undermines or at least makes far more difficult to argue a third possible form of skepticism in ethics, cultural relativism. In any case, it is necessary not to confuse descriptive relativism with other possible varieties.

It is not the purpose of the present section to argue for the correctness of descriptive relativism. That, following the section just above, would clearly be redundant. In short, the proper understanding of the relationship between "means" and "ends" and the concrete action directly entail what we here mean by descriptive relativism. What remains is to explore further the implications of such relativism for moral thought.

(The Ideological Issue)

Even though Stirner failed to accurately diagnose the problem, he was correct in his thesis that a certain kind of descriptive dogmatism, a certain way of reducing concrete actions to one-sided, abstract, "fixed" categories or ideas has important ideological functions. Feuerbach (although Marx argued that he, too, had not grasped the actual import of the thesis) also believed in this relation between conceptual and ideological questions,
in the relation between "the negation of space and time in metaphysics" and the "pernicious" worship in morals and politics of the "principle of stability." If Stirner and Feuerbach and the hosts of Marxists have been wrong, they have not been alone. A rather modern philosopher wrote:

To the vested interests, maintenance of belief in the transcendence of space and time...is an indispensable prerequisite of their retention of an authority which in practice is translated into power to regulate human affairs throughout—from top to bottom.

That was John Dewey. And MacIntyre wrote that "The moral and political conservative still feels able to give (moral) words a fixed connotation." In the preceding chapter, I considered a particular kind of political conservatism (there are others), and argued that it depends both in its particular arguments and for its general "picture" of the social order upon such a "belief in the transcendence of space and time" of the concepts which it employs. Although much of that discussion will clearly carry directly into the one which now occupies us, we now examine more narrowly moral issues.

This ideological use of language takes two primary forms:

A. *Competition over an emotion-laden vocabulary.*

There is something like a "qualitative leap" (in emotive value) between describing a fetus as very-very similar
to the other things which may be classified as persons, on the one hand, and saying that fetuses are persons, on the other.

And the same is true with all other words which have an emotive content for us: violence, murder, lie, love, etc.

B. The logical use of a "miracle apparatus."

Apart from the emotive content, we have certain "theories," or categorical assumptions in which such words are central--e.g., "Violence is wrong." As we have seen, there is nothing wrong with such categorical assertions--so long as the clause "but there are no actual actions which are 'purely' and nothing but cases of 'violence'" is appended to them. Such propositions serve, as I have written above, to "suggest certain features of the action which deserve further exploration," to "suggest a tentative hypothesis about how the action is to be treated," and to "call attention to a general character of the action which then awaits to be tailored by that which is not general, but specific and unique."

The ideological use of such language, however, attempts to cause such an action to be seen as a pure case of such a concept, to be appropriately "placed" (Sartre) within the desired "miracle apparatus" (Marx), and thus disposed of "as such."

Clearly, any actual action is capable of being reduced to more than one such abstraction. And sometimes such options will present quite striking alternatives in both emotive content and the general theoretical/factual structure into which they fit.
I imagine the following case: In the (fictitious) country Rowando, the Neo-Nazi Party (NNP) comes to power, pledged to purify Rowandoan culture of a subclass of the population. An underground network is being organized to transport and hide persons of the threatened group; and I am a member of this group, in fact hiding Mr. K., a member of the threatened population, in my own bedroom. Someone from the NNP knocks upon my door, asking if I know the whereabouts of Mr. K. As a moral person, what am I to do? I begin by recalling the coup de maitre with which Kant concluded his argument against Constant, hoping to find some guidance here:

If one is asked whether he intends to speak truthfully in a statement that he is about to make and does not receive the question with indignation at the suspicion it expressed that he might be a liar, but rather asks permission to consider possible exceptions, that person is already potentially a liar. That is because he shows that he does not acknowledge truthfulness as an intrinsic duty but makes reservations with respect to a rule which does not permit any exception, inasmuch as any exception would directly contradict itself.

This sounds very convincing; but now I recall a part of a lecture which I heard in my last meeting with the underground:

If one is asked whether he intends to hide individuals from the NNP and does not receive the question with indignation at the suspicion it expressed at being a NNP-collaborator, but rather asks permission to consider possible exceptions (e.g., whether
it depends upon telling a lie), that person is already potentially a collaborator. That is because he shows that he does not acknowledge the saving of innocent lives as an intrinsic duty but makes reservations. . . (etc.)

"Oh, yes," I recall further, "I believe that he also added that the telling of a lie would be no responsibility of mine at all, that it would be only an 'accident' of my life-saving act." 28

In this way, the same action receives two different "descriptions," and thus opposing moral evaluations. Of course, in neither case has the action been described; but instead it has been reduced to two pure categories— in the one case, a "lying act," and, in the other, an act of "saving an innocent life."

One counters Kant's argument not by opposing to it an alternative and competing abstract characterization (although one may oppose the ideological impact in such a way), but instead by filling in the details of the actual action, even if ever so little. This does not prove Kant's conclusion wrong (although it presents the right form of argument for doing so); but it does destroy the form of his argument. The simplest response for Kant's hypothetical person who is asked if he intends to speak the truth would be that he "always tells the truth except when a lie would save the life of an innocent man from murders." (This is sufficient to save him from Kant's "contradiction.")
"Thus you do sometimes lie, and are therefore bound up in the contradiction described," insist his accusers.

"If it is a 'lie' to tell an untruth to murderers in order to save an innocent man's life, it is surely a different kind of 'lie'," he responds.

"But it is still a lie!

"If you are so taken by words," he goes on, "if you can see a difference only when you have a word to hang it upon, then we can surely devise a new one for this special kind of action. I will call 'untruths told to would-be murderers in order to save an innocent life' cases of a 'prevaricating ploy'. And I insist that there is nothing contradictory in the thought of a society which insists upon truthfulness from its members, which encourages parents to tell fairy tales to their children, values those who act in plays, and swears each person to the strictest oath to always tell prevaricating ploys if questioned by would-be murderers."

"It is still a lie."

"You sound like an old woman who objects to telling children fairy tales because 'One ought never to tell children lies, but only that which is true.' Of course there is a common ground here; but there are also differences. Now, why don't we talk about the actual case, the particular action, which, if a lie (and I will not object to your language), is a particular kind of lie."

We distinguish here between two "kinds of lies" only in order to respond to the particular case set up by Kant. But this, of course, does not mean that there are only two kinds of lies; there are as many different kinds of lies as there are lying situations. Past experience provides
clues, hypotheses about how we might proceed, suggestions concerning the features of the case which deserve further inquiry. And calling a particular action a lie, knowing that it is a lie, is to call up a range of such clues, hypotheses, suggestions.

There is a fashion, an abstract fashion, of reasoning about ethics which is closely analogous to a once fashionable manner of thinking in psychology. In his discussion of instincts, Dewey wrote:

Again it is customary to suppose that there is a single instinct of fear, or at most a few well-defined sub-species of it. In reality, when one is afraid the whole being reacts, and this entire responding organism is never twice the same. In fact, also, every reaction takes place in a different environment, and its meaning is never twice alike, since the difference in environment makes a difference in consequences. It is only mythology which sets up a single, identical psychic force which "causes" all the reactions of fear. . . . There is no one fear having diverse manifestations; there are as many qualitatively different fears as there are objects responded to and different consequences sensed and observed. 29

It is important to note that Dewey is not making an empirical point here. Arguing that there is no such thing as a psychic force or an instinct which is marked off by the word "fear" is not like arguing that there are no sub-atomic particles marked off by the word "neutrino."

At least, if it is, Dewey will not solve the problem by philosophizing. His point is, instead, a conceptual one,
and the same which we have made in regard to moral concepts. There is no one lying act (or at most a few well-defined sub-species of it) having diverse manifestations or "accidents"; there are as many qualitatively different lying acts as there are contexts acted within and different consequences sensed and observed.

Marxists, then, have emphasized the need to think about the particular, concrete action, defined through a contextual fabric of historical, economic, political, and generally social relationships and consequences or ends which are not accidentally or extraneously related to, but instead definitionally related to the "action" to be evaluated. They have, in short, emphasized the need to "have regard for the nature of one's acts," rather than regard for merely abstract characterizations of those acts. They have also emphasized an important ideological aspect of moral discourse, and the place of abstract characterizations in regard to it. The Gestalt of such an emphasis is critical, suspicious of received moral truths, and sensitive to the nuances of the novel. It is uninhibited by the "wisdom of the ages," since it understands that such wisdom, even if true for its time, has only an approximate, analogical application for the situation at hand. At its best, such wisdom offers suggestive hints and hypotheses about how the present concrete and unique case is to be dealt with; but this suggestiveness, these
hypotheses must submit themselves to the test of fresh reason and experience, spreading the burden equally upon the defenders of the ways of their fathers and upon the advocates of the new. 30 As Dewey wrote, "The primary significance of the unique and morally ultimate character of the concrete situation is to transfer the weight and burden of morality to intelligence." 31

In his lecture, The Conflict of Science and Society, C. D. Darlington wrote that "We need a Ministry of Disturbance, a regulated source of annoyance; a destroyer of routine; an underminer of complacency." 32 Such, in any case, would be in the tradition of moral philosophy as established by Socrates, who described his own philosophical career as that of a gadfly clinging to a state that needed to be aroused. Attention to the concrete case is a source of such disturbance to the moral equilibrium, an annoyance to the conservative worship of established rules, a scandal to the proper, an abomination to all whose interests tie them to the old. But, as Socrates also taught, through the discouraging logic of his death, the critical road is seldom the highroad to fame and popularity among one's fellow men.
NOTES
TO CHAPTER VI

1It will be made clear below that one can reject this thesis without accepting what may at first appear as the only alternative, which is the thesis that the end does justify the means.


3Camus, for instance, explicitly defined "moral questions" in such a way:

It is clear that our Socialists, under the influence of Leon Blum and even more under the pressure of events, have preoccupied themselves much more with moral questions (the end does not justify all means) than in the past. (Neither Victims nor Executioners. Chicago: World Without War Publications, 1972)

And if we "assent to the principle: 'the end justifies the means'," he wrote in the same essay, we abolish morality and "legitimize terror." Our option is to "either admit that the end justifies the means, in which case murder can be legitimized; or else... reject Marxism..." 

4Compare this to the Roman Catholic principle of "double effect." For Catholics, the truth of the claim that the end does not justify the means is a matter of faith founded on the teaching of Paul. (See: Casti Connubii, Section #66) But as Anscombe, in full sympathy with these teachings, rightly notes, Paul's thought on the matter is an impossibility without the corresponding notion of double effect, which distinguishes between the "intended" and "merely foreseen" ends of an action. ("War and Murder," published in War and Morality. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1970) My full discussion of this kind of principle occurs in the consideration of Kant's case, in the main text. I note here only that such principles appear to this writer to be such "scholastic," facile evasions of the problems that,
however prestigious their sources and however wide their currency, they are difficult to deal with as good faith arguments. The Catholic, no doubt, may be equally repulsed by views such as those which are offered here. How can we most briefly characterize this conflict?

For the Catholic, the Marxist is immoral because he does not embrace the proposition that the end does not justify the means. For the Marxist, the Catholic who embraces this principle of doubt effect is immoral because he is able, through this principle, to systematically disregard the nature of his acts (i.e., to have regard only for the abstract characterization of those acts).

The Catholic: "The Church holds that it were better for sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fall, and for all the many millions who are upon it to die of starvation in extremest agony rather than that one soul should commit one venial sin."

--Cardinal Newman--

The Marxist (as euphemist): The act which has as a result the sun and moon dropping from heaven, the earth falling, and all the many millions who are upon it, to die of starvation in the extremest agony is at least a venial sin.


9Ibid., p. 28.
It has been argued that it performs at least a positive psychological function. Carritt wrote that it is a "dodge"—"like having an angry child look at his face in a mirror." Or, according to Dewey, it is a demand for "sincere"deliberation and judgment.

Marcus Singer ("The Categorical Imperative," Philosophical Review, October, 1954) has argued the interesting thesis that the Categorical Imperative need only be saved from Kant. That is, Kant is said to have himself confused the Categorical Imperative (interpreted as a "moral rule"—this being defined against its opposite, a "precept of prudence") with an Unconditional Imperative, and further confused this latter notion (in the form of an Unconditional Rule) with an Unconditional Duty. Singer argues that it was this confusion, rather than the concept of the Categorical Imperative itself, which was responsible for Kant's "ethical rigorism or absolutism."


The "ingenuity" which MacIntyre refers to here is simply the willingness to describe the actual case.


22. In modern speech, "liberalism" means anything from any random theory which is thought to be somehow "progressive" to what is sometimes referred to as "classical liberalism" (a political/philosophical body of literature in the tradition of Locke)—which has itself come to be closely associated in political and economic literature with a certain brand of modern conservatism.

Marxists use the term to refer to the political/philosophical tradition, and, again, virtually define it by its habituated use of abstraction. Beyond its critique of liberal morality as a system which turns upon abstractions, its central and related charges have been:

Liberalism abstractly pictures "man" as an atom, an isolated monad of potential waiting to bud so long as it is not stifled by the state or society.

Liberalism abstractly pictures human "freedom" as something which can be described without positive (as opposed to "negative" reference to restrictive state or social relationships) reference to social relationships.

It is not my intention to argue, or even explain, these charges here; they are common enough to be familiar to anyone who has read almost any literature (by now, Marxist or otherwise) which deals with classical liberalism in a critical way. I do wish to call attention to the consistency of this concern with abstraction in the Marxist critique of liberalism.


24. R. B. Brandt asked:

Is theft the same thing in societies where conceptions of systems of property differ? Is incest the same thing in societies with different kinship terminologies, different ways of counting lineage, and different
beliefs about the effects of incest?

Do the values differ between societies which treat "incest" differently; or are they merely evaluating different things?

25 I employ the term "ideological" rather broadly here. By an "ideological use" of moral language, I mean a use which differs from the employment of such language in the quest for what I (or others) ought to do. It is a use which attempts to gain the compliance of others in what I want them to do. The grounds for this desire may be moral (having through an independent inquiry determined what they ought to do), or it may be purely self interested. And the desire may be a personal and consciously pursued one, or it may be a "societal desire" which is unconsciously pursued through the activities of the institutions of social and political socialization. Thus the word is not used in a necessarily perjorative sense; and, to emphasize again, the distinction need not be, and probably seldom is, clearly and consciously drawn between these uses in actual moral practice.

26 Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. xv.


28 As the result of a little logical game, this may at first sight appear unfair to Kant. For he argued that even though I believe my friend to be, for instance, in my bedroom, logically, at least, he might not be there—he might by now be out the window and across the way. Thus: (1) if I direct them to the bedroom and, lo and behold, he is there, this is an "accident"; but (2) if I lie and tell them that he is across the way, and he per chance is, then his murder is a "consequence" of my action for which I and my lying act are fully responsible.

But the lie, in the case which I imagine at page 176, does not at first appear open to such a plea. For don't I know for certain at the time of speaking that I am lying? For the same reasons as above, I think not. I might believe that I am lying, but in fact be telling the truth, and vice versa. But if one insists that it is the belief that one is telling the truth that is important, the commitment itself, then: (1) it is not clear why the belief or commitment is not equally central to the case of identifying the locale to murderers; and (2) since, as
Kant indicates, there is always the logical possibility that we might be mistaken, we can on his terms (without "lying") always in such cases simply tell the would-be murderers that we don't know our friend's whereabouts.

But as I have said, this seems to me a game.


30 Or, to be more precise, it is not a question of justifying "the ways of their fathers"; for, assuming that they were justified, it is now a question of justifying actions which are not and cannot be the same actions to which reasoning analogously refers.

31 Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 162.

32 Cited in Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. xvii.
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