Constructing Marx in the History of Ideas*

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Abstract. Publication of a new general biography of Marx is a reminder that no intellectual biography exists. This is an extraordinary omission, and the present article offers a draft outline of such a biography. Some central elements from established 20th century views of Marx are reviewed and upheld, such as the centrality of his early ideas before 1848 and the essential unity of his thought overall. Yet there are also substantial revisions and clarifications: the supreme importance of labour (rather than alienated labour); the revised status of the 'German Ideology'; the mistaken neglect of the *Poverty of Philosophy*; Marx' identity as a synthetic and universalist thinker. More important than any particular finding is the underlying analytical standpoint. Marx is treated as a historical subject like any other. He is removed from the partial isolation created by political constraint or embarrassment, and located unreservedly within the broad stream of the history of ideas, a stream which is continuous with the present. In this history Marx and his bourgeois and Marxist reception are two of the greatest subjects.

Keywords: Marx, History of ideas, labour, dialectic, Hegelianism, Marxism

At the opening of Gareth Stedman Jones' life of *Karl Marx* he states that 'However interesting Marx's life was, his enduring importance derives from the impact of the ideas he developed'.[1] This looks like an endorsement of an obvious but necessary truth: that it is Marx' ideas, rather than any other aspect of his life, which is the most important subject of historical inquiry today, whatever the concerns of political theorists and social scientists may be. The historical Marx was of course a political actor as well as a thinker, and the two cannot be simply disentangled; yet a separate focus on his ideas is not just an imperative of the history of ideas today, but has been clearly marked out by his 20th century reception. Thus our understanding of Marx still dates from the pioneering editorial work of David Riazanov, Siegfried Landshut and J.P. Mayer in a relatively undivided Europe before 1933,[2] and their recovery of a series of seminal, unpublished texts which, because they were not part of an established Marxist political mythology, could hardly serve the purposes of mass political parties or state hierarchies. This meant, above all, the three texts of the 1840s that have come to define Marx' identity in the academy: the 1843 manuscript Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" of 1844, and the 'German Ideology'

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* Established German texts are cited from the *Marx-Engels Werke* edition [*MEW*] (Berlin, 1956-90), freely available online: https://marx-wirklich-studieren.net/marx-engels-werke-als-pdf-zum-download/ . Further abbreviations: *MEGA*: *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1975–); *MECW*: *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Collected Works* (Moscow / London, 1975-2005); *Frühe Schriften*: Karl Marx, *Frühe Schriften* edd. H-J. Lieber & P. Furth (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1962-71); *IRSH*: *International Review of Social History*; EPM: 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts'. — E-mail address: peter.ghosh@history.ox.ac.uk .

[1] *Karl Marx. Greatness and Illusion* (Penguin: Allen Lane, 2016) [hereafter *Karl Marx*], xv.

[2] Riazanov is well-known as the creator of the original *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe* (1927-35, *MEGA*[1]). But though based in Moscow from 1921, he was a cosmopolitan; his editorial work on Marx and Engels commenced in Germany in 1917; the Marx-Engels *Nachlass* lay in the West; *MEGA*[1] was published in German and in Germany down to 1933; and there was extensive co-operation between Riazanov's Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow and the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt: Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School* (Cambridge, 1994), 31-6. Alongside *MEGA*[1] note the collection edited by Landshut and Mayer: Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus: die Frühschriften* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1932). This was much cheaper than *MEGA*[1]; it began a continuous sequence of publication (reprinted in 1952); and though the editing was not as good, it was the first to bring together the three early texts that are now canonical: the Critique of Hegel, the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, and the 'German Ideology': i.20-187; 283-375; ii.1-530. Landshut (b.1897) was not just an editor but is a central figure in the German-language reception of Marx after 1918 with Georg Lukács, Karl Korsch and Karl Löwith.

of 1845-6. To these were then added the giant unwieldy manuscript of *Grundrisse* (1857-8), the starting point from which *Capital* would emerge. Its reception was much more limited,[3] but it too served to entrench the authority of the early writings, since its principal function was perceived as showing the continuity between *Capital* and those writings, by stressing the Hegelian foundation that ran throughout.[4]

A major consequence of this work was a growing separation between Marx the intellectual and Marx the political activist — a fact which post-1945 "Western Marxists" recognised to their chagrin. In the words of Perry Anderson in 1976: 'The first and most fundamental of [Western Marxism's] characteristics has been the structural divorce of this Marxism from political practice. The organic unity of theory and practice realized in the classical generation of Marxists before the First World War… was to be increasingly severed in the half-century from 1918 to 1968 in Western Europe.'[5] This did not prevent Western Marxists from trying to reunite theory and practice though their political commitments, not least in 1968. Nonetheless, it was Western Marxism and the concomitant abandonment of the Althusserian attempt to continue to focus on Marx as (politically) an instrument of Western Communist parties and (intellectually) as the author of *Capital* standing apart from the early texts, that established the agenda for today's understanding of Marx. By comparison the fall of the Soviet bloc in 1989-90 was of little consequence. By then Marx' stock in the West was already in decline. The "turn" (*die Wende*) may have made people less willing to think about him, but it hardly altered the way they thought about him if they chose to do so. Its principal intellectual result was the takeover by Western agencies of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (*MEGA*, the *Collected Edition*) that had begun publication in East Berlin in 1975. Yet even in 1975 this title was a kind of homage to Riazanov's *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, the original *MEGA* of 1927-35; the volumes of the pre-1990 edition have not been repudiated by scholars; and the keynote of intellectual continuity subject to Western control is clear.[6]

Yet despite the strength of this tradition, there has only ever been one avowed intellectual biography of Marx, by Maximilien Rubel in 1957,[7] and none written in accordance with the procedures or political detachment of the modern history of ideas. This is now long overdue. It might be said that a biography narrowed down in this way would be arbitrary, and this is true; but only in the sense that any act of historical selection is arbitrary. The separation between Marx' theory and practice can never be complete, and the canon of his texts has always recognised this by the inclusion of some political writings. Yet a significant degree of separation was acknowledged by Marx himself when he distinguished between his political and his theoretical or academic-scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) work, even if he supposed that

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[3] Prior to the edition in *MEGA* (II/1, 1976-81) there was only one German edition, Moscow 1939-41, reissued in East Berlin and through Communist outlets in Frankfurt am Main and Vienna in 1952-3: *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf) 1857-1858* [hereafter *Grundrisse*]. There was no independent West German edition, and the primary function of other Western editions, though they had their own editorial matter, was to make the text available in translation. On the paucity of the reception of *Grundrisse* down to 1967, Roman Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx's Capital* [1967] (London, 1977), i.xiv & n.6. For a bibliographical reception history: *Karl Marx's Grundrisse* ed. M. Musto (Abingdon, 2008), Part III.

[4] eg. Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx's Capital*, i.xi-xiv.

[5] *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London, 1976), 29.

[6] Jürgen Rojahn, 'Und sie bewegt sich doch! Die Fortsetzung der Arbeit an der MEGA unter dem Schirm der IMES', *MEGA-Studien* 1994/1, 5-31; Thomas Marxhausen, '"MEGA–MEGA" und kein Ende', *Utopie kreativ* 189/190 (2006), 596-617.

[7] Maximilien Rubel, *Karl Marx: Essai de biographie intellectuelle* (Paris, 1957). The core of this work, Rubel's 1954 Sorbonne thesis, was drafted before he gained access to the Marx archive in Amsterdam in 1955. It is only chronological in the loosest sense and is dominated by ahistorical, thematic categories (variants of 'sociology'). Rubel after 1955 was a very different writer.

the latter too would ultimately serve a political purpose. In 1859 he implicitly compared his theoretical labours to Dante's scrutiny of the denizens of the Christian Hell. It was a mordant and complex analogy, but of the apotheosis of *Wissenschaft* as a realm free from fear and mistrust there can be no doubt:[8]

> at the entrance to *Wissenschaft* as at the entrance to hell, the demand must be posted:
> *Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto;*
> *Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta*.
> [Here it is necessary to leave aside all mistrust;
> Here all cowardice must die.]

Yet whatever we may desire, Stedman Jones has not written an intellectual biography. Consider another of his introductory statements: that he wished to 'rethink the history' – not the intellectual history – 'of the nineteenth century'.[9] So what we receive is quite as much a political as an intellectual life, one that includes a generous exposition of Marx' journalism and occasional political writings, supplemented by substantial amounts of extraneous political history. This is a book written by the author of *The Languages of Class* (1983), whose previous major statement on Marx was attached not to a theoretical text but to *The Communist Manifesto* (2002).[10] Operating at the interface between politics and ideas, the new book's most appropriate descriptive title would be *Karl Marx: Intellectual in Politics*. Its ground plan is little different from that of David McLellan, author of the longstanding standard biography, who wrote in 1972 that he had 'attempted to cover fully the three main facets of Marx' life — personal, political and intellectual'.[11] Indeed McLellan's work is by no means superseded by the new book: the overlap in material between the books is considerable, and for any purpose short of specialism they are equally good alternatives. So we have at least two excellent biographies of Marx, not to mention Jon Sperber's *Life* of 2013, which has its own strengths.[12] We may say, then, with some confidence that the general biography of Marx need not be written again for a long while, but the question of his intellectual biography remains pressing.

Of course Stedman Jones has forceful and original things to say about Marx' ideas. Yet despite some resounding occasional pronouncements regarding his "failure",[13] the lineaments of an overall interpretation are hard to detect. What emerges most clearly is an emphasis on the contingency of Marx' ideas – none of them are lasting, even in his own lifetime – and there is an obvious parallel here with the book's organization, where texts and ideas appear like islands set within a wider narrative sea. So for a more systematic treatment of Marx' intellectual career, one has still to go back to mid-century authors, and in particular Rubel, the German-speaking Jew from Czernowitz (Chernivtsi, b.1905) who arrived in Paris in 1931 and was moved to take up the study of Marx through the Communist resistance in 1940-45. His work between 1955 and 1968 is undoubtedly dated by its political preoccupations (his Marx is both ethical and anarchist, betraying the early influence of Max Adler). Nonetheless his focus on the continuous sequence of Marx' ideas and on the archival deposit of Marx'

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[8] 'Vorwort', *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1859) [hereafter '1859 Preface'], *MEW* 7.11 cf. Dante, *Inferno*, Canto 3, ll.14-15.
[9] *Karl Marx*, xv. At the Colloquium, he said he hoped to have made 'a contribution to political history'.
[10] 'Introduction' to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London, 2002), 1-187.
[11] David McLellan, 'Preface to the First Edition', *Karl Marx: a Biography* (Basingstoke, 2006[4]), n.p. [xiii], originally published as *Karl Marx: his Life and Thought* (London, 1973).
[12] Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: a Nineteenth-Century Life* (New York, 2013). This, too, is a distinguished piece of work which like McLellan and Stedman Jones 'juxtaposes the private man, the public agitator, and the philosopher-economist' (blurb). If I largely set it aside here, it is only because Sperber is primarily a historian of radical and revolutionary politics and of the Rhineland, rather than of ideas.
[13] *Karl Marx*, 235, 430.

notebooks, represent major contributions which remain of value today.[14] His survey of the notebooks is being slowly superseded by *MEGA* as it publishes the texts in their entirety,[15] but he has had no successor as a synthesist of Marx' intellectual history. Modern thinkers are commonly second-class citizens in the history of ideas precisely because they are modern: enthusiasm for their present-day uses outweighs interest in historical inquiry into what it is that could be used. But in Marx' case the political burden of the past is an additional handicap. The post-1990 requirement that the editors of *MEGA* should confine themselves to textual matters and avoid broader interpretative statements as part of post-Soviet sanitization has left a significant gap.[16] Here at least the Soviet bloc did impact upon the Western reception of Marx, albeit posthumously and only by way of reaction.

In what follows, then, I propose in accordance with what I take to be our most pressing need, to construct at least an outline of Marx' intellectual biography: to present him as a subject in the history of ideas. Such history is of course founded on what Marxists would call "bourgeois" intellectual detachment; but it has nothing to do with the covertly political "detachment" which today renders him slightly unusual as a research subject. I can but '"*effleurer* la question"';[17] but if at the end the reader is impressed by how large the subject is and how much of it remains to be written, I shall have succeeded in my aim.

I. To 1845

The central assumption generated by the discovery and presentation of Marx' early writings was that the period down to 1848 was formative, and that any intellectual development after that date was a process of refinement and no more.[18] More recent scholarship has reinforced rather than challenged this emphasis: most obviously by the weight of interest falling on Marx' Hegelian roots, but this is also the view of those relatively rare writers who consider the early and late Marx in conjunction.[19] As we shall see, some significant adjustments to the established picture are in order, but I suggest that its chronological focus was essentially just. Marx was a great intellectual synthesist who carried out a wholesale re-shaping of a series of subject-areas between 1839 and 1847; he then spent much of the rest of a fairly short life working out the consequences of this.

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[14] See *Rubel on Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 1981) edd. Joseph O'Malley & Keith Algonzin, esp. c.3, 'A history of Marx's "Economics"', which derives from the 'Introduction' to his edition of Marx' *Oeuvres: Economie II* (Paris, 1968). On Rubel personally see the 'Introduction' to *Rubel on Karl Marx* and Bruno Bongiovanni, 'Maximilien Rubel', *Telos* no.47 (1981), 159-74. The nearest parallel to Rubel is Roman Rosdolsky, another scholarly Marxist from Eastern Europe. However, he was born earlier (Lemberg /Lviv, 1898); he was Ukrainian rather than Jewish; he engaged with Marx earlier (he was a corresponding member of Riazanov's Marx-Engels Institute in Vienna from 1926-31), while his principal scholarly work, *The Making of Marx's Capital* drafted between 1948 and 1955, was more narrowly focussed.

[15] It has so far reached September 1851: see the edition's website: http://mega.bbaw.de/struktur/abteilung_iv .

[16] *Editionsrichtlinien der Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)* (Berlin, 1993), C.I, III, esp. pp.19-21 cf. Marxhausen, '"MEGA–MEGA" und kein Ende', *Utopie kreativ* 189/190 (2006), 609-15. It is ironic that this restriction should have been laid down in the name of "value freedom", a good Weberian principle, when there is such a marked contrast between the post-1990 *MEGA* and the roughly parallel *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*. The latter served as a discursive forum for a major research community; the former much less so.

[17] '…touch upon the main points', cf. Marx, Value, Price and Profit [1865], *MEGA* II/4.1.402.

[18] See the literature surveys in Jürgen Rojahn, 'Marxismus—Marx—Geschichtswissenschaft', *IRSH* 28 (1983), 2-14; L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (Oxford, 1978) i.262-7.

[19] Keith Tribe, 'Karl Marx's "Critique of Political Economy": a Critique', *The Economy of the Word* (New York, 2015), 171-254, one of the most important and broadly focussed of recent contributions.

At first sight, Marx' origins are classically German in that his adult intellectual life begins with the reading of law.[20] This locates him in what is the principal context for all German political theory from Hegel down to Niklas Luhmann, and it is characteristic that both Marx and Max Weber should have started their university careers with the study of the Roman and civil law of property. His attendance at Savigny's lectures on the Pandects in 1836 and reading of Savigny's early work *The Law of Property* (1803),[21] followed by his meeting and hearing the Hegelian lawyer Eduard Gans in Berlin, are facts of the very first importance, above all in regard to ideas about private property, which is one of three or four original cells from which all his subsequent thought derives.

Savigny presented ideas about law and property as historically mutable; and though he was an undoubted political conservative, in Marx' hands such thinking was turned to radical ends. He might be outraged by the sheer nakedness of Savigny's historicism – 'The real foundation of private property, *possession*, is a *fact*, an *inexplicable fact, not law*'[22] – but he could apply this historicist reasoning to subvert the contemporary assumption that private property was somehow "eternal" and immutable. In classical times and under 'feudalism' (he held) it was ubiquitous, because the state was composed of an agglomeration of property goods ranging from chattel slavery and conquered territory to landed estates and corporations: 'the political constitution [was] the constitution of private property, but only because the constitution of private property [was] the political constitution.'[23] However, once 18th century bureaucracy and the French Revolution had established a distinction between civil or bourgeois society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) and a narrowly political state based on abstract, universal premisses embodied in a written constitution, then abolition of private property in the political sphere became possible: for example, in North American democracy with universal suffrage where there was no property qualification for participation.[24] Abolition of private property in its core sphere of civil society was more problematic, but even here Marx found history was on his side. Modern commercial and industrial property was more mobile and socially embedded than landed estates passed on by primogeniture, and so could be more easily "abolished": that is to say, the possession of socially significant goods should be made to serve the interests of society as a whole.[25] This groundwork laid down in 1843-4 then supplies a central seam that runs through all Marx' later work, where the law of private property is the very heart of bourgeois 'relations of production'.[26]

A second germinal cell of Marx' thought was his belief that 'society' rather than politics was the central theatre on which human life was played out. Indeed his esteem for the discourse of 'society' was so high that he supposed – in the mould of Enlightenment universalism – that it was a new universal category that united man and nature: '*society* is the completed unity in

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[20] Karl to Heinrich Marx, 11 Nov. 1837, *Frühe Schriften*, i.7-17.
[21] *Das Recht des Besitzes* (Gießen, 1803).
[22] Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.402.
[23] Ibid., i.296.
[24] 'On the Jewish Question' [1844], ibid., i.459-60. Compare Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), §.278A: here private property is only part of feudal monarchy (alongside independent corporations and associations) and of course the pejorative association of private property with slavery is absent.
[25] Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: *Frühe Schriften*, i.386, 391 cf. 400-3; EPM, ibid., i.583.
[26] Cf. *Misère de la Philosophie* (Paris/Brussels, 1847), 153: 'to define bourgeois property is nothing other than to give an exposition of all the social relations of bourgeois production.' — Surprisingly Stedman Jones thinks Marx lost interest in private property after 1845 and became more interested in the "bourgeoisie" and class struggle, *Karl Marx*, 307 cf. 380. It is a typical example of his breaking up Marx' thought into discontinuous fragments, but it is hard to see any empirical basis for such an interpretation. Compare Marx' exposition of the historicity of private property in 'The Civil War in France' (first draft, 1871), an account unaltered since 1843: *MEGA* I/22.73.

essence of man with nature… the realised humanism of nature'.[27] His more concrete point (largely ignored in later reception) was that society was where individual self-realisation took place: 'my *own* being *is* social activity' and so 'It is above all necessary to avoid postulating 'society" once more as an abstraction confronting the individual.'[28] Marx imbibed 'social' and generically socialist thought at a very early date and (as these remarks show) with an intuitive faith. This inevitably suggests the influence of French socialism and, specifically, Saint-Simon. But though such a connection has been frequently supposed, Marx nowhere acknowledges it directly and Saint-Simon is hardly features in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts". Stedman Jones, for example, largely dismisses the role of Saint-Simonian ideas in Marx' early formation, noting the obvious disparity between their religious ideas.[29] Yet to do so leaves a considerable hole in Marx' history, for why then was he a socialist thinker at all? Why was it that as early as March 1842 Marx proposed to write a 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' (a text that actually saw the light in the summer of 1843), where 'The kernel is the struggle against *constitutional monarchy*, as an out-and-out hybrid which contradicts and cancels itself'?[30] The hybrid was Hegel's alleged 'identity' between the spheres of the state and civil society.[31] Marx wished to prise it apart because he was absolutely confident that the central focus of attention in construing modernity lay not in politics and the constitutional states created by the French Revolution, let alone constitution-less Prussia, but in the society that lay behind them. Yet German intellectual traditions of law and idealist philosophy can hardly explain this fundamental, life-defining choice.

It may be said that the very fact that Hegel – Marx' immediate predecessor in the tradition of German universal and synthetic thought – introduced the novel, category distinction between the state and civil society supplied him with a sufficient opening. But while Hegel is undoubtedly a great formative influence on Marx, Marx' wholly original reading of the *Philosophy of Right* occurred to no-one else. For example, Feuerbach's pioneering critique of Hegelian abstraction – mistaking the ideal derivatives of real phenomena for reality itself – might in principle have been applied to Hegel on political institutions. However, Feuerbach can only be described as a social and political thinker of the most 'cryptic' kind.[32] So even when Marx discovered Feuerbach (which was not in 1842 but in early 1843),[33] he remained an irrelevance in this context, and his deficiency is the principal burden of Marx' famous theses 'Ad Feuerbach' (1845). This is the obvious reason why Feuerbach makes no appearance in the Critique of Hegel, as composed in 1843 and any critique of abstraction or occasional mention of 'alienation' there refers to Hegel alone.[34] Again, the contrast between Marx' thinking and Arnold Ruge's August 1842 critique of the *Philosophy of Right* could hardly be more extreme: the latter exalts the state and the political sphere; it complains at Hegel's imperfect realization of these categories (only), and never mentions civil society.[35] Yet Ruge was close to Marx at this date.

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[27] EPM, *Frühe Schriften*, i.596.
[28] Ibid., i.596-7.
[29] *Karl Marx*, 115, 608n.30.
[30] Marx to Arnold Ruge 5 March [1842], *MEW* 27.397. Original emphasis.
[31] Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.258.
[32] Warren Breckman (who esteems Feuerbach highly in this respect), *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1999), 219 cf. Marx to Ruge, 13 March 1843, *MEW* 27.417.
[33] Marx to Ruge, 13 Mar. [1843], *MEW* 27.417. Ruge had sent him the *Anekdota zur neuesten deutschen Philosophie*, published in February, which included Feuerbach's 'Preliminary Theses on the Reform of Philosophy'.
[34] *Frühe Schriften*, i.260, 295-6, 360 cf. David Leopold, *The Young Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 2007), 83-5.
[35] 'Hegel's "Philosophy of Right" and the Politics of our Times' in ed. L.S. Stepelevich, *The Young Hegelians. An Anthology* (Cambridge, 1983), 211-36.

But if Hegel alone cannot explain Marx' social critique, then Saint-Simonian ideas, with their pioneering emphasis on society rather than politics and constitutions, take on an obvious importance. Marx' general Franco-German context is relevant here: he grew up within 10 kilometres of the German *Bund*'s Western border; he wrote French easily; he enthusiastically supported the relocation of suppressed radical journalism from Germany to France in early 1843 in the form of the *Deutsch-Französischer Jahrbücher*;[36] while the lifelong importance of French thought to him down to his extended labours on the French edition of *Capital* (1872-5) is well-known.[37] Then there are the more particular facts of intellectual transmission. There were multiple sources by which Marx might receive Saint-Simonian ideas (most obviously Eduard Gans) and as scholars have shown, their permeation of German thought in the 1830s was considerable.[38] Marx' famous borrowings or derivations from Saint-Simon regarding the nature of the state – as an essentially administrative rather than political agency, which performed a necessary function like that of a cobbler[39] – and his notably individualistic and non-egalitarian definition of the socialist utopia ('From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!'),[40] are quite consistent with such a debt. Again, French socialism (Saint-Simon, then Proudhon) is the sole source of the idea of the socialization of property, and this is indeed a point at which both are mentioned in 1844.[41] Conversely, Marx' sharp dissent from Saint-Simonian religious and ethical commitments and belief in class harmony is not inconsistent with indebtedness elsewhere. There is, then, no reason to doubt Marx' oral recollection of his teenage mentor, Ludwig von Westphalen, as 'a fervent supporter of the doctrine of Saint-Simon and one of the first to speak to [him] about it.'[42] Their differences were so large he could hardly acknowledge any precise debt to Saint-Simon; but the idea that he could have imbibed the elementary priority underlying Saint-Simon's ideas from a source he esteemed very highly, is plausible. So Engels' judgement that early West German socialism (for there was none East of the Rhineland) was Franco-German in origin seems appropriate. Its French component was self-evident, even if it was also something more: 'we German socialists are proud that we are descended not only from Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen but also from Kant, Fichte and Hegel'.[43]

By contrast the proposal that '"Socialism"… in Germany as elsewhere arose from a battle about the status and character of religion', seems unlikely.[44] It makes Marx too much like Young Hegelians such as D.F. Strauss and (above all) Bruno Bauer who had religious

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[36] Marx to Ruge, 13 March [1843], *MEW* 27.416.
[37] Already in 1862-3 he envisaged French and English editions of *Capital* alongside the German original: to Ludwig Kugelmann, 28 Dec. 1862, to Engels 22 June 1863, *MEW* 30.640, 359.
[38] eg. H-C. Schmidt am Busch, *Hegelianismus und Saint-Simonismus* (Paderborn, 2007); Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians and the Origins of Radical Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1999), 158-76; Moritz Veit, *Saint Simon und der Saintsimonismus. Allgemeine Völkerbunde und ewiger Frieden* (Leipzig, 1834).
[39] Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.415. Engels comes closer to Saint-Simon's words when he proposes that 'the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things': *Anti-Dühring* [1878-85], III.2: *MEW* 20.262.
[40] Critique of the Gotha Programme [1875] §.3. Stedman Jones rightly points out that Marx' slogan was not the same as Saint-Simon's, but still Saint-Simon is the point of origin: *Karl Marx*, 608n.30.
[41] EPM, *Frühschriften* i.590.
[42] Maxim Kovalevsky, 'Meetings with Marx' [1909] in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow [1959]), 298. Kovalevsky (b.1851) is a good source who saw Marx on an almost weekly basis in the years 1875-7: James White, *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism* (London, 1996), 259-73.
[43] *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, 1882 German Preface: *MEW* 19.188. Mention of Owen here is specific to Engels: Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 181-8. David Leopold is sceptical about Saint-Simonian influence, yet his account is consistent with that given here: *The Young Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 2007), 271-7.
[44] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 70; see further his 'Introduction' to *The Communist Manifesto* (London, 2002): 8-9, 61-5, 78, 97, 136-7, 143.

priorities and engagements. But though he had a short period of association with Bauer, he was not like him. Specifically, the proposal overlooks Marx' Voltairean and rationalist heritage deriving from his father and von Westphalen. He is a man of *Aufklärung*, as is brought out in Moses Hess' famous description of him as 'Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel combined… in one person'.[45] It also overlooks the secular mindset of Marx' early associates and influences: Hegel's desire to detach the state from the church so far as possible, so that he regards 'the *unity of state and church*' as a misfortune;[46] the concomitant secularity of Eduard Gans, and the classically trained Arnold Ruge.[47] Of the early educated German socialists, Marx, Engels, Hess all have irreligious views,[48] but the central question is: what level of religious interest does irreligion imply? Engels undoubtedly reacted against the Pietist heritage of the Wuppertal, and Hess' interest in Spinozist ethics is also noticeable (though it is also supplies an obvious reason why Marx and Engels could no longer work with him after the spring of 1846). But none of these three was ever a theologian; none engaged in the critique of Protestant theology that bulks large in Young Hegelian discourse as a whole (Strauss, Bauer, Feuerbach); and all practiced their critique of contemporary world within secular formats, that is to say, society and politics. Of this trio Marx was the least touched by the need to react against or borrow from pre-existing religious discourse. His pointed silence on the related subject of Kantian ethics with their modern Christian and individualist message is another relevant feature here.

An obvious case to consider in this context is Feuerbach, from whom Marx undoubtedly took a great deal. It would be easy to pigeonhole Feuerbach as a religious thinker alongside Strauss and Bauer, but it would be a mistake, because unlike them he was 'not a theologian'.[49] Feuerbach may have started student life in theology, but as early as 1825 (aged 20) he had dismissed theology as 'a discarded chrysalis, a superseded stage of culture.'[50] Thereafter, all his work was in philosophy, though his interest in natural science (hence ideas such as 'species-being'), should not be discounted.[51] The outermost limit of Feuerbach's religious work, therefore, was *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), a work of '*speculative* theology or philosophy', where '*vulgar* theology' was dismissed as 'trash'.[52] In other words, it was an investigation of religion from a philosophical standpoint, and its frame of reference, unlike the works of Strauss and Bauer, was philosophical, not Christian or anti-Christian. Even so, Marx took no interest in a book with this title, and it was only later (February 1843), that he at last picked up on the importance of Feuerbach's 'Provisional Theses for the Reformation

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[45] Hess to Berthold Auerbach, 2 Sept. 1841, cit. McLellan, *Karl Marx: a Biography*, 151. S.S. Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature* (Oxford, 1976) supplies a plethora of illustrations of Marx' absorption of Voltaire, which amply justify Eleanor Marx' recollection that 'He knew his Voltaire… by heart' (p.2 cf. Index s.v.).

[46] *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, §.270 Remark, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1955), 232. There is no discussion of the church at all in the core lecture paragraphs.

[47] Robert Boxberger, 'Arnold Ruge', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 29 (1889), 594-598.

[48] Marx' contemporary and fellow student at Bonn Karl Grün (b.1817) is a separate case, though he too had little interest in religion: Ludwig Fränkel, 'Karl Grün', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographi*e 49 (1904), 583-9.

[49] [Ludwig Feuerbach], 'Luther als Schiedsrichter zwischen Strauss und Feuerbach' [1842], in Karl Marx (*sic*) *Frühe Schriften*, i.107. This article was attributed to Marx by Ryazanov, but its theological content alone shows this to be a mistake: see further H-M Sass, 'Feuerbach statt Marx: Zur Verfasserschaft des Aufsatzes „Luther als Schiedsrichter..."', *IRSH* 12 (1967), 108-19. For Marx' distinction between '*critical theologians*' such as Bauer and philosophers such as Feuerbach: eg. EPM, 'Vorrede', *Frühe Schriften* i.508.

[50] To his father, 22 March 1825, cit. Carl von Prantl, 'Ludwig Feuerbach', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 6 (1877), 747-753, here 748.

[51] Feuerbach's disenchantment with theology caused him to attend lectures on botany, anatomy and physiology at Erlangen in 1827: von Prantl, 'Ludwig Feuerbach', loc. cit.

[52] 1843 Preface to *Das Wesen des Christentums* in *Sämmtliche Werke* edd. W. Bolin & F. Jodl (Stuttgart, 1903-10) vii.286, emended translation from M.W. Wartkofsky, *Feuerbach* (Cambridge, 1977), 261.

of Philosophy' at the prompting of Ruge.[53] What he took from Feuerbach – as has long been understood – was thus twofold: the inversion of the Hegelian dialectic (from ideal to real), and a naturalistic dismantling of religion. Nonetheless, Feuerbach's analysis remained individualist and as such open to religious argument, whereas Marx' focus was on the individual as defined by civil society,[54] so that even the level of Feuerbach's anti-religious engagement was unthinkable to him. He never participated in any 'battle about the status and character of religion', though there were plenty about, and this is another central aspect of his originality.

It was typical then that his doctoral thesis should be on Epicurus, rather than on a religious subject: 'as the world becomes philosophical, philosophy also becomes worldly.'[55] The nearest he came to religious critique, when he was close to Bauer, was the proposed essay on Christian art of 1841, where the subject was art (a subject close to Marx' heart).[56] But nowhere do we find theological critique. Hence the seemingly bizarre format of Marx' and Engels' polemical collaboration, *The Holy Family* (1844), which did not deconstruct Bauer's major theological works from the early 1840s on the Gospels, but attacked instead the literary journal Bauer had been producing with his brother, the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*. Marx' views in favour of ignoring religion are repeatedly stated at this time: when he protests in 1842 against 'the confusion of the political with the Christian-religious principle' embodied by Frederick William IV; when he asserts in the *Rheinische Zeitung* 'that the construction of the state cannot start from religion but only from the rational character of freedom'; or when he distinguishes in 1844 between communism and 'that atheism [which] remains more of an abstraction.'[57] Again, the distance between Marx and the religious socialists in France (Leroux, Considérant, Blanc, Cabet, Buchez) is clear, and this is surely an important negative factor behind his selection of Proudhon as practically the one French socialist he is prepared to take seriously in theoretical debate in the 1840s.[58]

An important part of the explanation for Marx' want of interest in Protestant theology lies, I suggest, in the secular liberal desire to cast off any vestigial Jewish identity and to assimilate to the civil society around him — another bequest from his father and von Westphalen.[59] Of course, not all German Jews shared Marx' desire to cast off Jewish identity wholesale, and one can always find modernizers who took something important from their Judaism with them: the Spinozist Hess is a pertinent example. Again, there were prominent contemporary examples of Jews for whom the telos of assimilation was Lutheranism itself (the theologian August Neander, the church politician and political theorist F.J. Stahl). Nonetheless, Marx' want of interest in Protestant theology and his detachment from the Young Hegelian critique of religion is best explained in this way. As a Jew by birth who did *not* wish to assimilate to Protestantism, he had no interest in the voluminous literature and complex intellectual structures it had produced. He felt no need to define his position in regard to Protestant Christianity in the way that was so important to Strauss, Bauer and even Feuerbach, because

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[53] Marx to Ruge 13 March 1843, *MEW* 27.417.
[54] Theses 'Ad Feuerbach' [1845], no.6.
[55] 'Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of nature' [1841], *MEW* 40.328.
[56] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 101-4; Margaret Rose, *Marx's Lost Aesthetic* (Cambridge, 1984), 60-70.
[57] Resp. 'Comments on the latest Prussian Censorship Instruction', *MEW* 1.12; 'Leading article in no.179 *Kölnische Zeitung*' [1842], ibid., 103; EPM, *Frühe Schriften* i.595. Cf. Marx to Ruge 30 Nov. 1842: 'I desired… that religion be criticised as part of the criticism of political conditions rather than that political conditions be criticised as part of religion…' *MEW* 27.412.
[58] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 148-9. *What is Property?* (1840) was the point at which Proudhon turned decisively against the Catholic church, even if he retained ethical and New Testament foundations: K. Steven Vincent, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism* (New York, 1984), 65-70.
[59] Compare Marx' reference to the innate human 'need for society': EPM, *Frühe Schriften*, i.618.

there was nothing here for him to reject. It is thus entirely appropriate that the nearest Marx comes to making a statement about religion appears in the essay 'On the Jewish Question' (1844), which must be taken at face value in this respect. The religious disqualification experienced by 'the adherent of a particular religion… is only *a part* of the general *secular contradiction between the political state and civil society*', and the only relevant analysis of religious problems here (as always) is secular and social.[60]

Marx' "early life" down to 1845 is not only a period of intellectual formation but of seminal intellectual creation. If the 'first work' he acknowledged in his curriculum vitae was the 1843 Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right,[61] the second and most consequential achievement of that early life has long been taken to lie in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" written in Paris from May to August 1844 — a judgement that has remained unchallenged since their first appearance in 1932.[62] Why, then, did Marx turn to political economy here *in the particular way that he did?* Stedman Jones is surely right to point to Proudhon's and Engels' attacks (in 1840 and 1843) on private property as a feature that would have evoked Marx' sympathy, but the idea that it was 'Undoubtedly… [the] equation between political economy and Proudhon's idea of private property which inspired [Marx] to embark upon his own "critique of political economy"' is hardly complete.[63] If this had been the sole or even principal motive, the result would have been no more than an imitation of Engels or Proudhon, different in particulars perhaps, but generically alike. Engels, Hess and Proudhon had all begun to develop a socialist critique of political economy prior to Marx but only in the form of single essays (Engels, Hess) or obliquely (Proudhon).[64] However, no-one before Proudhon's *Système des contradictions économiques* (1846) thought to devote a whole book to the subject, by which time Marx' course was set, and no-one at all chose to devote the rest of their lives to such a critique as Marx did. Meanwhile Stedman Jones himself undercuts any appeal to Engels' effect on Marx in 1843 by his learned portrait of the formation of Engels' ideas, which stresses the importance of Owenite influences upon him and the obvious distance this marked out from Marx.[65]

The reality, not merely in Marxist hagiography but in the contextualised history of ideas, is that Marx was doing something unique and original. When he was confronted by the political economists' discourse (in whatever text) about the centrality of 'labour' as the primary source of value, it was as if he had entered a world he instantly understood — better indeed than those who presented it to him. Marx commonly worked with a white-hot intensity, but this was surely one of the great moments of recognition in his life, for in his eyes the productive 'labour' of the economists was one and the same as the 'labour' and 'activity' that were already familiar to him from idealist philosophy as central qualities of human nature.[66]

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[60] *Frühe Schriften* i.469. See the extended analysis by David Leopold, who comments that 'Although much of the text of 'Zur Judenfrage' is ostensibly concerned with religion, it is readily apparent that the young Marx's real interests lie elsewhere': *The Young Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 2006) c.2, here 133.
[61] 1859 Preface, *MEW* 13.8.
[62] Jürgen Rojahn wonders whether the Manuscripts can really be called Marx' "most central work" (Landshut) when their textual make-up is so miscellaneous and provisional. Yet he too admits that purely textual analysis 'has little to say about' (cannot impugn) 'their content *per se*': 'Marxismus—Marx—Geschichtswissenschaft. Der Fall der sog. „Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte"', *IRSH* 28 (1983), 2-49, here 45.
[63] *Karl Marx*, 174.
[64] *Qu'est-ce que la proprieté* (1840) c.3 considers 'Labour as the efficient cause of the domain of property'.
[65] *Karl Marx*, 181-8.
[66] Douglas Moggach rightly identifies this centrality, but his depiction of Marx' ideas on labour evolving along the lines of a Hegelian triad is a philosopher's fiction: 'German Idealism and Marx', ed. Nicholas Boyle et al., *The Impact of Idealism* ii (Cambridge, 2013), 82-107, esp. 94-99.

(This is one of Marx' principal derivations from Hegel, and his avoidance of the Saint-Simonian term 'industry' as a *human* denominator here is noticeable, even if it is a copious descriptor of *things*, such as 'big industry'.) Consider (among many examples) the passionate affirmation that closes the 1844 notebook extracts from James Mill:[67]

> In my *production* I would have objectified my *individuality* and its *specific character*, and so I would have enjoyed an individual *expression of life* during that activity… In your enjoyment or use of my product I would have the *immediate* enjoyment and awareness of having satisfied *human* need through my labour… of having directly created the expression of your life through the expression of my individual life, and of having directly *confirmed* and *realized* my true nature, my *human, communal* nature through my individual activity.

Here he has unified idealist philosophy, political economy, and social or socialist man: all must be seen as productive and active, taking enjoyment in the reciprocity of productive activity and need fulfilment within society. Can we be surprised, then, that at this moment he thought that he had solved 'the riddle of history', or that he set aside the critique of the *Philosophy of Right*, however important, in favour of the critique of political economy?[68] It would not be true to say he took nothing from the economists: he is deeply interested in their idea of the division of labour, but he does so because it looks like an extension of the idealist category of 'labour', and later he will realise the difficulties presented by its alien origin.[69] 20th century commentary, impregnated with existentialist philosophy, demoted 'labour' to concentrate on 'alienated labour' and 'alienation' within capitalist society;[70] but these are secondary categories. To Marx it was self-evident that labour was humanly impoverished ('one-sided, abstract', '*unfulfilling, wretched*')[71] in such a context, while the manuscript discussion of alienated labour in 1844 trades on the language of law as well as of humanity: alienated [*entfremdet*], self-alienated or evacuated [*entäußert*] labour is the source of private *property*.[72] For these reasons he could allow the terminology of alienation to lapse in *Capital*. The crucial, original premiss was 'labour'.

Yet this moment of illumination was not discontinuous. It confirmed Marx' adherence to the other central fruit of Hegelianism to which he was committed: Hegelian logic and dialectic, albeit construed along Feuerbachian lines as operating within a real context rather than as an illusory, autonomous process. For all that he dismissed the abstraction and unreality of Hegelian logic in isolation, he was clear that reality ('nature') also lived and moved and expressed itself in logical form: 'So the whole of [Hegel's speculative] *Logic* is proof that abstract thought is nothing in itself, that the absolute idea is nothing in itself, and that only

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[67] *MEGA* IV/2.465.

[68] Marx, *Frühe Schriften*, i.594 cf. i.506 on setting aside criticism directed against speculation.

[69] Ali Rattansi, *Marx and the Division of Labour* (London, 1982). The treatment of the distinction between 'productive' and 'unproductive labour' in 'Theories of Surplus Value' is another such borrowing. Here it should be remembered that, regardless of publishing history, this was a part of *Capital*, and originally a heading for *Capital I*: Notebook XVIII.1140 [Dec. 1862/Jan. 1863], *MEW* 26/1.389 cf. 122-277.

[70] The first writer to portray 'Marx's interpretation of the bourgeois-capitalist world according to the leading idea of human "self-alienation"' was Karl Löwith, 'Max Weber und Karl Marx', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft* 67 (1932), 175-207 (title). But one did not need to be a philosopher to mine this seam once opened: see Bertell Ollmann, *Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge, 1971). The deficiency here is that in the treatment of 'Marx's Conception of Human Nature' which precedes the exposition of Alienation, the space allotted to 'Activity, work, creativity' is slight; *Arbeit* is rendered as 'work' rather than 'labour', with more obviously shopfloor overtones, just as 'activity' is defined as 'the chief means by which man appropriates objects', and '"creativity" focuses on the uniqueness of the product' (99-105, here 99, 105). In short, the tendency to think in terms of 'capitalist society' and economy far outweighs consideration of 'human nature'.

[71] Resp. EPM, *Frühe Schriften*, i.518; 'Wage Labour and Capital' [1847/49], *MEW* 6.420.

[72] Ibid., i.559-75, see esp. 571-5 and then 575-608.

nature is something.'[73] 'The *real* movement'[74] of political economy was the same as the dialectical 'movement of history' outlined by philosophy, but for the fact that it was *real*. At the same time the analysis that now started with 'labour' came *back* to the principal target of his previous socio-political critique, the private property enshrined in Hegel's 'civil society': '*Society*, as it appears to the economists, is *civil society*'.[75] The connection between abstract or alienated labour and private property is thus the second central concern of the 1844 "Manuscripts": 'It is only when *labour* is grasped as the essence of private property, that the movement of the economy… becomes transparent in its real definition.'[76] Here one might perhaps suppose that Marx is going back to Proudhon – the quoted comment is part of a correction and clarification of Proudhon, "what he should have said" – but in reality he is returning to his own Hegelian premisses, and the chain of thought is different. Neither Engels' nor Proudhon's conception of labour is comparable to Marx' exalted, idealist-derived idea of labour as the most fundamental expression of men's lives;[77] and since neither was a Hegelian philosopher, neither could remotely have conceived of Marx' seamless *translation of the critique of philosophy into the critique of political economy*, which is the essence of his intellectual movement between 1844 and 1846. From August 1844 Marx wished not merely to settle personal scores with men such as Bruno Bauer (as he had already begun to do) but to dismiss philosophy finally: 'With the presentation of reality, independent philosophy loses its medium of existence.'[78] Yet even as philosophy was sent packing, the intellectual world Marx had found there had been relocated within "the critique of political economy", and this is why it could occupy him for the rest of his life.

II. Brussels 1845-8

The nature and status of Marx' work in Brussels have long been contested and recently his three years there (1845-8) have emerged as positively a black hole in his intellectual development. Louis Althusser famously posited an epistemological "break" in Marx' work around the year 1845: here was the point when he made the transition to 'the theoretical practice of a science' which would lead to the writing of *Capital*, leaving behind 'the ideological theoretical practice of its prehistory'.[79] However, this attempt to marginalise the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" found favour with no-one, and insofar as there is any formed view today it is a general, if unspecified sense that once Marx had discovered political economy in Paris, his subsequent life course was set. That his political expulsion from Paris signalled no intellectual discontinuity is clear enough. The Paris notebooks of readings in political economy were continued uninterrupted in Brussels and Manchester in 1845,[80] and Marx' publication plans tell a similar story. Already in the 'Preface' to the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts", he had announced (as we saw) that the critique of political economy would precede 'the critique of law, morals, politics etc.'[81] So we can be sure that

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[73] Ibid., i.660 cf. i.645: 'Das Große an der Hegelschen *Phänomenologie*…'
[74] Notebook excerpts from James Mill, *MEGA* IV/2.447 cf. 453 etc.
[75] EPM, *Frühe Schriften*, i.623.
[76] Loc. cit., see generally i.559-608.
[77] The one point where Engels appears to expand Ricardian political economy's definition of labour is when he notes its omission of 'the mental element of invention, of thought, alongside the physical element of mere work': 'Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie' [1843], *MEW* 1.508. But in fact he is still viewing labour as an economistic category: 'the spirit of invention' has an economic relevance which has been wrongly overlooked. This is far removed from Marx.
[78] *Die deutsche Ideologie* [1845-6] edd. Inge Taubert & Hans Pelger, *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003* (Amsterdam, 2003), 116.
[79] 'On the Materialist Dialectic. On the Unevenness of Origins' [1963], *For Marx*, 167-8.
[80] Rubel, 'Les Cahiers de Lecture de Karl Marx I. 1840-1853', *IRSH* 3 (1957), 392-420, here 399-405.
[81] *Frühe Schriften*, i.507.

when he signed a contract with the Darmstadt publisher Karl Leske just before he left Paris in February 1845 for a two-volume *Kritik der Politik und Nationalökonomie*, this was – as Engels understood at the time – an 'economic book'.[82] The titular reference to *Politics and Economics* did not imply that there would be one volume on politics (drawing on the critique of the *Philosophy of Right*) and one on economics (based on the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts") though good authorities have assumed this.[83] It was simply a clumsy way of expressing *Critique of Political Economy* – the heading that stands above Marx' work from 1857 on – and the 'Preface' to the "Manuscripts" offers one of the best definitions of what he meant by this phrase: 'the connection of economics with the state, law, morals, bourgeois life etc. is treated only so far as economics treats these subjects on its own account'.[84] However, such programmatic statements tells us nothing more specific about what Marx did in Brussels, once he arrived there.

Just how problematic Marx' time in Brussels has become is evident from the revelation by *MEGA* in 2003 that the text of 'Part I' of the 'German Ideology' on 'Feuerbach' (1845-6) does not exist, except for a draft preface and some brief draft introductory statements.[85] The materials which have previously been described as such are in fact a combination of these introductory fragments and a body of extracts paginated and so probably culled by Marx from the other parts of the volume of "philosophical" critique that were more or less written (Parts II and III on Bauer and Stirner). These extracts were saved so that they might serve as preparatory materials for the critique of Feuerbach, which however was never written. Now to all appearances this is an earthquake. The titular critique of Feuerbach, though it has little to say about Feuerbach and has been valued precisely because it is not mere negative critique, was presented by Engels as the point at which Marx created 'a new world view', and in the wake of Engels it was conventional to accept that this part of the 'German Ideology' offered not only the first but the only 'presentation of the materialist conception of history'.[86] But can this statement be true if no finished text was ever prepared? Marx' latest biographers (Stedman Jones, Sperber) have felt entitled to pass over this critical shock in virtual silence, but such a strategy cannot serve the history of ideas.[87] Textual deconstruction has raised issues of the largest kind which must be confronted. One of the central foundations of the

[82] To Marx 20 Jan. 1845, *MEW* 27.16. This is also the assumption of later correspondence such as Marx to Leske, 1 Aug. 1846: *MEW* 27.450. However, by this date it is to be expected.
[83] eg. Joseph O'Malley, 'Introduction' to Marx, *Early Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1994), xi-xiii. He sees exactly what Marx is saying in the 'Preface' to the Paris manuscripts, yet interprets the contract with Leske in a contrary sense.
[84] *Frühe Schriften*, i.507.
[85] The *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003* edd. Inge Taubert & Hans Pelger presents a preliminary edition of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Joseph Weydemeyer, *Die deutsche Ideologie* (Amsterdam, 2003), although bizarrely it omits the Preface (see *MEW* 3.13). The final *MEGA* edition (I/5) has not yet appeared. Terrell Carver and Daniel Blank consider the *Jahrbuch* text as a text in *A Political History of the Editions of Marx and Engels's "German Ideology Manuscripts"* and *Marx and Engels's "German Ideology Manuscripts": Presentation and Analysis of the "Feuerbach Chapter"*, both New York, 2014. However, the possible implications of the *MEGA* discovery for Marx' intellectual biography is not considered there.
[86] Engels, Vorbemerkung, *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie* (1888), *MEW* 21.264 cf. Ryazanov, *Marx-Engels-Archiv* (1926), 206-9 who simply added the word '*früheste*' (earliest) to Engels' description: cit. Carver & Blank, *A Political History of the…"German Ideology Manuscripts"*, 19; McLellan, *Karl Marx*, 135: 'the first concise statement of historical materialism'.
[87] Cf. Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 192. Sperber notes *MEGA*'s demonstration that the *German Ideology* 'does not and never did exist', but continues to make untroubled reference to the text in the *Marx-Engels Werke* edition dating from 1958: *Karl Marx: a Nineteenth Century Life* (New York, 2013), 164, 167 & nn.24-31.

"Marx" of the mid-20th century has received a severe hit and the extravagant praises lavished on it by commentators must be revised accordingly.[88] But by how much?

On the one hand, there are good grounds for conservativism. All the manuscript materials which have previously been cited as 'Part I of the German Ideology' continue to exist; the views stated there are genuine, while the fact that they are fragments from an incomplete and problematic text has always been known.[89] Had Marx, Engels, Weydemeyer and Hess secured a publisher for their volume of critique of German philosophy – the first of the two volumes that made up the publishing project called 'The German Ideology'[90] – it is a reasonable presumption that the preliminary materials we have would have been worked up into a text whose content would have closely resembled what has previously been called 'Part I of the "German Ideology"'. We can say this in part because of Marx' inveterate habit of re-using existing manuscript materials is evident in this case (where some of the paginated materials have been taken out for later use) just as it is elsewhere, as for example the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts".[91] Furthermore, the draft fragments that *were* written for 'Part I' of the text connect directly to arguments made in the "raw materials" and include literal textual borrowings.[92] Here there is a family resemblance to the 1843 Critique of Hegel and the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" where the 'Introduction' and 'Preface' (respectively) were composed last and are the most finished portions of two textual miscellanies. The 'German Ideology' materials must certainly be re-presented in future without any of the editorial interventions that sought to create a unified text where none existed, and with the restoration of occasional shards that did not accord with the dignity of a finished text, such as that the German 'nation is shit in & for itself'.[93] But overall there will be no great change in the textual matter.

However, the reduced status of the textual materials forces us to confront facts that have always been in plain sight: that after the 'German Ideology' failed to secure a publisher, by 1859 Marx could dismiss the project as obsolete and unworthy of reviving, a verdict that was endorsed by Engels when he looked again at the manuscript in 1888.[94] In this respect the 'German Ideology' is *unlike* the Critique of Hegel and the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" – the other pillars of the 1840s textual tripod – in that the agenda they posed (critique of the state, critique of political economy) was never thrown over and would always

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[88] eg. McLellan, *Karl Marx: a Biography*, 134-40; Rubel, 'A history of Marx's "Economics"', *Rubel on Karl Marx*, 129, which presents the 'German Ideology' as the foundation of *Capital*.

[89] Engels, Vorbemerkung, *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie* (1888), *MEW* 21.264; *Die deutsche Ideologie* ed. V. Adoratskij (Moscow-Leningrad, 1933), XVII-XIX, 7-67.

[90] This is the title that stayed in Marx' mind, as can be seen from the 'Erklärung gegen Karl Grün', 8 April 1847, *MEW* 4.38. For an outline of the publishing project: Marx to Leske, 1 Aug. [1846], *MEW* 27.448.

[91] Consider the missing pp.I-XXXIX of the 'Second Manuscript' in EPM, which were surely re-used at some point after 1857. (Rojahn's alternative speculation, which still leaves four pages unaccounted for, is not plausible: 'Marxismus — Marx — Geschichtswissenschaft', *IRSH* 28 (1983), 38-40.) See also Tribe, 'Karl Marx's "Critique of Political Economy"', *Economy of the Word*, 214, 219-22.

[92] For example, 'Fragment 1' is a history of the early forms of private property ('German Ideology', *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 111-4), which fills a gap in the precedent "raw materials" where a general history of modern forms of private property had emerged in the course of writing. Thus the latter speaks of 'second period', 'third period of private property since the middle ages' (but not a first) and concludes with the statement that 'these various [social and economic] forms are just as much forms of the organization of labour & hence of property' (61, 64, 67). This final statement then recurs almost exactly at the beginning of 'Fragment 1' (111).

[93] 'German Ideology', *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 18; compare the text in *MEW* 3.32. The quotation is directed against the constraints imposed by German nationality, not against Germany or Germans as such.

[94] Marx, 1859 Preface, *MEW* 13.10. Engels' reaction was to print Marx' 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach", but otherwise to compose an entirely new text in lieu of the 'incomplete' Part I: *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie*, here *MEW* 21.264.

remain current, even if in the first case it went unfulfilled. What this signifies is that the 'German Ideology' was never intended as a significant positive statement on a fundamental theoretical question, although this is how it has always been received. As its 'Preface' makes clear 'the first volume' was always intended as polemic, an attack on 'more recent Young Hegelian philosophy', and any positive reflections could at most be an accompaniment to that.[95] For example, an introductory draft notes that 'in order to recognise the pettiness and local constraint of this entire Young Hegelian movement, it is necessary for once to observe it from an extra-German standpoint.'[96] This 'extra-German standpoint' allowed a space for the authors to enter upon the universal historical vistas of the text: the critique of intellectual production in general and the sketch history of the phases in the history of private property, of social classes and the division of labour — all that constitutes the interest of the text for us. Nonetheless, the principal focus was always local and polemical. It might begin with '*Ideology in general*' but this was only the prelude to an assault (even in Part I) on '*German philosophy in particular*'.[97] The target was that small world where 'the *theatrum mundi* is limited to the Leipzig Book Fair', and where in any case 'these theoretical conceptions do not exist for the mass of men, i.e. the proletariat, and so do not need to be dismissed'.[98] Even in 1845-6 there was a clear recognition that this was a non-essential text.

A central implication is that though Marx had a clear conception of how history worked, he was not a historian. However large his historical reading might be, reference to history was only ever intended to serve the purposes of analysis of the present, 'a historical movement going on under our eyes',[99] and his critique of political economy was always organized around economic categories rather than historical sequence.[100] He might read about the French Revolutionary Convention in 1843-4; he might then draw on considerable learning in his theoretical writing in 1844,[101] not to mention decades of later pronouncements on the nature of revolutionary politics; but he was never going to write a history of the 1790s.[102] The only history he would write – and even this he categorized as a secondary concern – was the history of his analysis of the present: hence 'Theories of Surplus Value' (1861-3).[103] The central *critical* idea of "Part I" of the 'German Ideology' – that intellectual production could be criticised in terms of its social and material premisses[104] – was a profoundly original theoretical proposition which would prove seminal after Marx' death. It lies at the heart of our modern, pejorative understanding of 'ideology', and for this reason the 'German

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[95] *MEW* 3.13.
[96] 'German Ideology', *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 107.
[97] Loc. cit. cf. 104.
[98] 'German Ideology', *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 34-5. *Theatrum mundi*: the theatre of the world.
[99] *Communist Manifesto* (1848) §.II, *MEW* 4.475.
[100] See the extended discussion in *Grundrisse*, 22-8, which includes a predictable reference to Hegel's similar overriding of historical categories in the *Philosophy of Right* (22).
[101] See eg. the diatribe against French revolutionary rights of man, 'On the Jewish Question' [1844], *Frühe Schriften*, i.471-6.
[102] It is widely supposed that Marx intended to write such a history on the basis of Ruge's letter to Feuerbach of 15 May 1844: '*Marx* wants to write the history of the Convention and has accumulated the material for it', *Arnold Ruges Briefwechsel… aus den Jahren 1825-1880* (Berlin, 1886) i.345. Yet even if we took this report at face value, it was an intention at most. However, Marx broke off personal contact with Ruge two months before this letter was written; his notebook material on the Convention is slight, and general reading on French history far exceeds it: *MEGA* IV/2.283-98. Attempts to get round these difficulties are unpersuasive: Rojahn, 'Marxismus — Marx — Geschichtswissenschaft', *IRSH* 28 (1983), 21, 39.
[103] Indeed a historical component of this kind had always been present: Brussels Heft 6 'Geschichte der Nationalökonomie' [1845] (*MEGA* IV/3.389, 453), Marx to Leske 1 Aug. 1846, Marx to Engels 24 Nov. 1851, *MEW* 27.450, 370; *Grundrisse* (Berlin, 1953), 447-512.
[104] 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* power in society is at the same time the ruling *intellectual* power': *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 40.

Ideology' (complete or not) will always be admired. Nonetheless this was not Marx' and Engels' overriding aim here and the conception of class-based ideology framed in the text was nascent only. Such thinking might resurface in political contexts,[105] but Marx never applied a critique of this kind to Ricardian economics. The latter might be bourgeois but it was not simply ideology. It was part of the continuum of *Wissenschaft*, where 'the science produced by the historical movement' might associate in time with that movement: then it would 'have ceased to be doctrinaire and become revolutionary.'[106] As such it deserved the comprehensive, substantive 'Critique of political economy' that Marx directed towards it. Meanwhile the principle *positive* feature of Marxist thought about history was its distinctive sense of historical process as 'dialectically articulated':[107] history should be construed above all as a 'historical movement', as logical, dynamic and qualitatively revolutionary. This had been part of Marx' mental furniture since reading and hearing Hegel, Savigny and Gans, and (as we saw) it was the foundation of the critique of political economy.[108] Yet the 'German Ideology' manuscripts have nothing to say on this subject,[109] and so it cannot be received as even a remotely complete statement of Marxist views on history.

The secondary status of the 'German Ideology' is marked out as much by its co-authorship as by the fact that it was a polemic. Now the revised history of the text tells us no more about authorship than we knew before. Although its sheer length is a clear presumption in favour of Marx as the prime mover, Engels' hand has always been clearly present as a copyist and as a source of marginalia. However, the fact that the text was a polemic casts an important light on the Marx-Engels "partnership". It confirms that in matters intellectual, polemic was the only thing the two men did on a truly collaborative basis, since it was the one point where intellectual production resembled the range of political activities where collaboration was frequent. After 1870 when Engels' move to London made joint authorship easy once more – indeed it might be supposed to be encouraged by the fact of Marx' physical weakness – it remained limited to the single polemical text of *Anti-Dühring*, although by then the centre of authorial gravity had shifted so much towards Engels, that Marx refused to acknowledge his share of the text.[110] The nearest relative of the 'German Ideology' from the 1840s is a modest one: *The Holy Family*. In hindsight the famous meeting between Marx and Engels in Paris in August 1844 may appear as the beginning of a famous and longstanding partnership. Yet, as is well-known,[111] the sole tangible fruit of the meeting was nothing more than *The Holy Family*, a denunciation of the Bauer brothers that (so far as Engels was concerned) was to run to no more than the length of a review essay. Once this point is established, we see how mistaken was the assumption underlying the traditional construction of the 'German

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[105] eg. 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' [1852], *MEW* 8.138-40.
[106] *Misère de la Philosophie* (Paris/Brussels, 1847), 119. Compare a similarly fluid formulation in 'Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts' [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.340.
[107] Marx to Engels, 31 July 1865, *MEW* 31.132.
[108] Karl to Heinrich Marx, 11 Nov. 1837, *Frühe Schriften*, i.14; EPM, ibid., i.637-65; *Misère de la Philosophie* (1847), II §.1. For Gans' Hegelian treatment of the interrelation between abstract categories and world history: *Naturrecht und Universalrechtsgeschichte* (Tübingen, 2005) ed. Johann Braun.
[109] The brief musings about 'abstractions' in the introductory 'Fragment 2' are elusive at best: 'German Ideology', *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 116-7.
[110] See Engels' three Prefaces (1878, 1885, 1894), where Marx' contribution to the text was only admitted after his death: *MEW* 20.5-15. See also Marx' Preface to *Socialisme Utopique et Socialisme Scientifique* (1880), a neglected document which summarises Marx' view of Engels' achievements and the principal components of their collaboration: *MEGA* I/27.542-4. Neither *The Holy Family* nor the 'German Ideology' is mentioned there.
[111] eg. McLellan, *Karl Marx*, 116-7. One collaboration that never saw the light of day was the plan to write a diatribe against Proudhon's *Idée générale de la révolution au XIXe siècle* in 1851. Predictably this recalled memories of *The Holy Family* in Engels' mind: to Marx 27 Nov. 1851, *MEW* 27.375.

Ideology': the idea that Marx would have presented a major theoretical statement, such as an outline of his views on history, in collaborative form.

The place of the Brussels years in Marx' intellectual evolution can now be clarified. Alongside smaller, didactic and political texts such as 'Wage Labour and Capital' (1847) and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), there were just two major texts from this period: the 'German Ideology' (1845-6) and the *Poverty of Philosophy* (completed in June 1847). Now without wishing to belittle the interest of the 'German Ideology' materials, *Poverty of Philosophy* was surely the central production of this phase in Marx' life. Smiting Bauer and Stirner, and distancing himself from Feuerbach (the agenda of the 'German Ideology'), was important to Marx, but not as important as the critique of political economy, just as the Paris manuscripts were more important than *The Holy Family*.[112] Hitherto the *Poverty of Philosophy* has been overshadowed by the 'German Ideology', yet the testimonies to its importance are substantial. In 1847 Engels told Louis Blanc that 'you may regard M. Marx as the chief of our party… and his recent book against Proudhon as our programme'.[113] In 1850-1 Marx hoped to publish 'Anti-Proudhon' in German,[114] and its existence meant that it was not until 1857 that he resumed the theoretical critique of political economy in *Grundrisse*. In 1880 he still held that 'it contain[ed] the germs of the theory developed… in *Capital*' and could serve as an introduction to its study; and for the same reason that Engels commissioned Kautsky and Bernstein to translate it into German within a year of Marx' death.[115] Thereafter, although *Capital* was the prestige text for bourgeois intellectuals, *Poverty of Philosophy* was constantly in print alongside it, because it was 'the most readable book he would ever write.'[116]

The underlying point is that, once the critique of political economy became the centre of Marx' intellectual universe, this was his first major statement from his newly adjusted perspective. It is true that he did not write or complete the critique of political economy he had contracted with Leske: for whatever reason, this project seems to have become becalmed at the end of 1845.[117] Instead it was an external provocation that spurred him into action — Proudhon's *System of Economic Contradictions* (1846). Even so any regret at this accidental origin is out of place. Proudhon was a very different target from those assailed in the 'German Ideology', being neither German nor lapsed theologian or ideologue, and the *Poverty of Philosophy* was not just another 'polemic' that could have been co-authored with

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[112] See 'Preface', EPM, where the projected dismissal of '*theological criticism*' – *The Holy Family* – is relegated to 'another occasion': *Frühe Schriften*, i.509-10.
[113] Engels to Marx 25-6 Oct. 1847, *MEW* 27.93.
[114] To Hermann Becker, 2 Dec. 1850, Engels 24 Nov. 1851, *MEW* 27.540, 370. (This is distinct from the plan to write a polemic against Proudhon's *Idée générale de la révolution*, also under discussion at this time.)
[115] Marx, notice in *Egalité* (7 April 1880), *MEGA* I/25.198 cf. Engels, 'Karl Marx' [1869], *MEW* 16.363. Regrettably Engels' 'Vorwort' (October 1884) casts no further light: *MEW* 21.175-87.
[116] Keith Tribe, 'Karl Marx's "Critique of Political Economy"', *Economy of the Word*, 222. There were nine German editions of *Poverty of Philosophy* 1885-1923, and at least eight 1947-79. It was on Max Weber's Bibliography for his students: 'Allgemeine („theoretische") Nationalökonomie' [1894-8], *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* edd. Horst Baier et al., (Tübingen, 1984–) [hereafter *MWG*] *MWG* III/1.107.
[117] The Brussels and Manchester notebooks (which run from February to August 1845, *MEGA* IV/3-5) and Marx' letter to Leske (1 Aug. 1846, *MEW* 27.447-50) suggest that all his work for the Leske *Kritik* was done in 1845; that he perhaps produced part of the first volume (out of two) though there are no manuscript remains; but that then he stopped. Presumably he turned aside to work on the 'German Ideology' project in November. Yet once this fell through in July-August 1846, he did not return to the *Kritik*, but spent September-December on the enormous series of excerpts he took from Gustav von Gülich's *Historical Portrait of Trade, Industry and Agriculture in the Leading Commercial States of our Time* (1830-45): *MEGA* IV/6.989-91. Was this related to the 'more historical' second volume he envisaged for Leske? We cannot say, but the swiftness of his response to Proudhon's *Philosophie de la Misère* in December 1846 looks like a release from an impasse of *some* kind.

Engels.[118] Proudhon was trampling ignorantly on both the subject areas of most interest to Marx: not only was he a 'bad economist', but his grappling with alleged economic 'contradictions' proved him to be a 'bad philosopher' or dialectician as well.[119] Accordingly, the *Poverty of Philosophy* is an undoubted statement of Marx' views on all central aspects of the critique of political economy. After his great moment of recognition in Paris in 1844, there would never again be any major discontinuity in Marx' intellectual evolution, which is marked out instead by a tenacious adherence to the foundations laid down in the 1840s. Nonetheless, the *Poverty of Philosophy* represents a half-way stage, roughly equidistant intellectually between the Paris manuscripts and *Capital*. It is the starting point for the sequence of work that takes in the London notebooks of 1850-1[120] and the nearly continuous body of writing that runs from *Grundrisse* (1857-8) to *Capital*; even so, it is striking that it was not until 1857 that Marx attempted to supersede it. In short, *Poverty of Philosophy* is the *other* original and indispensable text he produced in the 1840s, and its neglect is a principal deficiency of the classical mid-20th century view of him.[121]

Note two outstanding features. First, it was in *Poverty of Philosophy* that Marx made the crucial leap from the post-idealist category of man as the active and creative source of labour to the socio-economic conception of labour, science, technology and machinery (as products of labour) combined. Hence from 'labour' to the 'forces' and 'relations of production'; to 'the capitalist mode of production', where a particular 'mode of production' was not just an economistic description, but a derivation of 'labour': 'a distinct *mode of life*.'[122] In the Paris manuscripts 'labour' was undeveloped in this respect. Apart from isolated remarks such as the association of 'socialism' with 'a *new mode of production*',[123] 'production' has only a low profile. Machines are discussed — Marx had read enough political economy to have a liminal awareness of their importance; but it was not until he got to Brussels that he read central texts about machinery by Charles Babbage and Andrew Ure.[124] So in Paris almost everything he has to say on this subject is critical: 'The worker is ever more dependent on… a particular, very one-sided machine-like labour… he is thus repressed bodily and mentally to

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[118] Cf. Terrell Carver & Daniel Blank, 'Analytical Introduction', *Marx and Engels's "German Ideology Manuscripts": Presentation and Analysis of the "Feuerbach Chapter"*, 23.

[119] 'Avant-Propos', *Misère de la Philosophie* (Paris/Brussels, 1847), n.p. In his capacity as a bad economist Proudhon would remain a central focus of criticism in *Grundrisse* and *Capital*.

[120] This body of work from September 1850 to the end of 1851 (17 numbered notebooks) is no doubt important as reading and reflection, but it produced no literary outcome: cf. Rubel, 'Les Cahiers de Lecture de Karl Marx I. 1840-1853', *IRSH* 3 (1957), 405-14. The one "independent" manuscript, 'Bullion. Das vollendete Geldsystem' (ca. May 1851), is no more than a short set of extracts from printed authors: *MEGA* IV/7.3-85. From July Marx began to look for a publisher so that what had hitherto been 'library studies' might be turned into a book: to Engels 2 April, 31 July 1851 (*MEW* 27.228, 293). To this extent the old publication plan of 1845 had returned to life and he could conceive that *Poverty of Philosophy* might be superseded, though he was also looking to publish 'Anti-Proudhon' in German at this time: to Engels 24 Nov. 1851 (*MEW* 27.370). However, no publisher was found; the notebooks petered out; and Marx took up journalism. The writing of *Grundrisse* – the first major theoretical text since 1847 – is thus the true new departure.

[121] Fleeting treatments in *Rubel on Karl Marx*, 130; Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 201, 230-1, reflect the omission of *Poverty of Philosophy* from all modern editions of selected Marx-Engels texts.

[122] *Die deutsche Ideologie* in *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 107. For 'forces' and 'relations of production', *Misère de la Philosophie* (Paris/Brussels, 1847), eg.127-41. — Stedman Jones is excellent on Marx on labour and production (*Karl Marx*, 194-9), but because of his belief that there is no fundamental continuity in Marx' ideas, he supposes that after 1845 he was 'reading… political economy in its own terms' (230). So the force of the original insight regarding the penetration of idealism into political economy is lost, and is replaced by the strange contention that Marx on 'the "forces" and "relations" of production' was 'not original' (378 & n.8) since these ideas could be found in John Locke and Enlightenment political economy.

[123] EPM, *Frühe Schriften*, 608.

[124] Brussels Notebook V [1845], *MEGA* IV/3.325-52.

the level of a machine'. The critical note is maintained even where Marx reveals an awareness of the potential of 'instruments' of production: 'The economist shows how the multiplication of needs and their instruments creates an absence of needs and instruments… by reducing the needs of the worker to the minimum and most pitiable physical subsistence and his activity to the most abstract mechanical movement'. Thus '*overproduction*' appears to be simply an evil.[125] Contrast the statement in *Poverty of Philosophy*:

> In 1770 the population of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain was 15 millions and the productive population 3 million. The scientific power of production [technology and machinery] was equivalent to a population of about 12 million more; so in total there were 15 millions of productive force. Thus the [ratio of] productive power was to population as 1 is to 1; and of scientific to manual power as 4 is to 1.
>
> In 1840 the population did not exceed 30 million: the productive population was 6 million, while the scientific power had risen to 650 million; that is to say, the scientific power was to the entire population as 21 is to 1, and to manual power as 108 is to 1.[126]

The label 'Industrial Revolution' might not exist, but Marx here announces what he understood by it and just how potent it was. Apparently abstract talk about the contrast between multiplying productive 'forces' and the 'fetters' imposed by static social 'relations of production' (bourgeois private property) becomes much clearer when expressed in these brutal quantitative terms. Marx knew full well that 'England [was] *the country of pauperism*'[127] as well as of enormous wealth, and that technology might have a contingent downside; but unlike Proudhon – who supposed that machinery and labour were simply opposed – he was an out-and-out modernist in economics just as he had been in philosophy. He was one of the first to imagine that, regardless of present ills, human agency and technology could create the good life within a world economy. In this he is the ancestor of Keynes and those who foresaw a new utopia in the internet, regardless of the fact that some of his principal prescriptions such as the abolition of the state and private property appear on any simple reading to be impossible and backward-looking, and despite his allegiance to an idea of labour which, regardless of its idealist origins, might also be construed as Ruskinian and artisanal.

A second outstanding feature of the text is its extended statement of allegiance to the Hegelian dialectic. This was 'the absolute method which not only explains all things, but also implies the movement of things', though of course it was not a mere 'logical formula', as Hegel supposed, but the 'systematic reconstructing and arranging according to the absolute method of *thoughts which are in the minds of everyone*.'[128] As we saw, Marx' interest in dialectic and logic goes back to his first reading of Hegel in 1837, and continues via the paean to the dialectic that appears in the Paris manuscripts of 1844 where, apart from Feuerbach, Hegel's *Phenomenology* and *Logic* were the only 'real theoretical revolution'.[129] After 'labour' this was the second great bequest of synthetic idealism. However, in Paris it is disconnected from the manuscript sections on labour and private property, and there are only the

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[125] EPM, *Frühe Schriften*, i.514, 611, 541 resp. In 1844 accordingly Marx spoke out in conventional terms against child labour (ibid., i.611), whereas in the table of demands in §.2 of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), the language is notably different: 'Elimination of child factory labour *in its present form*. Combination of education with material production etc.' *MEW* 4.482, emphasis added. This position was then adhered to thereafter, as for example at the close of the Critique of the Gotha Programme (1875), *MEW* 19.31-2.

[126] *Misère de la Philosophie*, 87. The germ of this idea can be found in the Paris manuscripts in a remark such as 'The machines for working cotton (in England) alone represent 84 000 000 handworkers.' But one would not know it from what appears as just a quotation (from Eugène Buret): *Frühe Schriften*, i.524.

[127] 'Kritische Randglossen…' [1844], *MEW* 1.395.

[128] *Misère de la Philosophie*, 92-120, here 96-7, 99 resp. Emphasis added.

[129] 'Vorrede', *Frühe Schriften* i.508 cf. 637-65.

briefest of references to the fact that 'Hegel adopts the standpoint of modern political economy. He grasps *labour* as the essence of man'.[130] In 1847 by contrast, the dialectical and historical movements of society and economy are fully integrated, and as such it is the *Poverty of Philosophy*, not the 'German Ideology', which is the first adequate statement of Marx' conception of history. On the one hand, the dialectic made history a usable field since, due to 'systematic reconstructing and arranging', it did not lapse into pathless infinity. This gave Marx the confidence to ingest empirical materials with great freedom and in an absolutely contemporary way. Already in 1847 he is relying on reports in 'the London papers' of strikes in 1844-5, just as in *Capital*, published in September 1867, he reproduces a wealth of material from the 1860s down to the swamping of the Indo-Chinese textile market by British goods 'at this moment, March 1867'.[131] This is what "standing Hegel on his feet" really meant in practice.[132] On the other hand, the dialectic was a crucial testimony to Marx' belief in the innate dynamism of the historical process. It might not supply 'the economic law of motion of modern society', which 'it [was] the ultimate end-goal of [the critique of political economy] to lay bare'; but it presented the general 'forms of motion' within which human society operated, and it was Marx' faith in the dialectic which encouraged his unshakable belief in the capitalist laws of motion, however difficult it might be to demonstrate them.[133] Seen dialectically, all history was by definition 'historical movement' and so intrinsically revolutionary. For these reasons his loyalty to the dialectic was lifelong and absolute.

III. The Critique of Political Economy

So much for Marx' intellectual formation. His history thereafter is commonly described as one of intellectual continuity and constancy,[134] but though this is just,[135] it must be rightly understood. Marx' adherence to the categories of property, labour and society and their historical-dialectical working out was undeviating; yet there never was a more mobile constancy. As just noted, the modernist thinker who took for granted the idea of constant 'historical movement', took constant delight in the new materials turned up by the advancing horizon of the present. In his work, 'everything had to be complete right up to the present day'.[136] Furthermore, even if we accept that there was no major deviation from the foundations laid down in 1843-4, this negative leaves open the question as to what was the positive status of the Marxist critique of political economy, when the aim of such critique was quite explicitly to rise 'above the level of political economy'.[137] One outline description that Marx did allow was that of a 'social science'.[138] The core unit of reference is always 'society' and never 'economy', and one might say that Marxist thought was the second social science to which Saint-Simon stood godparent after Comte.[139] But what kind of social science was this open-ended 'critique'?

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[130] *Frühe Schriften*, i.646. To be sure this is introduced as an anticipation of something further to come, but the aspiration was unfulfilled.
[131] *Misère de la Philosophie*, 171; *Capital I*, *MEW* 680n.100. The last proofs were sent off on 16 August and the book appeared in the third week of September.
[132] Cf. 'Afterword' to *Capital* (1873), *MEW* 23: 'With [Hegel], [the dialectic] is stood on its head.'
[133] 'Preface' to *Capital* (1867), *MEW* 23.15-16.
[134] eg. McLellan, *Karl Marx*, 282-4.
[135] Consider for example the section heading in EPM, '*The accumulation of capitals and competition among capitalists*', which leads into a discussion of the circulation of capital: *Frühe Schriften*, i.531-42. This anticipates the construction of *Capital II-III*. See also n.151 below.
[136] Engels to F.A. Sorge 29 June 1883, *MEW* 36.46.
[137] EPM, *Frühschriften* i.518 cf. 559-60.
[138] eg. *Misère de la Philosophie*, 178; *Grundrisse* (Berlin, 1953), 26.
[139] Marx' suggestion of an alternative label to Lassalle – '*Critique of economic categories* or, if you like, the system of bourgeois economy' – retains an obvious social dimension ('bourgeois'); but still the suggestion was

Marx was a product of the new world created by the French Revolution which, by its establishment of equality before the law, marked the end of the attempt to conceive of Western European society in terms of 'estates' and gave a quite new importance to forms of social description standing outside the law: this was the language of class.[140] The principal subject of the 1843 Critique of Hegel was 'civil' or 'bourgeois society' based on private property, accompanied by references to a feudal vestige within it (the 'agricultural class' [*Bauernstand*] or landowners enjoying primogeniture) and those who stood outside it: the propertyless '*class of direct labour*'.[141] Even so, it was only his reading of political economy in 1844 and the recognition of 'labour' it induced which gave a full development to his thought. Previously, Marx had been clear about the imperfection of bourgeois society, its hedonism and '*individualism*'; yet this had been only the obverse of the dialectical and historical advance it represented ('the fully realised principle of *individualism*', '*unconcealed contradiction*'),[142] and he had paid relatively little attention to those excluded from 'civil society'. But now there appeared to be a simple equation between the three sources of value in classical political economy, '*Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour*', and 'the three great classes into which modern civil society is divided'.[143]

This model of three social classes deriving primarily from economic foundations would prove to be enormously influential down to the late 20th century, and a large part of Marx' posthumous reputation has rested upon it. Yet while the Marxist critique of political economy undoubtedly seeks to explain the economic foundations of class identity, it is not an exposition of either class or class struggle. In principle, it acknowledges the existence of only two classes at most: the class of those who labour, and the class which live off the fruits of 'accumulated labour' or capital, where landowners, regardless of their feudal origins, can only function in any active way by conforming to the workings of capital: 'Rent… is property in land in its bourgeois state; that is, feudal property which has become subject to the conditions of bourgeois production.'[144] Furthermore, the two classes are ultimately only one, since what unites all is the capacity to labour and their potential for human fulfilment therein. Marx' central emphasis on capital as 'accumulated labour' is an assertion of this underlying unity, even within the 'capitalist mode of production' and the distorting relations imposed by private property – a feature that was picked up (for example) by the "sociological" Marxist thinkers of the 1920s such as Landshut and Georg Lukács when they spoke of Marxist

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provisional ('if you like'), and he never made it again: 22 Feb. 1858, *MEW* 29.550. — He first read Comte's *Cours* as late as 1866, when the 'noise' made by the recent publication of the *Système* was a provocation: to Engels 7 July 1866, *MEW* 31.234. He was predictably unimpressed and reproduced the content of the letter in the 1st edition of *Kapital* (Hamburg, 1867), 314n.22a. Cf. *MEW* 25.352; *The Civil War in France* (first draft), *MEGA* I/22.65: 'Workmen and Comte'.

[140] Compare the 'German Ideology' [1845-6]: 'The bourgeoisie… is no longer an *estate* [*Stand*] but a *class* [*Klasse*]', *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 94. This is an enormous and as yet only patchily researched subject: eg. Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie… 1750-1850* (Harvard, 2003) c.5.

[141] *Frühe Schriften* i.362 cf. 362-80 on 'estates' and 380-92 on the *Bauernstand*.

[142] Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.363, 355. Stedman Jones' belief that it was only in the *Communist Manifesto* that 'the "bourgeoisie" had become an epic hero of the forward march of humanity' for Marx (*Karl Marx*, 201), overlooks comparable statements from 1843-4 where he describes the '*political* emancipation' and 'representative constitution' which entrench bourgeois power as 'a great advance': 'Zur Judenfrage' [1844], Critique of Hegel [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.462, 355 resp.

[143] 1859 Preface, *MEW* 13.7. This goes back to the "Introduction" to the *Grundrisse* [August-September 1857] (Berlin, 1953), 28-9 and Marx to Lassalle 22 Feb. 1858, *MEW* 29.551.

[144] *Misère de la Philosophie*, 156. See at length *Capital III*, Part VI.

'totality'[145] – and it is this elementary conception of a united human nature far more than any economic argument which requires that ultimately all obstacles to the realisation of its unity will be removed. Private property and civil or bourgeois society were Marx' starting points; then came political economy and human 'labour'; last and, in terms of the analytical attention it received, least, was the three-class model and 'class struggle' as epitomised (for example) by the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and other canonical political texts.

The various programmatic statements Marx drafted in 1857-9 regarding the structure of the work that would become *Capital* illustrate the relegation of class as a subject. The first of these, which appears in the 'Introduction' to the *Grundrisse* (written in August-September 1857), is strongly social in appearance:[146]

> Obviously the division [of contents] has to be arranged so that [there is] (1) the general, abstract determinants which attach to all social forms more or less… (2) The categories which make up the inner order of civil or bourgeois society and on which the fundamental classes are based. Capital, wage labour, landed property. Their interrelation. … The three great social classes. Interchange between them. Circulation. (Private) credit system. (3) Summation of bourgeois society in the form of the state. … (4) International relation of production. … (5) The world market and crises.

Yet appearances would be misleading. When Marx finished the *Grundrisse* notebooks at the end of May 1858, he decided to frame 'an index' to set their disorderly contents in analytical order for the purposes of his future work.[147] The language here reads very differently, and the words 'class' and 'society' do not appear at all. Yet this does not signal any change of mind. On the contrary, he is simply redescribing nos.1-2 from the previous listing in language which reflects more precisely how in fact he has been writing about them:[148]

> I. Value
> II. Money
> III. Capital in General
> 1. The Production Process of Capital
> a. Exchange between capital and labour resource [*Arbeitsvermögen*]
> b. Absolute surplus value
> c. Relative surplus value
> d. Primitive [original] accumulation ...
> 2. The Circulation Process of Capital

Indeed the notebooks themselves had gone a step further than this listing since, however disorderly their contents might be in detail, alongside sections on the Production and Circulation Processes of Capital, they include a 'Part Three. Capital as fruit-bearing. Interest. Profit.'[149] With this the structure and contents of the three volumes of *Capital* as written between 1863 and 1867 come clearly into view: that is, 'The Production Process of Capital', 'The Circulation Process of Capital', and 'Capital and Profit' (to borrow Marx' pithy shorthand for *Capital III*'s more formal title 'The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole').[150]

The description of the work in these terms makes clear an elementary point: that at all times the Marxist critique of political economy was (as he told Lassalle in 1858) a '*Critique of Economic Categories*',[151] – money, value, capital etc. – 'the categories… on which the

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[145] Siegfried Landshut, *Kritik der Soziologie* (Munich & Leipzig, 1929), 54-82; Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* [1922] in *Frühschriften II* (Darmstadt, 1968), 349-50 cf. 275; Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley, 1984) cc.2-3.
[146] *Grundrisse*, 28-9.
[147] To Engels 31 May 1858, *MEW* 29.330.
[148] *Grundrisse*, 855-9. I cite only the leading headings from a much longer document.
[149] Ibid., 631. This dates from early March 1858. Compare the dating of the next reference.
[150] Cf. Marx to Lassalle, 11 Mar. 1858, on 'Capital and Profit': *MEW* 29.554. This goes back to the column heading 'Profit of Capital' in EPM [1844]: *Frühe Schriften*, i.525-42 cf. *MEGA* I/2.189b-203b, 216b-227b.
[151] 22 Feb. 1858, *MEW* 29.550.

fundamental classes are based'; not of the classes themselves or the "real individuals" that composed them. The 1867 Preface to *Capital* makes this hegemony of categories over persons explicit: 'I do not draw the figures [*Gestalten*] of the capitalist and the landowner in any rosy light. But we are talking about persons here only insofar as they are the personification of economic categories, the carriers of particular class-relations and interests.'[152] Accordingly the workings of social classes are removed to the margins. It is true that, because the worker and his labour are practically one and the same thing, the human struggles of organized workers over (for example) the working-day in Victorian England are vividly present in *Capital I* (c.8). However, the introduction of this human and voluntaristic element is problematic, because it casts doubt on the overall structure of the argument, which is steely and dialectical. If workers and the state can set limits to the working day, why can they not improve wages beyond the subsistence minimum?[153] and why is the state (the 'summation of bourgeois society')[154] assisting the workers? Even so, Marx' relentless trend to abstraction is apparent here as much as elsewhere. Hence his modification of the all-too-human entity 'labour' into a host of reified compounds of which 'wage labour' (from 1847/49)[155] and 'labour power' (triumphant in 1865)[156] are two of the most prominent. Still, the worst sufferers in this respect are the capitalists and the bourgeoisie. They are practically invisible, because they are subsumed in an object: capital or private property. Even where we encounter a heading such as 'Genesis of the industrial capitalist' (*Capital I*, c.24 §.3), this is not a portrait of the rise of a class, but simply part of the overall process signified by the superior chapter heading, 'So-called primitive accumulation' of capital, and its impersonal matter is further indicated by the gloss Engels inserted into the Contents after Marx' death: 'Colonial system. System of state debts. Modern tax and protection system.'[157]

Marx was aware of a deficiency here. A presentation in terms of abstract categories admirably fulfilled his intention of presenting bourgeois society in alien, objectified terms, but still it was not the same as an exploration of social class itself. In particular he recognised that he must explain how economic categories translated into social classes – 'What makes wage-labourers, capitalists, landowners the formative elements of the three great social classes?'[158] – for he had always known that (to take the outstanding case) there was more to the bourgeoisie than capitalists alone. The post-1789 state might have 'abolished the distinctions of *birth, rank, education, occupation* in its own way', but still they remained as '*unpolitical* distinctions' at work in society.[159] Again, the entire critique of bourgeois 'ideology' and its constituent '*ideologues*' ('jurists, politicians, all those involved in the state, moralists, the religious') is ample testimony to his awareness of the incomplete nature of social explanation by means of the capitalist mode of production alone. Class was also (in our language) a

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[152] *MEW* 23.16. The point is frequently repeated in the text: eg. *Capital III* c.48: 'the capitalist is simply personified capital, he functions in the production process solely as the carrier of capital': *MEW* 25.827.
[153] Marx' attempt to get out of this difficulty – which is very much at odds with his previous exposition in c.8 – is hardly convincing: that 'in reality a change in the productivity and intensity of labour either precedes or immediately follows a shortening of the working day', thereby rendering the change economically null, *MEW* 23.548-9. For a gathered exposition of his views see Value, Price and Profit [1865], *MEGA* II/4.1.385-432.
[154] *Grundrisse*, 28-9, cited at note 147 above. The contrast between relentless insistence on the failure of working class wages to rise and the victory of the Ten Hours Bill in 1847 is equally stark in the 'Inaugural Address' to the International Working Men's Association (1864): *MECW* 20.5-11.
[155] 'Lohnarbeit und Kapital', *MEW* 6.397-423.
[156] 'Das ökonomische Manuskript 1863-1865', *MEGA* II/4.1.451.
[157] *Capital I* (Hamburg, 1890[4]), XXXII.
[158] *MEW* 25.893. Rosdolsky's assumption that there could be no gap here – by implication Marx' question was fictitious – was an obvious consequence of his narrow focus on the relationship between *Grundrisse* and *Capital*: *The Making of Marx's Capital*, i.31.
[159] 'On the Jewish Question' [1844], *Frühe Schriften* i.460.

"discursive reality".[160] And yet it is hardly an accident that his question about class formation was only posed on the very last page of *Capital III* as published in 1894, and there left unanswered. Marx was not Kautsky — indeed he had a very clear estimate of Kautsky's mediocrity.[161] He knew that one could not reason simply from the economic base to the ideological superstructure, and that, even within a Marxist model, the existence and formation of social classes constituted a middle term between them. Nonetheless, it was not a subject to which, amidst a vast corpus of writing, he ever devoted any sustained attention, and in this sense there is a gap between the 'theoretical' critique of political economy and the political portrayal of class struggle, however dazzling, in works such as *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. As with the critique of ideology, Marx stood at the entry to a seam of analysis that would be developed enormously thereafter, beginning with Max Weber and moving on to the social history of class after c.1970;[162] but it was not a threshold he passed.

This deficiency raises broader questions regarding the shape of Marx' *oeuvre*. How incomplete was *Capital*? and how incomplete was the critique of political economy as a realization of his original programmatic statements from the 1840s? Enthusiasm for the latter can lead to the misplaced inference that the critique of political economy was negligible by comparison. The 'Preface' to the 1844 manuscripts outlines a scheme of future work whereby Marx' 'critique' (a critique so open that its scope is never mentioned, let alone defined) would be broken down into a series of separate 'brochures' or pamphlets covering not only economics, but 'law, morals, politics etc.', prior to a synthetic work that would 'supply the connection of the whole, the relation of the individual parts, as well as (finally) a critique of the speculative treatment of [all] that material'.[163] This has caused commentators to infer that 'In this project for a lifetime's work, Marx never got beyond the first stage: *Capital* and its predecessors', as if there were works of equivalent magnitude on all these other subjects waiting to be written.[164]

This is too hasty. In 1844 Marx was evidently thinking of a series of short works: as if for example the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" which the 'Preface' introduces were a complete treatment of the critique of economics. The scheme envisaged here has the same kind of synoptic purpose as Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), as is suggested by Marx' proposal to conclude with a summary as well as 'a critique of the speculative treatment' of the whole, and in writing in these synthetic and synoptic terms Marx once more betrays the influence of Hegel even as he was trying to shake it off. However, the further statement in the 'Preface' that the critique of economics would itself

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[160] 'German Ideology' [1846-6], *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2003*, 99. Stedman Jones rightly notes that 'historians have come to understand class no longer as the expression of a simple socio-economic reality, but as a form of language discursively produced to create identity' (*Karl Marx*, 306), and in *The Languages of Class* (Cambridge, 1983) he supplied a classical example of such analysis in the case of the Chartists: 'Rethinking Chartism', 90-178, esp. 94-6. Yet he denies that *Marx'* ideas about class should be analysed in these terms. Instead they should be subjected to an external test, that of 'real' European political and economic history, 'the observable sequence of events' as framed by himself in accordance with the canons of Western scholarship in 2016: *Karl Marx*, 234, 252. By this criterion (we are told) Marx after 1845 was guilty of misunderstanding, ignorance and even anachronism(!) (311, 397, 285). Here as throughout Stedman Jones retains his youthful preference for 'the real history of… working-class struggle' over *Geistesgeschichte* cf. 'The Marxism of the Early Lukács', *New Left Review* #70 (1971), 47 cf. 41.

[161] To Jenny Longuet, 11 Apr. 1881, *MEW* 35.177-8.

[162] '„Klassen", „Stände" und „Parteien"' [c.1910], 'Stände und Klassen' [1919-20], *MWG* I/22-1.252-72, I/23.592-600.

[163] *Frühe Schriften*, i.506.

[164] McLellan, *Karl Marx*, 95.

take in the critique of 'state, law, morals, bourgeois life etc.' so far as they touched on economics was a portent for the future, as can be seen from his discussion of this same question in 1859. By now (and indeed at any point after 1844) he had laid down a clear priority: 'the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which could be established with the fidelity of natural science' was to form the basis of his analysis, in contrast to 'the juristic, political, religious, artistic or philosophical, and in short ideological forms' which could not.[165] The critique of political economy (albeit in expansive Marxist form) was now marked out as his principal subject and all else worked out from that foundation, as is clear from the discussion of a miscellany of extraneous subjects – war, Roman law, cultural history and art – in *Grundrisse*. (Predictably Marx had most to say here about art, where he found a Marxist historicization of his all-too-historical tastes upsetting: 'The difficulty is that [Greek art and epic] still…rank as a norm and an unattainable model.')[166] So we should not repine over a mirage of missing texts on fascinatingly different subjects. A man who left behind a great volume of writing in unsystematic, free form – both in notebooks and journalism – would surely have touched on these subjects if he had had substantially more to say; but so far as we know, neither notebooks nor journalism gave rise to an alternative series of reflections.[167]

A different line of reasoning – the desire to show that Marx was not the inhumanly complete systematizer embodied in Soviet mythology – has led to an imaginary depreciation of the scope of the three volumes of *Capital*. Among the many outline plans framed in 1858-9, a prominent, if purely summary one was the six book scheme that appears at the opening to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859: '*Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour; State, International Trade, World Market.*'[168] Now if one supposes that 'Marx… retained in its entirety his six-rubric plan' and that the three volumes of *Capital* covered only the single heading 'Capital', then of course the conclusion follows that Marx 'executed only a small part of his vast program'.[169] However, such reasoning is as mechanical as the myth it seeks to counteract. Here as elsewhere the motto of "mobility within constancy" must be observed. In the organization of his work, as distinct from its intellectual foundations, there never was a more mobile thinker than Marx and his recent editors comment on this.[170]

Some of Marx' headings from 1858-9 survived down to 1867 and some did not; but what he did with the survivors changed. Originally he intended to give a short, theoretical presentation of the workings of capital as a purely analytical category which would then be followed by an examination of its social and class workings. Thus in 1858 the 'first instalment' was to take in '1. Value, 2. Money, 3. Capital in General (Production Process of Capital, Circulation Process of Capital, Unity of the two or Capital and Profit, Interest)' — all the subject headings that make up *Capital I-III*; but it was to do so in just '5-6 printers' sheets' or 80-96 pages

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[165] 1859 Preface, *MEW* 13.9.
[166] *Grundrisse*, 29-31, here 31.
[167] We await publication of Marx' London Notebook XVIII (1851-2), where much of the content is devoted to readings in literary history and poetry: Rubel, 'Les Cahiers de Lecture de Karl Marx I. 1840-1853', *IRSH* 3 (1957), 412.
[168] *MEW* 13.7 cf. Marx to Engels 2 Apr. 1858; to Lassalle 22 Feb. 1858, and to Joseph Weydemeyer 1 Feb. 1859, *MEW* 29.312, 551, 572.
[169] Rubel, 'A history of Marx's "Economics"', *Rubel on Karl Marx*, 167, 164 resp., cf. 'The plan and method of the "economics"', ibid., 218-9 on "true believers" and '"scientific" socialism'. Also: Ernest Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx* (London, 1977), 100; McLellan, *Karl Marx*, 275, who supposes there are entire 'sections' of *Grundrisse* 'devoted to topics such as foreign trade and the world market'.
[170] eg. Michael Heinrich, 'Reconstruction or Deconstruction?', *Re-reading Marx. New Perspectives after the Critical Edition*, edd. R. Bellofiore & R. Fineschi, (Basingstoke, 2009), 78-85.

and not three large volumes. The bulk of the book, a minimum of '30-40 sheets' even in 1858, was still to follow and *this* would be primarily devoted to the first three headings in the six-book scheme: Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour.[171] However, Marx' first attempt at realising this scheme, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), was a formal disaster. He covered more than ten sheets (170 pages)[172] on value and money without ever reaching Capital; and the six-book plan of 1858-9 was never mentioned again. The fact was that he was incapable of treating capital except in relation to labour, as the entire previous history of his engagement with political economy had already shown: capital, after all, *was* labour: accumulated or alienated labour, while ground rent was another form of capital. What happened thereafter was thus logical: the treatments of wage labour and landed property were subsumed under the treatment of capital. The detailed headings for Capital that Marx worked out in 1858 remained intact down to 1867 and beyond ('Production Process of Capital, Circulation Process of Capital, Unity of the two or Capital and Profit') and here is the underlying continuity between the *Grundrisse* notebooks and the final result; but now the three volumes that appeared under the title of *Capital* took in the whole of the three headings from the original six-book scheme (Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour). The relationship between capital and labour is the predominant subject throughout the whole of *Capital I* – labour is by no means confined to the brief treatment of 'Wages' (Part VI) – while the extended treatment of 'Ground Rent' is a major component of *Capital III* (Part VI),[173] and the categories of landed property and wage labour are in some sense continually present. *Capital* was not just a coverage of 'Capital' as defined by the six-book scheme of 1858-9, but much more.

In fact Marx covered the majority of what he set out to do, subject to the reservation made above: that *Capital* treats the economic categories underlying class, rather than class as such. The six headings listed in the 1859 Preface fell into two groups of three: '*Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour; State, International Trade, World Market.*'[174] (Note the punctuation here.) Of these Marx covered the first and in his eyes more important group. As he noted in 1858: 'It is by no means my intention to work out all the 6 books… uniformly; rather in the 3 last I shall give more of a simple outline, while in the first 3, which contain the actual and fundamental economic development, detailed expositions cannot always be avoided.'[175] Much the same view emerges in December 1862 when he stated that "Capital in General" – which embraces the subjects of *Capital I-III* – 'is the quintessence… and the development of what follows (with the exception perhaps of the relationship between the various forms of state to the various economic structures of society) would be easy to work out even by another person on the basis of what has been completed.'[176] Just how 'easy' can be seen from Marx introduction of a large volume of material on commercial crises – originally envisaged as part of headings 5-6, international trade and the world market[177] – into *Capital III*. Much of Part V (cc.25-35 in the published text) is taken up with fairly straightforward description of the irrationalities of capitalist behaviour (such as charging punitively high

[171] Marx to Lassalle 11 Mar. 1858, *MEW* 29.554.
[172] This is the pagination of the first edition: *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Duncker: Berlin, 1859).
[173] Compare the projected contents for *Capital III* ('Capital and Profit') in February-March 1859 with the scheme drawn up in Notebook XVIII in January 1863, where the introduction of '*Groundrent*' smuggled in as an 'illustration' is the outstanding change: resp. *Grundrisse*, 978; *MEW* 26/1.390. See further Regina Roth, 'Karl Marx's Original Manuscripts… Another View on *Capital*', *Re-reading Marx. New Perspectives after the Critical Edition* (Basingstoke, 2009), 27-49, here, 34-5.
[174] *MEW* 13.7.
[175] Marx to Lassalle 11 Mar. 1858, *MEW* 29.554.
[176] To Kugelmann 28 Dec. 1862, *MEW* 30.639. See similarly Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx's Capital*, i.53-5.
[177] See the plan of circa November 1857, *Grundrisse*, 175.

interest) during British crashes since 1825, above all those of 1847-8 and 1857, based on copious reproduction of material from a small number of parliamentary reports.[178]

Even so, his statement raises a question as to the significance of the missing treatment of the state. It is the one admitted shortfall in his intellectual production, just as the 1843 Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is the one important text he was never able to develop for publication. That Marx did not say all he would like to have done here would also seem to be implied by *The Civil War in France* (1871) and its accompanying drafts, which contain apparently novel matter regarding the communal and local nature of political representation. Might there then have been a treasure trove of Marxist political ideas that never found expression? Yet once again the answer seems to be largely negative. The amount *The Civil War* has to say about political theory is limited by its polemical context, but still it displays the same constancy and tenacity of opinion that appears in the critique of political economy. It is a faithful reproduction of central tenets laid down in the 1843 Critique of Hegel and *The 18th Brumaire*: bourgeois state power is traced from its origins in 18th century absolutism through the revolutions of 1789-1848 down to what he takes to be its final and most ambivalent form under the Second Empire: pure state power, with only ambiguous social support.[179] This leads to the conclusion that the legitimate public or administrative functions which remain after 'the destruction of the state power' must become '*real workmen's functions*': they should 'serve the people, constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business'.[180] But such a view is none other than the 1843 conception of the functions of the state as equivalent to those of a cobbler: it should perform a concrete social service and nothing more.[181] Again, the idea that the primary representative organ should be the local commune beneath a national assembly of delegates may appear novel, but in fact it is present in a notebook entry of early 1844 when Marx presents summary headings of his view of the state. These include: '7. The *executive power*. Centralization and hierarchy… Federalism and industrialism. *State administration and communal administration* [*Gemeindeverwaltung*].'[182]

The underlying reason for Marx' want of theorising of the state is in fact obvious. He could have little interest in doing so if the state was but a 'superstructure' and epiphenomenon of the class struggle: 'At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified, the class antagonism between capital and labour, the State power assumed more and more the character… of an engine of class despotism.'[183] Accompanying this was the slightly less obvious view that, while social evolution and class might be international phenomena, every state was different: '"*The* present-day state" is… a fiction'.[184] In other words, they were all illegitimate in their own way, like their ideological supports, and here is a further powerful reason for his reluctance to theorise the state. By a similar logic (though it seems questionable) the socialist parties in various countries were also different

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[178] The manuscript oscillates between (1) sections which transcribe material and (2) chapters of text which ingest that material: resp. (1) *MEGA* II/4.1476-500, 561-83, 597-646; (2) 506-61, 584-97. This would have required proper distillation in any final version, but it was a literary problem only, not an intellectual one.
[179] Compare esp. *Civil War in France* (1871), *MEGA* I/22.137-9 with Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.362; *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), §.VII.
[180] *Civil War in France* and 'first draft', *MEGA* I/22.141, 58.
[181] Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* [1843], *Frühe Schriften*, i.415.
[182] It appears near the beginning of an odd, miscellaneous notebook that runs from 1844-7. The prior contents (books to be bought from Paris booksellers and a paragraph on Hegel's construction of phenomenology 'still be developed'), indicate a date before the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts: *MEGA* IV/3.11.
[183] *Civil War in France*, *MEGA* I/22.137.
[184] Critique of the Gotha Programme (1875), *MEW* 19.28. Original emphasis.

despite their roots in a universal process – 'the only similarity in them is the end to be attained'[185] – and the Commune, too, had only limited significance, even if it was not politic to say so publicly. It might be a product of class struggle but still (Marx insists) 'the Commune is not the social movement of the working class… [It] does not do away with the class struggles [which lie ahead]… but it affords the rational medium in which that class struggle can run through its different phases in the most rational and human way.'[186]

The limited nature of this statement is clear, but still it reveals a significant opening: what was 'the most rational and human way' forward? In other words: what was the future state which would enact the kind of social reform and regulation that Marx held to be necessary? Now the prospect of such a future state was not undermined by a belief in revolutionary change and the political agency that accompanied it. What in 1850 he called 'the *class dictatorship* of the proletariat' was the logical negation of the currently existing 'bourgeois dictatorship' and no different from '*crude* communism' seen as part of a historical and logical sequence.[187] For Marx it was axiomatic that 'revolutions will be made by the majority [in society]. No revolution can be made by a party.'[188] Furthermore, dialectical change whereby the Commune (for example) was a 'true antithesis' and 'definite negation' of the decadent Bonapartist Empire, could be logically and qualitatively revolutionary without violence, even if Marx' not unjustified estimate of the physical force commanded by vested interests never made him into a Gandhian.[189] The real stumbling block was that the political complement to his modernist, socio-economic internationalism was a set of ideas that were unsatisfactory even on Marx' own internationalist and anti-statist terms. His communal and administrative politics had nothing to do with ideas about the ancient polis or Rousseauvian Geneva, since these related to social states that were obsolete;[190] but he did acknowledge his sympathy with 'that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government' — which is to say the English *laissez faire* of Gladstone and Cobden.[191] What Marx seems not to have understood about the 19th century state was that it too was modernizing in parallel to the industrial, technical and scientific modernization which interested him; that its technical and administrative functions were becoming greatly expanded even in his lifetime; and that this must breed a

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[185] 'Karl Marx', *Chicago Tribune*, 5 Jan. 1879, *MEGA* I/25.432. After Marx' abandonment of the International in 1872 he was likely to say this in any event, but there is an intellectual foundation to this position.
[186] *Civil War in France* (first draft), *MEGA* I/22.58-9.
[187] Resp. 'Class Struggles in France' [1850], *MEW* 7.89; 40-1, 84, 86-7, 93 (bourgeois dictatorship); EPM [1844], *Frühschriften*, i.593; cf. 'Erklärung', *Neue Deutsche Zeitung*, 4 July 1850, *MEW* 7.323.
[188] 'Karl Marx', *Chicago Tribune*, 5 Jan. 1879, *MEGA* I/25.435.
[189] *Civil War in France* (first draft), *MEGA* I/22.55. His 1879 interview with *Chicago Tribune* is an excellent synopsis of his views. On the evidence of the events of 1776-1851 he held that 'No great movement has ever been inaugurated without bloodshed.' As for the future, 'No socialist need predict that there will be a bloody revolution in Russia, Germany, Austria' because the course of political exclusion pursued by the governing classes made this outcome obvious. Yet such thinking undoubtedly allowed for peaceful transition in England, France and America, and in general the achievement of socialism would be 'a question of time, of education, and the institution of a higher social status' (for ordinary people): *MEGA* I/25.429-37, here 432-6. Here as always in politics, there was no uniformity of circumstances. So I cannot share Stedman Jones' view that Marx was uninterested in political exclusion (*Karl Marx*, 397), or his postulate that Marx' views changed overall in response to an alleged 'new era' in politics in the 1860s: ibid., 431-2, 466-70. Once again this makes Marx' thought appear more mutable and ephemeral than it was.
[190] For Marx' dismissal of 'the ancient state', Notebook entry from 1844, *MEGA* IV/3.11 (reprobating the 'confusion' of the French revolutionaries' classicism); on Rousseau eg. *Grundrisse*, 5, which picks up Rousseau's anti-social tendencies very clearly. David Leopold would like to argue for the importance of Rousseau, but sees the difficulty in doing so: *The Young Karl Marx*, 262-71.
[191] *Civil War in France*, *MEGA* I/22.142. Note too his positive description of the American state which 'as distinct from all previous national formations, was subordinated from the first to bourgeois society and its production, and could never pretend to be an end in itself': 'Bastiat and Carey', *Grundrisse*, 844.

very large centralized apparatus which, whatever the practical necessity of its functions, must be an instrument of political power. In short, the classic Saint-Simonian distinction between power over people and the administration of things could not be maintained. The obvious harbinger of modernity here was the German *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, founded in 1872, a successor to the cameralism Marx had despised when young. But he held aloof from any contact of this kind, although there were members of the *Verein*, such as Emile de Laveleye when he was writing *Le Socialisme Contemporain* (1881), who undoubtedly wanted to meet him.[192] For it was the *laissez faire* English state, made all the more agreeable by its freedom of information (in the form of parliamentary papers) and absence of police harassment, that stood closest to the confessedly utopian elements in his vision of the future state.[193]

IV. "Late" Marx

Marx' "late" years, after the publication of *Capital I* in 1867, are not normally a fulcrum of his intellectual biography, but Stedman Jones suggests they should be. In his eyes Marx' failure to complete and publish the second and third books of *Capital* after 1867, is a symptom of the fact that the entire intellectual project embodied in the critique of political economy 'had failed', even if 'he was unable to admit it'.[194] Incompletion was not merely a textual fact but a breakdown. This claim rests on a conflation of a number of ideas. First, that in *Capital* Marx failed to identify the "laws of motion" of capital.[195] He could prove neither the immiseration of the working class nor the declining rate of capitalist profit that were key material and historical symptoms of the movement of capitalism towards contradiction and catastrophe. However, while this failure is self-evident today, it was first perceived only after Marx' death: when his reputation grew sufficient to invite challenge; when he became the avowed doctrinal authority of the German SPD with its Erfurt Programme of 1891; and when *Capital III* was published in 1894, which in Part III contained his one and only attempt to prove the 'Law of the progressive fall in the rate of profit'. Only then did the economic and dialectical components of *Capital* come under significant attack, from the standpoint of theoretical economics by Böhm-Bawerk in 1896, and through the empirical critique of Eduard Bernstein (1898-9), who pointed out that in fact working class living standards were rising.[196] But none of this relates to Marx' lifetime.

Yet even if Marx was 'unable to admit' his theoretical breakdown, it can be detected (we are told) in two ways: first, from his interest in the historicist literature on the ancient village community as a pre-modern community of property. This found expression in his well-known letter to Vera Zasoulich in 1881 and its unpublished drafts, that allow for the possibility of a Russian evolution separate from that of Western Europe, such that the

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[192] Kovalevsky, 'Meetings with Marx' [1909] in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow [1959]), 295. Compare de Laveleye on Marx in *Le Socialisme Contemporain* (Paris, 1881) cc.II §.4, III.
[193] Cf. *Civil War in France* (first draft), *MEGA* I/22.67.
[194] *Karl Marx*, 430.
[195] Ibid., 429.
[196] Resp. Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, 'Zum Abschluß des Marxschen Systems' in ed. O. von Boenigk, *Staatswissenschaftliche Arbeiten: Festgaben für Karl Knies* (Berlin, 1896), 87-205; Eduard Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus* (Stuttgart, 1899). — The accusation that 'Marx had not a word to say on the movement of wages [in England] after 1850' in *Capital I* is quite untrue: B. Wolfe, *Marxism* (New York, 1965), 323 repeated by Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (Oxford, 1978), i.290. There is a large body of material in c.23 §.5, and in Value, Price and Profit [1865], *MEGA* II/4.1.385-432. What is true is that Marx' sources were insufficient to make a statistically systematic case. The first statistical presentation of 19th century English wage trends was distinctly positive, and this would have been a problem for Marx; but it did not appear until after his death: Robert Giffen, *The progress of the working classes in the last half century* (London, 1884).

communal property of the Russian peasantry might be a springboard for a direct transition to a modern social ownership of property on Marxist lines without undergoing the phase of private property experienced in the West.[197] The admission that Russia might follow a different historical path from that of Western Europe is seen as an admission that the normative status of Western European experience was called into question, which is then taken to coincide with a second tell-tale sign of breakdown: Marx' allegedly diminishing faith in the universal operations of the world market and the Hegelian dialectic. In the years after 1867 he failed to work out the 'continuous and unstoppable spiral' of the dialectic; he was bereft of 'Hegelian props', and so was unable to compose a finished text for *Capital II* or *III*.[198]

This is ingenious, rather than convincing. The operation of the world market was the last of the six headings Marx framed for *Capital* in 1857-9, and he never came on to treat it; but still there is no evidence (and none cited) to suggest that he ceased to believe in its workings.[199] On the contrary, he continued to take a keen interest in the movements of the international economy after the speculative crash of 1873. The progressive and sustained nature of price deflation throughout the rest of this decade was quite unlike the sharp cyclical movements accompanied by financial crises that marked the period 1825-66 and this inevitably interested him.[200] By 1879, though the collapse of his health was the obvious if psychologically inadmissible cause for failing to complete *Capital II*, he cited this interest as one of his excuses for postponing publication. It is precisely the same cast of mind that, ever since the *Poverty of Philosophy*, had led him to latch on to absolutely contemporary materials: 'The phenomena are this time singular, in many respects different from what they were in the past, and this… is easily accounted for by the fact that never before the *English crisis was preceded* by tremendous and now already 5 years lasting crisis in *the United States, South America, Germany, Austria*, etc.'[201] There is no want of interest in the world economy here and Marx' horizons after 1867 do not narrow; on the contrary, they widen. He goes beyond Western Europe and its maritime empires, and now attaches independent significance to both Russia and the United States, previously written off as 'pillars of the existing European order'. It is this dual expansion of 'the proletarian movement' which is the subject of the striking snapshot in the 1882 Preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto* and which explains 'the mass of American and Russian material' that Marx was accumulating down to his death.[202]

The claim that Marx lost faith in the dialectic is supported only by such suggestions as that he 'was at pains to distance himself from Hegel's philosophy' in the 'Afterword' to *Capital I* of

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[197] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 568-86.

[198] Ibid., 430, 537 cf. 389-90. It is even suggested that the illnesses that held up his work were psychosomatic responses to theoretical difficulty: ibid., 419, 434, 537-8.

[199] For an overview of Marx' global horizons: Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins* (Chicago, 2016).

[200] Economic historians would later dub it 'the great depression': S.B. Saul, *The Myth of the Great Depression, 1873-1896* (London, 1969).

[201] To Nikolai Danielson, 10 Apr. 1879, in Marx' original English: *MECW* 45.354. English price depression first became marked in 1878, five years after 1873.

[202] Resp. *MEW* 19.295; Engels to F.A. Sorge, 29 June 1883, *MEW* 36.46 cf. Maxim Kovalevsky, 'Meetings with Marx' ['Two Lives', 1909] in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow [1959]), 294 etc. There is no reason to doubt that the 1882 Preface is an accurate rendition of Marx' views. The manuscript is in Engels' hand, but was revised by Marx; and Marx was engaged in the correspondence attaching to its publication cf. *MEGA* I/25.970, 973. As regards the US it argues that in the 1850s it propped up European capitalism by absorbing emigrant labour and supplying cheap primary products: it was, as *Capital I* states, a 'colony' (*MEW* 23.475 n.234; compare *Das Kapital* [Hamburg, 1867], 755 with *MEW* 23.801). Now, however, it was threatening the European landholding class by cheap grain exports, while developing a class structure on European lines, with an industrial proletariat, and a class elite superior to the farmers. The empirical reality of this, except for the idea of 'giant farms' pointing towards a future landlord elite, is clear.

1873.[203] This is frankly mystifying, since the purpose of this text is so clearly the opposite: to remind readers that, however much Hegel had fallen into general disrepute, he did *not* share this view.[204] He might have been critical of 'the mystificatory side of the Hegelian dialectic' in the 1840s, but (in a famous formulation) its 'mystical shell' concealed an indispensable 'rational kernel'.[205] Hence his recollection of the illumination he received from his reading of Hegel's *Logic* in 1858 when he was setting out on the road that led to *Capital*.[206] At this point (he says) 'I openly avowed myself a pupil of that great thinker' – that is to say, he accepted that the critical standpoint of the Paris Manuscripts in 1844 was too one-sided – and it was at this date that he told Lassalle that the Hegelian dialectic was 'undoubtedly the last word of all philosophy'.[207] So in 1873 the whole of *Capital I* was to be explained as a dialectical construct. It was overtly present in the famously abstract 'chapter on value theory' (Part I); but he also held that the empirical and historical body of the text could be judged a success only 'if the life of the [empirical] material is reflected ideally', as part of 'the real movement', for 'then it may look as if one is dealing with an *a priori* construction.' There was nothing the bourgeoisie had more to fear than the operation of the dialectic, the logical progression of history driven by the energy of conflict and its revolutionary resolution; and there is no more passionate and personal confession of faith made by the late Marx than this:

> In its rational form [the dialectic] is an outrage and an abomination to the bourgeoisie and its doctrinaire spokesmen, because its positive understanding of what [currently] exists also includes the understanding of its negation, of its necessary collapse; it thus grasps every form that has [hitherto] emerged within the flux of movement, that is, in terms of its ephemeral side. It does not let itself be impressed by anything because by its nature it is critical and revolutionary.

Finally, we come to Russia. Peculiar interest has attached to Marx' late contacts with Russians and his reflections on the peasant commune, for an obvious but wholly extraneous reason: the light it casts on the nature of his connection to the Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet Communism.[208] Now it is true that from 1869 on Marx' lifelong dismissal of Russia as a reactionary, extra-European irrelevance was significantly changed. This is a significant part of the overall expansion of horizons just noted, and yet it must be placed in perspective. In the last 16 years of his life, his principal, business concerns were as always centred on the West as the normal model of universal development, and had little to do with Russia: the re-

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[203] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 427.

[204] Stedman Jones' view here derives from the Soviet historian James White, whose history of the dialectic sought to demonstrate that there could be no continuity between Marx and Plekhanov: *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism* (Basingstoke, 1996). However, White's methodological principles were of an unusual kind: in particular an absolute faith in his own "philological" reading of texts, which compensated for any unfamiliarity with German intellectual history (20). Besides yielding insights such as that Schleiermacher was the origin of the idea of alienation or that Schelling was a principal influence on Marx, this method allowed him to quote Marx' 'Afterword' *in extenso* as a self-evident testimony to his 'elimination' of any substantial reliance on the dialectic (210). However, White's grasp of Russian sources is much less forced and, in defiance of his own argument, he cites *inter alia* the testimony of Kovalevsky in 1875: '[Marx] was and remains a Hegelian' (260-1). See also Kovalevsky, 'Meetings with Marx' [1909] in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow [1959]), 301.

[205] *MEW* 23.27-8. The 'Afterword' is the source of what follows unless otherwise referenced.

[206] Compare Marx to Engels 16 Jan. 1858, where he commends Hegel's *Logic* in terms identical to those employed in 1873: 'If ever the time should come again for such works, I should take great pleasure in writing 2 or 3 sheets [32-48 pages] that made the *rational* element in the method H[egel] discovered but also mystified, accessible to ordinary human understanding', *MEW* 29.260.

[207] 31 May 1858, *MEW* 29.561. This remark does, however, presuppose Marx' view that philosophy had come to an end: see above §.II.

[208] *Late Marx and the Russian Road… A case presented by Teodor Shanin (editor)* (London, [1984]); James White, *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism* (Basingstoke, 1996).

writing of *Capital II* between 1867 and 1870; a lesser amount of linked work for *Capital III* in 1867-8;[209] the politics of the International, especially between 1870 and 1872; extensive work on the revised German and French editions of *Capital I* in the years 1872-5; and then a return to *Capital II* between 1876 and 1881, in a series of fragmentary attempts rendered null by declining health.[210] Russia was marginal to the technically conceived *Capital II* ('The Circulation Process of Capital'), which in its surviving form includes just one significant reference to Russian agriculture. Now this does indeed derive from a late manuscript of 1878. However, it relates not to the peasant commune but to the developing capitalist agriculture of large landlords, an evolution Marx expects to continue: 'the landlords can take comfort. Everything comes to those who wait.'[211] Russia's more obvious relevance was to the treatment of landed property and ground rent in *Capital III*.[212] Even so, this was an examination of the evolution of capitalist agriculture, a story where England and America might expect to feature largely, but where the commune could at most feature as a contrast. In any case the manuscript of *Capital III* at this point, dating from 1864-5, was left untouched.

Still, Marx' attitude to Russia did change. Where before he had dismissed Russia entirely, he now admitted it to the sphere of reading and reflection, though the volume of his Russian and American collections may in some degree – like his work on 'Theories of Surplus Value' in the 1860s – have been a displacement activity brought on by illness.[213] The origin of this change lay not in the Russian commune, but the dawning awareness that there was a Russian revolutionary movement, and that his 1848 view of Russia as a bulwark of reaction, at home and in Central Europe, was obsolete. Correspondence with revolutionaries who, already by 1868, wished to translate the first two volumes of *Capital* (*sic*),[214] prompted him to learn Russian, like Weber a generation later. Specifically he read Flerovsky's (Vasily Bervi's) *Situation of the Working Class in Russia* (1869), and became 'convinced that a most terrible social revolution – in such inferior forms of course as suit the present Muscovite state of development – is irrepressible in Russia and near at hand.'[215] In 1870 he then read selections from the work of Nikolai Chernyshevsky, who had opposed any serf emancipation that pointed towards the inauguration of private property in rural Russia, and implicitly signalled his approval in the January 1873 'Afterword' to the 2nd edition of *Capital I*.[216] Nonetheless, it should be remembered that this same 'Afterword' contained his paean to the dialectic; that he greeted the 'excellent Russian translation of *Capital*' in 1872 as a 'Western European';[217] and that the particular essay of Chernyshevsky he chose to praise was not his 'Critique of philosophical prejudices against communal ownership [of land]' (1859), but of J.S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*.[218] Indeed Chernyshevsky's awareness of a different West standing outside Russia was a principal feature that attracted Marx to him.

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[209] See 'Einführung', *MEGA* II/4.3.422-8 and the associated texts.
[210] For a synopsis and chronology of Marx' work on *Capital II* after 1867: *MEGA* II/11, 'Einführung', 843-51.
[211] *MEW* 24.39, from Manuscript VII.
[212] See Engels' Preface, *MEW* 25.14; Regina Roth, 'Karl Marx's Original Manuscripts…', *Re-reading Marx. New Perspectives after the Critical Edition* (Basingstoke, 2009), 34-7.
[213] Cf. Marx to Engels 29 May 1863, *MEW* 30.350. Marx compiled a catalogue of his Russian books in 1881, which ran to 115 titles. These were mainly official and statistical publications, analogous to his use of English parliamentary sources: James White, *Karl Marx and… Dialectical Materialism*, 244.
[214] See Marx to Nikolai Danielson, 7 Oct. 1868, *MEW* 32.563.
[215] Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 5 Mar. 1870, *MECW* 43.450. Danielson had sent Flerovsky/Bervi to Marx the previous October.
[216] *MEW* 23.21. See Haruki Wada's careful narrative, 'Marx and revolutionary Russia' in ed. Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 40-75.
[217] *MEW* 23.22.
[218] James White, *Karl Marx and… Dialectical Materialism*, 224-6; Wada, 'Marx and revolutionary Russia', *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 47, cf. 182-90.

Such was the context for various statements he and Engels would make thereafter,[219] including the letter to Vera Zasoulich. Now Marx' admission here that 'The "historical inevitability" of the movement' from communal ownership to private property in agriculture was '*expressly* limited to the *countries of Western Europe*' was in no way an admission that the universal working of dialectical-historical movement was impaired.[220] In the brief "public" letter he actually sent, Marx pointed out that he had allowed for Russia following a different historical evolution from that of the West by a minute textual revision that appeared in the Paris edition of *Capital I* (1872-5): this noted that the process of 'the expropriation of the peasants' was taking place in 'England… [and] all the other countries of Western Europe', a grouping that silently omitted Russia.[221] However, there was not the slightest suggestion that this sibylline modification of a sentence was of any consequence for the rest of the text, where in any case Russia was almost completely absent due to Marx' original, pre-1869 view of its irrelevance, and it never occurred to Engels (though he too had learned Russian) to incorporate the Paris change into the German text of *Capital* thereafter.[222] The point underlying this shadow boxing is that it was only because he considered Western European development so advanced and so close to its terminus, that Marx allowed that there might be no need for a backward Russia to repeat such a painful experience: 'Precisely because of its contemporaneity with capitalist production, [the rural commune] can appropriate all its *positive gains* without having to pass through its terrible misfortunes.'[223] So the primacy of Western Europe and universal-dialectical reasoning was firmly maintained. The further point is that Marx had always allowed for historical flexibility in detail. Already in 1867 he had insisted in *Capital* that the expropriation of communal property and the creation of private property was a process that 'takes on a different colouring in different countries, and passes through its different phases in different sequences at different historical epochs', and it cost him nothing to repeat this point in a Russian context.[224] The remark that the dialectic 'does not let itself be impressed by anything' was as capacious as it was defiant.

In sum, what we see in Marx' "late" years (between the ages of 49 and 65) is clear evidence of intellectual vitality and flexibility, and none of intellectual failure or departure from the foundations of his previous thought, even if after c.1876 any major composition was probably beyond him on health grounds. It is true that he prioritised the revision and republication of *Capital I*, which he now saw as 'a whole, complete in itself',[225] over new work on *Capital II*

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[219] Engels, 'Soziales aus Rußland' [1875], *MEW* 18.556-67; Marx [unsent] letter to *Otecestvennyja Zapinski* [*Fatherland Notes*, October/November 1877], *MEGA* I/25.112-7. In Marx' late snapshot of Engels' life, 'Soziales aus Rußland' is selected as one of a handful of works from the 1870s worthy of note: Preface to *Socialisme Utopique et Socialisme Scientifique* (1880): *MEGA* I/27.544. Wada rightly portrays Marx' and Engels' view as a 'joint' one: *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 53.

[220] 8 Mar. 1881, *MEGA* I/25.241.

[221] This is the final sentence of c.24 §.1, 'The secret of primitive accumulation' cf. Wada, 'Marx and revolutionary Russia', *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 49.

[222] Cf. *Capital* I (Hamburg, 1890[4]), 682; *MEW* 23.744. An isolated reference to Russian agriculture moving in parallel with that in England was also left intact: *MEW* 23.751.

[223] 'Premier projet de la letter à Vera Zasoulich', *MEGA* I/25.220.

[224] *Capital I*, *MEW* 23.744 cf. Marx to *Otecestvennyja Zapinski* [1877], *MEGA* I/25.116, where he denies emphatically that 'my sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe' can be equated with 'a historico-philosophical theory of universal development fatally imposed on all peoples, regardless of the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed'. These pronouncements anticipate Engels' well-known observations regarding the flexibility of the materialist theory of history: eg. to Paul Ernst, Conrad Schmidt, Joseph Bloch, 5 June, 5 Aug., 21 Sept., 27 Oct. 1890, *MEW* 37.411-3, 435-8, 462-5, 488-95.

[225] Marx to Nikolai Danielson, 7 Oct. 1868, *MECW* 43.123.

in the years 1872-5. However, this was neither a new strategy – it goes back to his prioritizing the composition of *Capital I* and *Capital III* at the expense of *Capital II* prior to 1867[226] – nor an obviously mistaken one. *Capital I* (and also *Capital III*) was far more important to him than the technical *Capital II*, since the kernel of *Capital* and of all Marx' thought from 1844 was the relation between capital and labour and the 'production process' it embodied. *The Production Process*, likewise *The Overall Production Process of Capital* that was the fruit of 'labour', was not just an economic and technical matter but a *life process* (as we saw). By contrast, circulation (the subject of *Capital II*) was but '*the surface phenomenon of a process going on behind it*', that is, production.[227] In any case there is no evidence for the claim that the 'years after 1870' witnessed Marx' 'abandonment of *Capital*' as an intellectual project.[228]

V. Assessment

Having outlined Marx' ideas within the context of the history of European ideas, we should assess him accordingly: by identifying his place *within that history*. Here it should be stressed that to historicise a subject is not to bury it — though this is a subject on which there appears to be some confusion. Both Sperber and Stedman Jones seek to assign Marx to the 'nineteenth-century', as if he was once (so to speak) a live coal, but now that the life has gone out of him he can safely be consigned to the dustbin of history.[229] This procedure is illegitimate not only because it suggests an implicit political judgement (the only safe Marx is a dead Marx), but because it assumes that history is just a dustbin or cemetery. It assumes, in other words, that the past ('history') can be detached from the present. Yet the history of ideas, like all history, is a continuous stream. There is indeed constant change within an infinity of strands; there is new life, decay and occasional rupture; but any absolute divorce of the past from the present, as if they were separate and separable categories, is an evident impossibility. Individual thinkers and ideas can be superseded, but falling back into the detached past is commonly a silent process, a lapse into oblivion (though even here there is the possibility of later resurrection), and it does not apply to authors entrenched in current cultural and scholastic canons, who are the subjects of large biographies.[230]

Marx is indisputably part of the continuous stream of ideas and here is another reason why talk of his "failure" strikes us as implausible. Such dismissals have been uttered times without number but they lack force because, regardless of his failings (he adopted positions that both contemporaries and we regard as mistaken), they fail to account for his "success": acknowledged importance even in his lifetime followed by a commanding presence in the

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[226] In what Marx supposed was the final draft of *Capital*, starting in August 1863, he worked exclusively on *Capital I* and *III* until he realised that the open frontier between *Capital II* and *III* required him to draft the former, which caused a temporary diversion. The final result in December 1865 gives a crude but just idea of his priorities: a paginated manuscript of 490 pages for Book I, 150 for Book II and 575 for Book III: *MEGA* II/4.1-4.2. (The figures which appear at II/4.1.448 are slightly inaccurate.) The modest status of *Capital II* explains why, until as late as October 1866, he assumed that it could be published in the same volume as *Capital I*: to Kugelmann 13 Oct. 1866, *MEW* 31.534.

[227] *Grundrisse*, 166. Contrast White, *Karl Marx and… Dialectical Materialism*, 194, who supposes that *Capital II* was 'an apotheosis of the whole system', and hence a pointer towards Marx' intellectual failure.

[228] Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Radicalism and the extra-European world: the case of Karl Marx' in ed. D. Bell, *Victorian Visions of Global Order* (Cambridge, 2007), 186-214, here 198.

[229] The thrust of Sperber's title, *Karl Marx: a Nineteenth-Century Life*, is confirmed by his 'Introduction', xi-xx; cf. Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*, 5. Both authors suppose that Marx' reception was political and primarily Soviet after 1917, thereby excluding the idea that he had a significant intellectual reception in Western Europe.

[230] When challenged on this point, Sperber made a U-turn: 'Karl Marx is still making sense', *Guardian* [London], Review, 18 May 2013, 21.

intellectual life of Western Europe subsequently, such that we today still routinely employ Marxist analytical categories such as 'class' and 'ideology'. Max Weber, Marx' successor on the podium of canonical esteem today, was simply stating the obvious when, having summarily equated Marx' and Engels' work with the *Communist Manifesto*, he observed that 'This document is in its way an academic-scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) performance of the first rank. That cannot be denied, it may not be denied, because no-one will believe the denial'.[231] This is not to say that Marx' intellectual stature can be measured solely by the later reception of his ideas by readers whose present-day commitments far outweighed that to the past. Yet nor can it be wholly detached from that reception. For these were historically sophisticated, academic readers of Marx who, at the very least, can serve as a control on our readings; and their judgements are no less historical facts than those issued by academic historians. A thinker's reception is but the mirror image of their context: these are their ancestry and afterlife within the stream of ideas, and no author can be fully assessed in that stream without reference to both, although commonly only the first requirement is taken as self-evident. Adoption of this principle becomes a practical necessity in the case of canonical authors, whose canonical status is itself the creation of a tradition of reception. It is still more necessary in Marx' case since, besides the subjects that engaged him fully and explicitly, a great deal of his influence was seminal. Ideas that he broached only indirectly or occasionally would be developed to a much greater degree by later generations; yet they could not have done so without the original stimulus.

Marx' origins lie in the tradition of German encyclopaedism and Enlightenment 'philosophy', which supposed that the world could be ordered according to universal categories, categories which (unlike all previous philosophy) embraced not only the present world but its past, through the 'philosophy of history'. His intellectual history is the history of his reworking of this universal and synthetic tradition and of the ups and downs he experienced in doing so. It may be suggested that his remarkable capacity to absorb previous tradition – Hegel and German idealism alongside a significant echo from Saint-Simon and French thought – was not simply German but an early example of the Jewish assimilationist culture that became so pronounced by the end of the 19th century. But if there is any truth in this it must be qualified by the fact that, unlike many in later generations, Marx was remarkably unselfconscious (or successfully repressive) of any Jewish origin and possessed the kind of brutal self-confidence that allowed him to be a radical innovator as well as an assimilator.

His great moment came in the years 1843-7 when he enacted a seismic shift across a whole range of intellectual inquiry. He took Hegel's relegation of individual ethics (*Moral*) to an extreme and silently dismissed it (apart from a series of later tirades against all those who continued to indulge in such sentimentalism). This was then a hidden foundation for his declaration that philosophy itself was abolished or superseded by 1845. He took a good deal of the intellectual apparatus of philosophy with him so as to conquer the virgin field of 'society', an inquiry that also assumed the supersession of traditional inquiry into law and the state (what Anglo-Saxons called 'politics'). When Hegel said that the Owl of Minerva flew in the dusk[232] – meaning that political theory recognised as final the achievement of the French Revolution, its abolition of untheorisable *anciens régimes* and ancient constitutions based on historical accumulation and precedent in favour of modern written constitutions based on the universal principles of natural law – Marx took him at his word. The portion of

[231] 'Der Sozialismus' [1918], *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, I/15.616. Weber was addressing an audience of Habsburg army officers; hence his brusque simplification.
[232] 'Preface' [1820], *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Berlin, 1821), penultimate paragraph.

Hegelian philosophy he retained was extremely powerful, but it was not capable of constructing the new and potentially infinite terrain of 'society' on its own. So where Hegel merely noticed the potentially ominous mixture of English wealth and pauperism and sought to contain it within the greater scheme of his philosophy, Marx "stood Hegel on his feet", and used the tools of philosophy to transmute the categories of Anglo-French political economy – a relatively recent, specialist area of inquiry that was 'foreign' to Germany[233] – into a new universal scheme of ideas. He never declared the abolition of political economy as such, but still he held that 'the bourgeois science of economics' had expired with Ricardo,[234] and here was another discipline he wished to pluck up by the roots and ingest into his system.

Such was Marx' principal act of intellectual creation: a great act of synthesis, in the descent of German ideas from Alsted and Leibniz. Yet it was an oddity in a world where synthesis and universalism were becoming ever harder to sustain, and where Marx' own triumph was founded on the ruins of Hegelian synthesis. This was marked out by the fact that the new scheme had no more positive name than 'the critique of political economy' – that is, critique carried on by extraneous (Hegelian and post-Hegelian) tools – and it remained, to a unique degree, an act of personal creation, known by the name of its author: Marxism. Marx' famous protestation that he was not a Marxist cannot alter this discursive fact,[235] and a contrast here with Comte is clear. For although the personal label 'Comtean' or 'Comtist' was prevalent, it was accompanied by the claim to found a supra-personal discipline: sociology.[236] Within the synthesis, differing components had differing fortunes. Marx' most remarkable achievement was to take the Hegelian and idealist category of 'labour' and assimilate it to the new world of industrial labour, expanding its meaning to take in machinery, technology and natural science[237] under the heading of 'production'. In this way Enlightenment optimism received a supercharge from the facts of industrial revolution. (Yet the 'emancipation of labour' was not the same as a call for social equality, however widespread the association of Marx with this idea in the 21st century. What Marx wanted was individual self-realization, including the realization of individual variety, within a social framework that allowed all to realize themselves. This was a form of *laissez faire*.)[238] On the other hand, his most glaring deficiency was equally Hegelian: loyalty to the dialectic. He himself was a major contributor to the decadence of Hegelianism in the 1840s; he recognised that interest in Hegelian logic and dialectic was in freefall after c.1850; and the unreality of

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[233] 'Afterword' [1873] to *Capital*, *MEW* 23.19 cf. 'Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Introduction' [1844], *Frühe Schriften*, i.493-4. Scholars inspired by Marx have looked extensively at Hegel's connections to "English" political economy, yet this cannot override the fact that Marx did not take his ideas on political economy from Hegel, but directly from Anglo-French sources.

[234] 'Afterword' [1873] to *Capital*, *MEW* 23.20.

[235] Engels was both the faithful reporter of Marx' protest (*MEW* 35.388, 37.436, 450) and, by common consent, the principal creator of Marxism, who knew of no better, alternative term: Rubel, 'The "Marx Legend"', *Rubel on Karl Marx*, 19-22. However, Rubel's belief (23) that the only meaning of 'Marxism' was that of 'ersatz religion' devoid of intellectual content, is an obvious, politically-driven fallacy.

[236] There are of course a number of thinkers, whose names are significant (Aristotelian, Thomist, Benthamite etc.), and who cross disciplinary boundaries. Yet they do not submerge the identities of subject disciplines.

[237] On the important case of Marx and Justus Liebig: Kohei Saito, 'The emergence of Marx's critique of modern agriculture', *Monthly Review* 66 (October, 2014), 25-47.

[238] *Frühe Schriften*, 'Zur Judenfrage', i.473-4; EPM, ibid., 555-6, 573, 617. Compare Thomas Piketty who presents Marx as a precursor to his inquiry: *Capital in the XXIst Century* [2013] (Harvard, 2014), 7-11. Statistical analysis of wealth *inequality* was wholly antithetical to Marx' thought (even if he was interested in the use of income tax statistics to illustrate the *overall* growth of wealth relative to population: *Capital* I, *MEW* 23.678-80). The one point of common ground is reliance on the fundamental distinction between those who live off capital and those who do not. This is important; yet it is an assumed datum of inquiry for Piketty, whereas it was secondary and surmountable for Marx.

the dialectic was a barely contested item of early criticism, from the revisionist Eduard Bernstein as much as from the marginalist Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk.[239] Its only supporters were the revolutionaries who promoted the idea after 1914 because of its revolutionary implication (Lenin, Lukács, Karl Korsch). But though this gave them real insight into the workings of Marx' mind, any such insight was occasional and partial at best, since their loyalty was not to the history of ideas as such but to dialectical-historical 'movement'.[240]

All the same, in an era which witnessed an immense expansion of university systems, Marx' achieved enormous intellectual "success" within the bourgeois-academic sphere of *Wissenschaft* (academic "science") — an area he chose to enter, even though he recognised that it would remain bourgeois until emancipation abolished social categories.[241] The language of *Wissenschaft* was one that all Continental thinkers understood, and in this sphere German authors were European leaders. This, quite as much as any intellectual quality, was crucial to Marx' success — and corresponding failure in England.[242] Already by the 1870s major bourgeois authors standing outside any Marxist framework were just as persuaded of Marx' intellectual superiority as the socialist politicians who were paving the way for his recognition as a totem in politics. He was 'the most influential socialist writer in Germany', 'the true of prophet of the new [socialist] confederation', and 'by far the most comprehensive and important mind in this group'.[243] This early reception was the prelude to the first great era in the European reception of Marxist thought in the years c.1890-1914, when an extraordinary range of thinkers across Europe testified to his intellectual distinction, ranging from bourgeois Marxists (Max Adler, Hilferding) through those who stood near to socialism (Tönnies, Sombart) to detached liberals (Weber, Croce). Even a critic such as Böhm 'esteem[ed] him as an intellectual force of the very first rank'.[244]

Given that the dismissal of the dialectic was largely uncontested, Marx' most noticeable intellectual failure before 1914 lay in the destruction of the labour theory of value by the marginalist Böhm-Bawerk in 1896.[245] This was a triumph of specialism over universalism; of marginalism's theorization of the individual actor over the holistic, social perspective of

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[239] Bernstein, *Die Vorausseztungen des Sozialismus* (1898), c.2; Böhm-Bawerk, 'Zum Abschluß des Marxschen Systems' c.4, in ed. O. von Boenigk, *Staatswissenschaftliche Arbeiten: Festgaben für Karl Knies* (Berlin, 1896) cf. Heinrich Heine's *Confessions* (1854) cit. Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature*, 150-1.

[240] Korsch is excellent when denies that 'classical German philosophy, the ideological expression of the revolutionary movement of the bourgeois class' came to a simple end or close (*Ausgang*); on the contrary, there was a 'transition of this philosophy… into that new science, which now appeared as the universal expression of the revolutionary movement of the proletarian class': *Marxismus und Philosophie* [1923] (Frankfurt, 1966), 86-7. Nonetheless his mockery of any undialectical, bourgeois 'history of ideas' is loud and clear: ibid., 80 etc.

[241] *Misère de la Philosophie* (1847), 118-9. The percentage of committed Marxist theoreticians who were bourgeois – as for example, Kautsky, Lenin, Lukács, Korsch – was of course almost as high as it was for university academics, while those who were not – such as Eduard Bernstein – became *déracinés*: Stanley Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Working-Class Mentality in Germany, 1887-1912* (Harvard, 1993).

[242] He always intended that there should be at least a digest of *Capital* in English and was clearly disappointed that there was no sign of translation in sight by 1880: to Ludwig Kugelmann, 28 Dec. 1862, to Engels 22 June 1863, *MEW* 30.640, 359; John Swinton', 'Karl Marx', *The Sun*, 6 Sept. 1880, pr. *MEGA* I/25.443.

[243] Resp. Emile de Lavaleye, *Le Socialisme Contemporain* (Paris, 1881), 67; Ludwig Bamberger, *Deutschland und Sozialismus* (Leipzig, 1878), 6; Heinrich von Sybel, *Die Lehren des heutigen Socialismus* (Bonn, 1872), 8. See further Albert Schäffle, *Socialismus und Kommunismus mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Geschäfts- und Vermögensformen* (Tübingen, 1870) eg. Lecture XI; Eugen Jäger, *Der modern Socialismus* (Berlin, 1873) c.1; Maurice Block, *Les Théoriciens du Socialisme en Allemagne* (Paris, 1872) cited *Capital I*, *MEW* 23.25.

[244] Böhm-Bawerk, 'Zum Abschluß des Marxschen Systems', in Horst Meixner & Manfred Turban (eds.), *Etappen bürgerlicher Marx-Kritik* (Giessen, n.d.) i.47-132, here 101. See too Böhm's profuse testimonies to Marx' significance in the 'Vorbemerkung'.

[245] 'Zum Abschluß des Marxschen Systems', in *Staatswissenschaftliche Arbeiten* (1896) ed. O. von Boenigk.

classical economics. Yet because of Marx' universal range and aspiration, he could not be undone by marginalism alone, and his penetration of bourgeois social science – the other great home of universal and synthetic thought before 1914 – was unaffected by this setback. Sympathetic reception is readily apparent in a thinker such as Ferdinand Tönnies;[246] but Max Weber supplies a still more important and influential example of bourgeois and socialist symbiosis. Marx' evocation of 'a social formation in which the production process controls men', where 'production is solely production for *capital* and not… for the *society* of producers',[247] was replicated by Weber's recognition of capitalism as a form of '*impersonal* rule' (*Herrschaft*) over man, leading to such statements as that 'Man is tied to acquisition as the end of his life; acquisition is no longer tied to man, as a means to satisfy the material needs of his life.'[248] Meanwhile Marx – the non-historian who suffered few regrets when the 'German Ideology' went uncompleted – also proved seminal in two other, related areas. First, the oblique and largely Engelsian announcement of the materialist conception of history set off a forest fire of enthusiasm after c.1890, because it tapped into the historicist appetite of the educated bourgeoisie when it was at its very peak. After 1918 encyclopaedic historicism of this kind receded, but its place was taken by the class critique of 'ideology': an original Marxist category which (with all its gaping theoretical deficiency) was taken up by 'the sociology of knowledge' in Weimar Germany, where it proved far more influential than the (theoretically pure) Weberian advocacy of qualified "value-freedom" and conditional "objectivity".[249] It is commonplace to dwell on the importance of the publication of the 'German Ideology' in 1926, but by then there was already an audience in being calling for it, because interest in 'ideology' was so strong.[250]

Even without a knowledge of Marx' early texts, the fact that he was advancing a comprehensive, unitary critique of society, its history and its ideas was clearly received. The pre-1914 "bourgeois" recognition of Marx in this sense has come to seem even more remote than the despised revisionism and "vulgar Marxism" of the Second International, and it has been ignored in such histories as we have.[251] Yet without this bourgeois foundation the creation of classical Western Marxism after 1918 could not have taken place. This is not to deny an axis of change at this point. Communist revolution; the concomitant or consequential rediscovery of Marxist dialectic by Lukács and Korsch; the emergence of the new "humanist" and "Hegelian" Marxist texts from 1926; the efforts of Lukács, Landshut and Karl Löwith to synthesise Weber and Marx — all combined to the reverse the balance of forces before 1914. Where before Marx had been received into sociology, now a good part of Weberian social

[246] Ferdinand Tönnies: *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887), Ab.II.
[247] Resp. *Capital* I, *Capital* III, *MEW* 23.95, 25.260.
[248] Resp. Lectures on 'Allgemeine („theoretische") Nationalökonomie' [1894-8], *MWG* III/1.555; 'The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism' [1904-5], *MWG* I/9.149.
[249] See most obviously Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie* [1929] (Frankfurt, 1985), and his statements about the importance of Marxism in the historical generation of these ideas (eg. 69, 266), albeit there was much else going on besides: David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind* (London, 1992). The theoretical deficiency of the sociology of knowledge – its assumption that there *was* an objective standpoint, for without this all critique was futile – derives from Marx, although the loci of objectivity proposed in the 1920s were not necessarily Marx's. For the problems raised by Weberian "value-freedom", see my 'Beyond Methodology: Max Weber's Conception of *Wissenschaft*', *Sociologia Internationalis* 52 (2014), 157-218.
[250] Karl Korsch, *Marxismus und Philosophie* [1923] (Frankfurt, 1966), 115n.54.
[251] Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* ii (1978); McLellan, *Marxism after Marx* [1979] (Basingstoke, 2007[4]); Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Cambridge, 1984) c.1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Adventures of the Dialectic* (Paris, 1955), cc.1-2, is an exception, though hardly a conventional history.

critique (as well as nascent existentialism) was being subsumed under the label of 'Marxism'.[252] This efflorescence in Weimar Germany was in turn a principal foundation for the intellectual hegemony of Marxism in Western Europe after 1960, since there was no other form of social and universal critique available.

The final conclusion is simple: Marx and Marxism are two of the greatest subjects in the modern history of European ideas, and should be studied accordingly. Marx' biological lifespan might have been confined to the 19th century, but he has enjoyed a continuous intellectual presence ever since. This was of the first order of importance in Western Europe down to c.1980 (to say nothing of the extra-European descent of Marxist ideas); and today what Weber called 'the economic way of viewing things'[253] – the cast of mind which Marxist "materialism" first presented to the world as a pre-eminent social reality – is for the first time a global phenomenon such as he anticipated. Even so, while universalist Marxist analysis has possessed enormous power, this power has been offset by a corresponding weakness: an adamant refusal to consider that categories need not be universal, and that the contrary processes of differentiation and specialization – another central theme of early social science – must be recognised as equally important. The utopia of a good life for all to be realized by the logical working out of allegedly universal categories such as 'labour' was always just a utopia. Yet the power of the critical analysis that accompanied it remains.

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[252] egg. Lukács, 'Das Verdinglichung and das Bewußtsein des Proletariats', *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* (1923); Siegfried Landshut, *Kritik der Soziologie* (Munich & Leipzig, 1929), cc.1-3; Karl Löwith, 'Max Weber und Karl Marx', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft* 67 (1932), 53-99, 174-214. See further my *Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic: Twin Histories* (Oxford, 2014), 294-5.
[253] *The Nation State and Economic Policy* [1895], *MWG* I/4.561.