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I

The political thought of Karl Marx, at its core, is a twofold promise regarding the future of mankind. This promise in turn is a reflection of Marx's own conclusions about human nature.[2] The term Marx employs to designate human nature is "species-being." According to Marx humanity evidences two species characteristics: the capacity for harmonious society with others, and the capacity for free, conscious, and universal labor; man is a social being, and he is a laboring being. With respect to the first of these characteristics, Marx promises the establishment of a classless society; with respect to the second, the opportunity for creative, self-satisfying labor. Standing between man and his destiny, however, is the stubborn fact of alienation. Historical man is alienated from his fellows, and so his political life is riven by class division and class struggle. He also is personally alienated from the artist within, thus his work-a-day life is a drudgery and enslavement. In order for man to realize his potential and to lead a life befitting his true nature, he must find the means to rid himself of the shackles of alienation. It is at this juncture, so to speak, that Marxism becomes scientific, investigating the economic forces that guarantee the future freedom of mankind.

Too often commentators narrow their attention to Marx's critique of capitalism without first inquiring into the origins of alienation. In this they partly follow Marx who also is sparing in his analysis of alienation's source. Still Marx does ask--why alienation?--and scattered throughout his early writings ("On the Jewish Question," The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, and The German Ideology) are the makings of an answer.[3]

Marx's response is not what might be expected. He does not contend that private property is the source of alienation. In a famous essay from

the Manuscripts titled "Estranged Labour," Marx comes to a surprising conclusion, that private property, rather than causing alienation, is itself caused by it:

> The relationship of the worker to labour engenders the relation to it of the capitalist, or whatever one chooses to call the master of labour. Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself (p. 79).[4]

Two paragraphs later he repeats the point:

> But on the analysis of this concept it becomes clear that though private property appears to be the source, the cause of alienated labour, it is really its consequence . . . (p. 79).

Marx does allow that at a later stage of development the relationship between private property and alienation is reciprocal with each aggravating the condition of the other. But this caveat in no way retracts the original asseveration that alienation antedates private property and is its cause. What then causes alienation? Before "Estranged Labour" breaks off incomplete, Marx addresses himself to this question: "How, we now ask, does man come to alienate, to estrange, his labour?" In his terse and unsatisfying reply, Marx traces alienation not to anything external to man, as would be the case with private property, but to something internal and essential--to the laboring act itself. Even though labor partially defines man's nature and contributes substantially to man's happiness, it is also, Marx seems to say, the source of his alienation.

This paradoxical reply yields two rather distinct interpretations. One follows a straight path mapped out with readily apparent signposts of Marxist doctrine; the other is an unfamiliar byway which comes up short of the intended goal and which causes doubt as to whether the goal is at all attainable. The first of these courses will be charted immediately, the second reserved until Part Two.

The early pages of The German Ideology contain Marx's most extensive description of the "state of nature" and of the origins of alienated labor.[5] Marx's point of departure is the real, living individual whom he defines materialistically by production and by the means of production. Human nature seems not to be a permanent condition but rather reflects the ways in which man through labor sustains and reproduces his material life:

> What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production (p. 150).

Physical need constitutes the predicament of all organic life. Man distinguishes himself from other life forms, not by consciousness as such, but by the laboring activity undertaken to meet his needs. Marx calls this necessitated labor the "first historical act," to which he quickly adds the discovery of new needs and their satisfaction through new modes of production. Marx's original man is very much like Rousseau's, a savage barely distinguishable from primate beasts except by a hidden capacity to enlarge his horizons, a capacity which Rousseau calls perfectibility. According to Marx, man is not wholly defined by the physical needs of his animal existence; man can give himself new needs and is therefore boundless.

Marx speaks almost as if the maintenance of life through labor and the reproduction of life through generation were inseparable activities. Hence included in the first historical act of need satisfaction and new-need discovery is the sexual society of the family. Procreation and this minimal sociability are also needs original to man. Furthermore, Marx allows as natural some extension of the family association, perhaps to the tribe, and so concludes that there are "four aspects of the primary historical relationships": production, changing production, the family, and society. Concerning language and consciousness, Marx regards these as derivative accomplishments developed over time as a result of man's expanding social existence. They

are neither original nor uniquely human, for Marx supposes that there pre-exists an animal consciousness of nature.

One consequence of man's life in the family is the division of labor, which Marx traces to division implicit in the sexual act. Beyond sexual differentiation within the family, there are the differences within the larger community arising from natural predispositions, from needs, and from accidents. In light of these early and manifold sources of disjunction, Marx concludes that the division of labor is spontaneous and natural. Marx also says, quite remarkably, that division of labor and private property are "identical expressions," the former referring to an activity and the latter to its product. Both the activity and the product of the activity are completely natural, argues Marx. Hence private property is not seen as some original sin precipitating man's fall from an Eden of non-alienated nature.[6]

Marx's account of the state of nature in The German Ideology suggests then that the cause of alienation is physical need. Man's labor is alienated because it is executed under the press of necessity. This same conclusion is reached by Marx in his essay "On the Jewish Question." Marx argues in this, his earliest piece, that the private rights of civil society, the Rights of Man, are but an expression of alienation, which Marx here calls Judaism, hucksterism, egoism. At the core of this malaise of selfish individualism is need: "Practical need, egoism," asserts Marx, "is the principle of civil society . . . " (p. 50). The individual human being, it would appear, is egoistic and alienated from others because of the practical needs of survival which his body imposes on him. Also, labor is alienating because it is performed in response to these needs; and alienation engenders private property because private property is a useful protection against the competitive hostility of others. The root cause, therefore, of alienation and private property, and much later of capitalism and exploitation, is the needy human body.[7]

If need is the cause of alienation, and the scarcity of goods the cause of competition, then the remedy for these ills is an abundance of material wealth. This of course is Marx's understanding of the problem and the reason why he supports capitalism, for capitalism, despite its contradictions and injustices, does produce wealth. Were capitalism's productivity not the crucial factor, Marx would be hard pressed to explain why the revolution he promotes, the proletarian revolution, should be any different from the numberless revolutions that have come before. If all history is class struggle, why will it suddenly change? Why will the class of proletarians not merely continue the cycle of oppression? Surely a presumption exists that an attribute of the human condition hitherto unvarying is not scheduled to change in one's own lifetime. Marx's response to this vexing objection is that something indeed has happened in his lifetime, namely the Industrial Revolution under capitalist modes of production. In The German Ideology Marx supplies the following analysis of the problem and its solution:

> This "estrangement" . . . can, of course, only be abolished given two practical premises. For it to become an "intolerable" power, i.e., a power against which men make a revolution, it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity "propertyless," and produced, at the same time, the contradiction of an existing world of wealth and culture, both of which conditions presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development. And, on the other hand, this development of productive forces . . . is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it want is merely made general, and with destitution the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced; and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a universal intercourse between men established, which produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the "propertyless" mass (universal competition), makes each nation dependent on the revolutions of the others, and finally has put world-historical, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones (pp. 161-62).

Concerning the cycle of oppression and revolution, the operative line is, " . . . without [the development of productive forces] want is merely made general, and with destitution the struggle for necessities and all the old

filthy business would necessarily be reproduced . . . . " The proletarian revolution, predicated on capitalist abundance now and on enhanced socialist productivity later, is the only revolution that can offer relief from the cycle of class struggle, because it is the only revolution that addresses the causes of class division and alienation--it alone therefore is a Marxist revolution.

The classless society promised by Marx follows naturally from the analysis above. Need causes alienation which in turn causes private property and class divisions. Classlessness, therefore, is a direct consequence of an economy of abundance: once provided with material abundance, the individual is able to break the chains of physical necessity and enter into spiritual communion with his fellow citizens who seem to him as comrades, no longer as competitors. But how serious is this expectation? Common experience would seem to belie it, for there is no fixed amount called abundance which continues to satisfy. What we regard today as necessities, our parents and grandparents thought to be luxuries; and what we take for luxuries our children and grandchildren will treat as necessities. Appetites are insatiable. And once their satisfaction becomes the desideratum of public policy, they will never admit to enough, and rarely will they let the individual go. There are exceptions of course, those people who given a sufficiency can set material gratification aside and direct their lives to nobler pursuits; but they are a few, a natural aristocracy, so to speak. Certainly it is unrealistic to suppose, as does Marx, that a whole population can live amidst plenty without acquisition, possession, and consumption becoming the center of their existence. No society can be so productive that the competition for goods will cease, either because resources are limited, a fact which strangely has entered Western consciousness only in the last dozen years, or because expectations forever rise. Scarcity will persist--whether real or imagined; and with scarcity will come divisiveness, alienation, and the perpetuation of class society.

Marx fails to realize, perhaps because he is a materialist, that the consumption of goods is an essentially private activity. The food, clothing, and shelter which one person possesses and puts to use cannot be easily shared by another. Consider that those things belonging to the body are the most private of all. Humanity's sense of shame is an instinct to keep from public view the body and its functions. Indeed the word "obscene" refers to dramatic actions that are properly kept "off stage." The body individuates; it is completely one's own. Mind (spirit, soul) by contrast universalizes; it is a person's chief access to a community beyond himself. Unlike food, knowledge is meant to be shared--it suffers no loss and is eminently communicable. Now Marx is in the untenable position of trying to build a universal community on foundations that are entirely particular, that is, on the human body. Marx is a materialist; the body and its needs constitute for him the real, living individual.[8] He proposes socialist modes of production to care for the body and to ready it for life in a classless society. But what Marx does not see is that materialism, by emphasizing the private aspects of life, renders people less fit for communism.[9] Both liberal and classical authors seem to know this. Tocqueville cautions that a society dedicated to physical well-being increases the alienation, or the individualism, of its citizens. And Plato, in the Republic, prepares people for communism by taking from them private delights and material comforts: from the warriors home and family, from the artisans the opportunity for wealth. Total devotion to the common good is a heavy exaction. Plato thinks it can be paid only by a disciplined and virtuous people. Marx, however, would seemingly replace virtue with satiation. He breaks ranks with his early socialist predecessors by basing human community on abundance rather than on austerity. But here he errs; material abundance aggravates our alienation, it does not heal it.

At this point the classless society would appear dubious because need is a permanent feature of the human condition and because efforts to alleviate it serve mainly to heighten our concern for privacy. But surely need is not the

only cause of alienation. People compete not merely for scarce possessions but also, to name but one example, for the affections of others. Perhaps it is no accident that communism's most enduring successes are monasteries and convents, communities where the competition for lovers is effectively prevented by the vow of chastity. Communism, it would seem, is incompatible with, or at least seriously troubled by, sexual and familial love. This assertion is not so extravagant as it may at first appear. Sexual attraction creates exclusive relationships which are, to say the least, discriminatory and which interfere with one's duties to the whole. Plato does his utmost to prevent the emergence of love, as does Lycurgus in his lawgiving for Sparta. Thomas More looks casually on the forced separation of family members. And at the time of Marx, communism has the reputation of being positively anti-family, a charge which Marx addresses but does not refute in the Communist Manifesto. The political problem of love is that it draws people away from the community, calls into being a rival set of obligations, and stimulates the desire to see one's own prosper ahead of others. Satisfying this obligation or desire requires property--private property--the pursuit of which disrupts the equality that total community demands. Communist regimes, more in theory than in practice, deal with the problem of exclusive love by countenancing promiscuity and by separating mother from child. These devices and others less extreme are meant to suppress the nuclear family, leaving the political unit as the only association to which allegiance might be given. A classless society built on these premises, however, is likely to strike someone either as objectionable, because too severe, or as impossible, if the power of love is presumed to conquer all.

There is a second human emotion no less troubling to the arrival of the classless society. This is the love of honor. Material abundance can do nothing to allay this passion because honor is by definition a scarce commodity; it diminishes in value the more others claim to possess it. Honor does tie people together, for some must give in order that others might receive; but

mostly honor divides. Marx would seem to allow no place to honor, or to its associated passions--anger and spiritedness--because human behavior is asserted to be a function of the modes of production--people have little choice but to be what they are, to think what they think, to do what they do. Since behavior is mostly determined, there is no point in being angry, in railing against the bourgeoisie. Marx's historical materialism represents, in effect, a theoretical denial of spiritedness. And yet Marxism surely cannot be understood apart from its frequent appeals to indignation and to a class of warrior revolutionaries.[10] Marxism is aggrieved and outraged by social injustice; it calls for heroic self-sacrifice in order to set the world right. But Marxist regimes are loath to acknowledge such efforts or to grant the individual the distinction owed to his deeds. Koestler's Darkness at Noon captures this contradiction well: Rubashov, the old Bolshevik, confesses that his hero's sense of honor is inconsistent with the progressive, egalitarian spirit of the revolution; that Gletkin, the uncouth "Neanderthal," is a better revolutionary than himself.[11] Marxism disputes, but at the same time relies on, a persistent fact of human behavior, that people, some of them at least, yearn for recognition and define themselves by what they are that others are not. Of course the result of this aspiration is that the comradeliness of the classless society will forever elude human pursuit.

One element of the human condition that affects us equally is the experience of death. We all die, and we all die by ourselves. To the degree that our lives are structured by the phenomenon of death, we are reminded of our ineluctable separateness. Separateness is a condition which Marx strives mightily to deny. He asserts that the true calling of the species is human emancipation which brings the diverse parts of society into perfect unity ("On the Jewish Question," p. 46). But the perfect unity of species-being is forcefully contradicted by our mortality. The fact is that we do not die as species-being; consequently we cannot simply live as species-being, and

we delude ourselves if we try. Death therefore, even more than the passions of greed, love, and honor, is the enemy of the classless society, which tries to argue that as species-being we are all one. In the Manuscripts Marx gives passing attention to this problem but has only a tautology to offer as a solution:

> Death seems to be a harsh victory of the species over the definite individual and to contradict their unity. But the determinate individual is only a determinate species-being, and as such mortal (p. 86).[12]

I would conclude this section by suggesting that Marx's vision of the classless society is most plausible when seen to rest on historical materialism, the thesis that human consciousness is a reflection of the modes of production, and that socialist modes of production engender a homogeneous consciousness cleansed of the usual disagreements that divide people into classes. James Madison dismissed as impracticable the project of giving to everyone the same opinions, passions, and interests. Marx's reply is to the effect that opinions and passions belong to an ideological superstructure which echoes and rationalizes an economic substructure of interest. Once people share the same material interests, they will hold the same opinions and passions as a matter of course. Alienation will thus vanish from the earth, making clear the way for a classless society.

To emphasize, however, the deterministic implications of Marx's historical materialism is to provoke the charge of reductionism, crude materialism, and vulgar Marxism. For Marx was the progenitor, so the argument goes, of a "new materialism" that allowed for human activism, the free play of consciousness, and reciprocity between the sub- and superstructures. While it is certainly true that Marx credits himself with developing a new materialism ("Theses on Feuerbach") and that scattered passages in the corpus proclaim the independence of consciousness (e.g., Capital, pp. 344-45) (a topic discussed below), nevertheless, historical materialism is mainly a deterministic theory and as such is the central pillar of Marx's doctrine. Present-day friends of Marx, it would

seem, are embarrassed by his "old" materialism and try to read it out of his thought. What they fail to realize is that it is only Marx the old materialist, the economic determinist, the positive scientist, who is a democrat. Marx the humanist[13]--and this may sound shocking--Marx the humanist is a totalitarian, at least incipiently so. For if consciousness is free, as humanism would have it, and not simply a reflection of the material base, it becomes necessary to shape consciousness by an elite corps of intellectuals. To the degree that the role of the intellectual increases in significance, an extended and perhaps unending dictatorship of the Communist Party is the result, postponing indefinitely the establishment of a classless society. This is by and large the controversy between Kautsky and Lenin: Kautsky, the orthodox Marxist, argues for proletarian revolution when and where material conditions make socialism possible; Lenin, the doctrinal maverick, urges revolution in agrarian Russia, claiming that propaganda and agitation work by professional revolutionaries can compensate for the absence of capitalist modes of production. But the work of professional revolutionaries in shaping by "education" a free and non-determined consciousness is an arduous, protracted business wholly inconsistent with democracy.[14] Once come to power, therefore, the revolutionary is tempted to supplement propaganda and agitation with the terrorism of a police state. And if consciousness clings to its bourgeois beliefs, as Lenin expects,[15] then the police state will likely be total and permanent. Hence the totalitarian implications of Marx's thought arise from the very humanism that ascribes freedom to human consciousness. Consciousness must be spontaneously formed by the modes of production, as crude materialism maintains, if the revolution is to be quick and easy, if democratic government by the proletariat is to be feasible, and if the classless society is to be given its chance to emerge.

II.

The second species characteristic which for Marx defines human nature is man's unique laboring capacity and his relationship to the natural environment as determined thereby. The promise which Marxism makes--the second component of its vision--is the liberation of the individual effected and expressed through creative, non-alienating labor. Marxism claims not only to serve the interests of the community but to accomplish as well the development of the individual. Marxism purports to be more individualistic than even liberalism.

Marx states in the Manuscripts that truly human labor is free, conscious, and universal. He contrasts it with animal labor that is unfree, because determined, unconscious, because directed by instinct, and particular, because for the animal alone:

> Admittedly animals also produce. They build themselves nests, dwellings, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc. But an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, whilst man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, whilst man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. An animal produces only itself, whilst man reproduces the whole of nature (p. 76).

It was stated before that need alienated man from his own species by forcing him to compete for scarce goods, by dividing his labor, and by inclining him to the private appropriation of property. Now it appears that need also alienates man from the other hemisphere of his species-being, namely his capacity for free and creative labor. That Marx has in mind something akin to artistic production is clear from a famous passage in Capital, the one cited above:

> We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises this structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already exists in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will (pp. 344-45).

Man is capable of artistic creation because he not only is part of nature, like all living organisms, but has the power to lift himself ~~about~~ above his place, to survey the whole, and to put it to his use. Nature provides man his sustenance but at the same time is an object of investigation (philosophy and science), of manipulation (technology), and of representation (art and literature). Most of man's exertions against his physical environment, when not prompted by necessity, are a type of art--labor that is free, conscious, and universal.

Marxism promises with the coming of communism to cancel the claims of necessity and to allow man thereby to labor creatively in full accordance with his species-being. But this promise, like the promise of a classless society, is beset with difficulties and subject to serious objections.

In seeking the original cause of alienation in Part I, it was suggested that two answers are to be found in Marx. One was discussed on the occasion, it being need, the other was put off until later on grounds that it represented for Marx a dead end. The second source of alienation--and it should be apparent why it is a dead end--is precisely free, conscious, and universal labor. Marx makes the point in the following passage from the Manuscripts, although seemingly without complete awareness of what he is saying: "An animal's product," notes Marx, "belongs to its physical body, whilst man freely confronts his product" (p. 76). In the case of animals, no particular distinction exists between life, the reproduction of life, and labor; they are all of a piece, a natural cycle of generation. Animal life and animal labor offer no opportunity for alienation; they evidence no capacity. Man, however, stands apart from the natural cycle with the power to observe nature and to give it shape, to "work it up," as Marx says. Free and conscious labor implies some distance between the laborer and his product, and with this distance the possibility of the product confronting its producer as an alien being leading a life all its own.[16] The argument could be put in Hegelian terms: God's need to know requires that he objectify himself in creation and that he come to view the objects of his creation as alien.

Transformational criticism would then convert this formula thus: Man's need to create freely and consciously requires that he be identifiably separate from the product of his labor, that it be other than and alien to him. Because man is more than an animal, his products cannot belong "immediately to [his] physical body," as do nuts to the squirrel; they confront him. Man therefore is inevitably alienated by virtue of his humanity, his species-being, his free and conscious labor. Alienation, quite simply, is part of the human condition.

Marx, however, does not arrive at this conclusion even though his Hegelian frame of reference would allow him to say that through history and under communism man's species-being transcends its alienating effects. Instead, Marx attributes alienation to the state of dispossession: "In tearing away from man the object of his possession, therefore, estranged labour tears from him his species life . . . " (Manuscripts, p. 76). For Marx, despite what is said above, a distinction is to be made between objectification and alienation. The creation of an object alone does not alienate unless the modes and relations of production effectively separate the producer from the product.[17]

How is it though that Marx can give to man free and conscious labor as a species characteristic and not find in it the roots of alienation? The answer has been formulated before by Hannah Arendt: Marx confuses work and labor. On the one hand, Marx speaks of artistic creation--free and conscious, peculiarly human--while on the other of homogeneous labor-power, that daily quantum of energy and exertion that humans have in common with animals. Unfortunately, to both forms of endeavor Marx gives the name "labor" and so loses sight of their differences. Work, not labor, is free and conscious, its products designed to endure the destructive cycle of nature. Arendt defines work as man's revolt against nature. Labor, by contrast, is performed in response to recurrent needs; it consumes its products almost in the act of producing them. Labor intends no revolt but is in tune with the rhythm of nature. Viewed as a protest against man's mortality, work is inherently alienating, whereas labor allows man an

animal-like absorption into nature. As Arendt explains:

> The "blessing or the joy" of labor is the human way to experience the sheer bliss of being alive which we share with all living creatures, and it is even the only way men, too, can remain and swing contentedly in nature's prescribed cycle, toiling and resting, laboring and consuming, with the same happy and purposeless regularity with which day and night and life and death follow each other . . . .
>
> The blessing of life as a whole, inherent in labor, can never be found in work and should not be mistaken for the inevitably brief spell of relief and joy which follows accomplishment and attends achievement. The blessing of labor is that effort and gratification follow each other as closely as producing and consuming the means of subsistence, so that happiness is a concomitant of the process itself, just as pleasure is concomitant of the functioning of a healthy body.[18]

Labor may not always be so satisfying as the quotation implies, for when humans are conscious of labor as an imprisonment in necessity, it too is alienating. But it still takes a conscious human being to experience this alienation. Marx anticipates that an economy of abundance under communist modes of production will eliminate alienating labor while liberating consciousness for free creativity. This may be true, but artistic creation is also alienating, and Marx does not show how abundance can eliminate it. On the contrary, in proportion as people become artists, people will suffer the artist's alienation.

The liberated individual promised by Marx is expected to labor (or to work) since labor is an elemental feature of man's species-being. Moreover, social labor under communist institutions continues to be divided. But the division of labor is voluntary rather than the natural division of labor that has typified economic activity in the past. Nature in Marx's thought is linked to necessity, and necessity is to be overcome historically and replaced by freedom--hence the <u>voluntary</u> supersedes the <u>natural</u>. Only rarely does Marx look into the communist future, but when he does, as in <u>The German Ideology</u>, he sees free people working contendedly at tasks of their own choosing:

> . . . in a communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus

> makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic (p. 160).

It is safe to say that Marx's worker is an amateur for whom the freedom of his work is more important than its skillful execution. The emphasis of voluntary division of labor is decidedly on self-expression over expertise--doing what one wants when one wants.

What now might be the consequences of so much voluntarism? The obvious objection will not be stressed, that the industrial system responsible for abundance establishes its own rules and timetables which cannot be met by workers doing their own thing. Let it be assumed instead that the magic of future technology will create an automated economy requiring no significant human contribution, at least none that is coerced; and let this assumption stand as an elaboration on Marx's statement that "society regulates the general production." The primary economy takes care of itself, so to speak, leaving the worker free for creative endeavor in a secondary economy. But what effects will this freedom have? In the first place, it seems unlikely that anything will be well done. Excellence depends on proficiency which comes from discipline, habit, and long training at one task. In order to achieve excellence among his artisans, Plato confines them to the practice of a single art; similar arrangements are in force for the warriors so that they too might develop the reasoning appropriate to their station. Marx though dispenses with these restrictions, called justice by Plato, and invites the worker to become a jack-of-all trades: " . . . each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes." Perhaps it is possible to argue that flitting from job to job ("one thing today, another tomorrow") is more intrinsically satisfying than performing any one of them well. But Marx conceals the choice from himself and from others by supposing that all people can do all things equally well. Can the conclusion be avoided that Marx here is flattering his audience, telling us that we are

all potentially Renaissance men and women, that the only thing preventing our emergence as Leonardo de Vincis is a system of divided labor that imposes upon us "a particular, exclusive sphere of activity . . . from which [we] cannot escape"? Is the sad fact not rather than each of us possesses limited talents with limited range and that outstanding accomplishment in any one requires native ability supplemented by a lifetime of concentrated effort. It may be harsh to say so, but Marx's portrait of non-alienated labor looks more like the hobbies people pick up in retirement.

Voluntary division of labor has also this second difficulty, that self-expression, like consumption, is predominantly private. Idiosyncratic creativity is hardly compatible with the all-encompassing community that Marx envisions. And of course in practice the socialist-communist regimes are staunch adversaries of anything smacking of "art for art's sake." The free spirit who lives in his own world of creative pursuit is not the stuff out of which comrades are made. He is too private, too much for himself. Moreover, artistic creation in any of its forms, whether a handbag or a cathedral, is more rewarding if others attest to its excellence. People need to hear from their fellows that what they do, they do well. But this only takes us back to the earlier problem of honor.

It will be instructive to look again at Marx's description of voluntary division of labor: " . . . to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic." Marx presents here an array of activities all of which are performed, or can be performed, in isolation. None of these constitute social labor, that great collective effort that Marx so regularly celebrates. Hunters, fishermen, shepherds, and critics tend all to be off by themselves, far removed from intercourse with other men. The demands of community thus do not weigh heavily upon them. In addition, these activities are mostly agrarian, even arcadian. Now this is surprising because

Marx makes such a point of disparaging the idyllic utopianism of his fellow socialists. Marx is a progressive, a man of science whose own perfect society is founded on the machines of industry. And yet when it comes to visualizing the laboring life of this society, Marx takes us back to feudalism and much beyond. Is this because it is impossible to picture the liberated individual in an industrial setting? Is this because machines are inherently alienating no matter what the modes of production? Even if Marx is granted a second economy where the division of labor is voluntary, it seems that this labor, in order to be non-alienating, must have little or no contact with the modern technology that undergirds it.

To sum up, Marx's vision depicts a classless society inhabited by liberated individuals whose labor is creatively satisfying and free of alienation. But the classless society would seem to be impossible; and the liberated individual, if not impossible, is arguably undesirable. Worst of all though, Marx promises to combine into one personality the rarefied individuality of the artist, the free spirit, with the regimented self-forgetfulness of the citizen and comrade. The word "comrade" in Marxist terminology connotes and equality tending to sameness. Comrades dress in plain, drab army fatigues, their leaders especially, in order to symbolize their shared hope in a classless society. These same comrades, however, are expected to explore the full reach of their individual potential and to emerge as proud examples of humanity's species-being. This quite frankly is a contradiction that offends both logic and history. The simple conclusion is that the goals of Marxism can never be achieved and ought not seriously to be sought.

NOTES

[1]This article is a revised and condensed version of a paper presented at the 1984 American Political Science Convention; the original title was "A Liberal Reflection on the Promises of Marx."

[2]To speak of human nature in connection with Marx is a delicate matter, as it would be with any evolutionist. Erich Fromm adopts a teleological view, which I think is generally correct: From the beginning man possesses a fixed potential which he develops through history. As potential, human nature is a constant; as actualized form, it varies from one era to the next (Marx's Concept of Man [New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1961], p. 26).

[3]The intermittent discussion of alienation in Marx's writings has led some to conclude that Marx dropped the concept in the "mature" period of his life. While not subscribing to the "two-Marx thesis," I do maintain that Marx fails to state precisely and repeatedly the causes of alienation and its solutions. The analysis presented here, therefore, means to be faithful to Marx but also to provide clarity where it is missing.

[4]All quotations from Marx are taken from Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader, sec. ed. (New York: Norton, 1978).

[5]It might be objected that Marx's depiction of the state of nature in The German Ideology was superseded by his survey of anthropological research late in his life and which provided the basis for Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State (New York: International Publishers, 1942). Engels writes that earliest man lived under a matriarchal form of communism. But even if communism was the true state of nature, Engels makes it clear that the transition from communal property under group marriage to private property under monogamous marriage was natural, necessary, and inevitable (pp. 34, 47). And he quotes Marx on the subject saying that the transition from mother-right to father-right was "the most natural" (p. 50).

[6]While division of labor and private property are fully natural institutions, with their beginnings in original human needs, Marx states that the division of labor is incidental to society until mental labor is separated from material labor. Serious and lasting distinctions between ruler and ruled depend on the emergence of a class (e.g., priests) whose mental productions (e.g., religion, law, philosophy) are used to legitimate the oppressive rule of the few over the many. Division of labor is the seed of contradiction and conflict; it must germinate before the harmful fruit of class rule can be produced. Rousseau says something similar about perfectibility, that a certain level of society has to be achieved before humans can develop their capacity for amour propre.

[7]Robert Tucker considers this account of the origin of alienation but then sets it aside in favor of acquisitiveness, which he defines as a compulsive, Hegelian-like desire to amass wealth (Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965], pp. 136-49). Tucker's analysis would have the alienated capitalist come first (i.e., insatiable greed) and the alienated wage-laborer come second (i.e., dehumanizing necessity). But according to Marx, the relationship is the exact reverse, the alienated laborer creates the capitalist. In speaking of the alienation of the worker in the Manuscripts, Marx says, " . . . he begets the dominion of the one who does not produce over production and over the product" (pp. 78-79; also p. 73).

[8]This is not to say that Marx reduces man to the physical. Consciousness is important to Marx, but it is derivative; and alienation, although in part a psychological state, depends for its remedy on material conditions.

[9]See Bertrand de Jouvenel, The Ethics of Redistribution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 11-12.

[10]See Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., The Spirit of Liberalism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 24.

[11]Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), pp. 149, 186.

[12]On Communist China's attempt to deal with the reality of death, see Robert Jay Lifton, Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). Death is a problem for Marx, but so too is birth, i.e., the question of ultimate origins and of whether man is responsible for his own being. Eric Voegelin observes that Marx's response to this question in the Manuscripts (p. 92) is to forbid its being asked. Such hostility to philosophical inquiry leads Voegelin to wonder if Marx was not an "intellectual swindler" (Science, Politics, and Gnosticism [Chicago: Gateway, 1968], pp. 23-28).

[13]The debate over Marx's humanism which began in Europe in the 1940's and in America in the 1950's and 60's focused on whether a young, immature, and humanistic Marx could be distinguished from an older, more mature, and scientific Marx. The debate has largely been resolved in the negative--Marx's humanism extends the full span of his scholarly life. With this point now established, new advocates of Marx's humanism argue that consciousness enjoys considerable independence from the material base. It is this meaning of humanism that is referred to above. As an example see Melvin Rader, Marx's Interpretation of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 3-55.

[14]Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Lenin Anthology (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 15, 25, 27, 68, 76-77, 87-88, 106.

[15]Ibid, pp. 29-30.

[16]Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man, pp. 45-46.

[17]Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 96-105.

[18]Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 106-08.