

Introduction

The subject of the present work is an exposition and critique of the views of Karl Marx and Marxists on morality and ethics. Following the introduction, I examine: morality in its bourgeois and proletarian forms, the origin and development of moral ideas, including the ideas of good and right, moral values and standards, egoism and altruism; rights and duties, justice, ends and means in the struggle for a classless society, and the role of religion and science in communist ethics. Marx's and F. Engels' views on morality and ethics are contrasted with some other views expressed in the writings of the French, British and German philosophical thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in so far as these have any relevant bearing on Marxist moral attitudes.

The aim of the work is to present a full exposition of Marx's and Engels' ideas on morality and ethics and to indicate some of their errors and weaknesses. What distinguishes this work from others in the same field is the analysis of all major aspects of morality. There are many original points and some themes, including the origin and development of moral ideas, the ideas of good and evil, moral standards and the role of religion and science in communist ethics, are discussed in some detail for the first time. In all chapters Marx's ideas are compared with relevant Hegelian concepts, and in some chapters with those dominating the ethical attitudes of the Age of Reason.

As the main purpose of the work is a critical evaluation of Marxist moral theory, all statements relating to the views of Marx and Engels are supported by quotations from their own writings. The views of other Marxists – orthodox and unorthodox – referred to in the text are carefully distinguished from those of Marx and Engels and are also supported by quotations from their works. Most of these quotations come from the works of Lenin which, needless to say, do not necessarily reflect Marx's own views.

Like any philosophical system, Marxism has its own internal and external contradictions. This is due mainly to the fact that Marx has made many statements about man, morality, society, religion and politics which are often ambiguous and inconsistent. Because of ambiguities and contradictions in many of Marx's most important ideas, there is hardly any question relating to the exegesis of Marxism that is not, as Kolakowski indicates, a matter of controversy.¹ This is particularly conspicuous in the domain of Marx's utterances about ethics and morality.

While some Marxists maintain that Marx is a moralist only 'in a very broad sense' but in fact is a 'non-moralist', others contend that he is fundamentally a moralist.² Tucker advocates the view that Marx is 'a moralist of the religious kind' in whose philosophical system ethical inquiry has no place.³ Ollman,

similarly, believes that Marxian ethics is a misnomer. Marx, he says 'may be taken as being or not being, or both being and not being an ethical thinker.'⁴ Ollman concludes that Marx may be regarded as an ethical thinker only in so far as he expresses feelings of approval and disapproval in his works. In fact Marxist ethics is based on dialectical laws, not, as Ollman suggests, on emotivism and 'moral sentiments'. Marx's moral theory has nothing in common with logical positivism and 'radical subjectivism' and, as Makai indicates, is strongly opposed to decadent bourgeois morality, including logical positivism, in which the evaluative-normative function of individual moral consciousness becomes merely 'a private matter'.⁵

There is a considerable metaphysical content in Marx's philosophical system as a whole, and it is the presence in it of incoherent concepts that is responsible for 'great disunity' which, according to Lukács, exists 'even in the socialist camp as to what constitutes the essence of Marxism'.⁶ While some Marxologists define Marxism as it appears in Marx's own works, others define it as it appears in the joint works of Marx and Engels, although between Marx and Engels there are sometimes notable differences. Following the collapse of the Second International in the face of World War I, the international Marxist movement split into a variety of trends and sects, each claiming to represent 'true Marxism'. Some modern philosophers and sociologists divide Marxism into 'critical and scientific Marxism'.⁷ In opposition to 'critical Marxists' who link Marxism with Marx's early humanism and moralism, 'scientific Marxists' see Marx as the scientific investigator of dialectical laws and associate Marxism with science and technology. While critical or humanistic Marxism is concerned primarily with culture and moral issues, including alienation, scientific Marxism focuses primarily on economic history and class struggle.

Marx himself has treated his work as being primarily critical in character. This can be seen from the titles and subtitles of all his major writings. In this respect he seems to follow I. Kant, who argued that 'only a sober, strict and just criticism can free' men from their 'dogmatic illusions'.⁸ Yet Marx also claims to be a scientist as well. As a result, 'scientific Marxists' regard Marxism as a science, unlike 'humanistic Marxists' who prefer to treat Marxism as a critique. Some modern Marxists, however, believe that Marx has formulated 'a theory which is both scientific and critical'.⁹ It is a mistake, they say, to oppose the later scientific Marx to the earlier humanistic Marx. Although the humanism of the mature Marx is in some ways different from the humanism of the early Marx, they believe that there is no essential difference between the goal of Marx's humanism advocated in the *Manuscripts of 1844* and *Capital*.¹⁰

A similar view is expressed in the writings of some Soviet Marxologists. M. B. Mitin speaks of 'a single theoretical line' that characterises Marxist humanism 'from Marx's *Manuscripts of 1844* through *Capital* to the works of Lenin in which a concrete programme is given for the liberation of man from all forms of alienation'.¹¹ Stressing the moral and humanistic foundations of science, Frolov contends that Marxism is 'a science of man's emancipation' and that it 'embodies' humanism and morality.¹² There is an assumption that there is an essential

unity in Marx's and Engels' ideology. This unity, however, is disputed by many commentators, including some Marxists. Although the original and later versions of Marxism are not 'wholly dissimilar in appearance', Tucker indicates, 'the disappearance of man and his alienation from the mature system changes the face of Marxism so considerably' that it creates 'the impression that we are dealing with two distinct complexes of thought'.¹³ Bell unambiguously speaks of a break between original and mature Marxism, believing, like Tucker, that the historical Marx has repudiated the idea of alienation because of its Hegelian overtones.¹⁴

The picture of alienated labour, reflected in the estrangement of man from his essential being, from nature and society, in *the Manuscripts of 1844*, has, according to Tucker and Bell, been abandoned by Marx in his mature writings. In *The German Ideology* Marx advocates the view that transcendental concepts of alienation are incompatible with the ideas of historical materialism. This materialism is based on the belief that ideas and concepts are not 'mysterious forces' but the product of 'real, active men conditioned by the productive forces'.¹⁵ In Marx's view, the entire movement of history gradually leads to the 'actual act of creation of communism'. Being the last antagonistic form of socio-economic evolution, capitalism, with its immoral ideology is destined to beget, with the inexorability of a law of nature, 'its own negation'.¹⁶

In opposition to the so-called critical Marxists who accept the continuity between original and mature Marxism, Louis Althusser believes that 'in 1845 Marx broke radically with every theory that based history and politics on an essence of man'.¹⁷ By rejecting essentialism, he says, Marx has also rejected social atomism, ethico-political idealism, Kantian ethics and abstract humanism.¹⁸ The new reality described by Marx in his mature writings, including *The German Ideology*, is not man in general but human society and 'masses'.¹⁹ For Marx, moral ideas are the product of the socio-economic relations that unite men with society. While Hegel explains the history of men with a dialectic of consciousness, Marx explains the whole process of consciousness by the concrete history of men. According to Althusser, Marx has definitely formulated 'a new science – the science of history of social formations' and in the form of dialectical materialism has 'opened up a new continent for scientific knowledge'.²⁰ As a critic of Hegelian humanism, Althusser defends scientific Marxism against humanistic Marxism, arguing that Marxism has nothing to do with woolly humanisms advocated by the bourgeois ideologists and the representatives of the Frankfurt school. It is class interest, not moral conviction, that moves 'masses' to change their society.

The truth is that Marx and Engels have always argued that scientific activity cannot be separated from 'communal or social activity' which, strictly speaking, is moral activity.²¹ Far from being something external or alien to science, moral and ethical problems are 'entwined in it'.²² Although Marxism denies to morality any intrinsic force of its own, it still appeals to the moral passions of the workers and instigates them to fight for a 'truly human morality'. By presenting proletarian moral demands in the form of scientific affirmations, Marxism thus protects proletarian moral sentiments against being discredited as mere emotionalism and, at least superficially, gives them a sense of scientific certainty. It is the unmask-

ing of capitalist immoral practices in purely scientific terms that considerably enhances the propagandist appeal of Marx's ideology. This appeal, in Polanyi's view, 'is the most interesting case of the moral force of immorality'.²³ According to Marxism, however, science and ethics are closely connected, and the communist ethics expresses all human interests and moral ideas 'most fully and scientifically'.²⁴ In Marxist axiology moral values cannot be divorced from scientific cognition. Some values, including courage, wisdom, kindness, sociability, fraternity and human dignity, are admirable in themselves and are worth having and pursuing at all times.²⁵

Although the relationship between the Marxism of Marx and that of other Marxists, including Engels, is important in the history of dialectical materialism, I have no intention of deciding which Marxists deviate from and which adhere to the thought of Marx. It is argued in the work as a whole that Marx's thought is far from being unified and coherent. As a result, there are today many Marxist tendencies, trends and schools. While some Marxists maintain that Marx developed an empirical and descriptive socialist theory – which is incompatible with moral and prescriptive theories, others argue that Marx's thought is value-orientated and that his ethics contains normative elements.²⁶ The notion of human dignity, they say, is a central feature of Marxist ethics that can be traced in all Marx's writings. According to the Soviet philosopher V. Tugarinov, the realisation of the Kantian principle that all rational beings should be treated as ends in themselves is also 'the goal of communist ethics'.²⁷ Some other Soviet Marxologists, including A. Shishkin, share the same view. Following Marx and Engels, they contend that communist morality is considerably superior to bourgeois morality.²⁸

Since Marx's death in 1883 much has changed in human societies, although many moral and social phenomena have remained the same. More recently we have seen the dramatic political changes in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union which seem to amount to the rejection of Marxism itself. The Marxist dogma that communism is the 'last stage in mankind's history' has undoubtedly been seriously weakened. Marx, in fact, had no clue to what lay ahead. He was too optimistic to see that egoism, chauvinism and immoral practices – however alienating and inhuman they may be – are not easily eradicated from society. Marxist thought has entered into culture without being absorbed by it and without absorbing it. In spite of Marx's and Engels' belief in progress, the twentieth century seems to demonstrate that 'real, existing man' does not improve in any significant sense. There is still class conflict, racial hatred, mammonism, social alienation, greed, egoism, inequality and indifference to the suffering of poor and disadvantaged human beings in practically all societies. Marx's and Engels' belief that egoism, greed and vices are only the product of societies based on competition is impossible to defend. They have correctly observed that capitalism has created 'a world after its own image' and that it resembles slavery.²⁹ There are no signs, however, that the transcendence of 'capitalist private property' in communist society is followed by the disappearance of alienation, greed and egoism.

Marx's philosophy, like Hegel's, is dogmatic, speculative and often obscure. The premises of his philosophical theory could never be 'verified in a purely empirical way'.³⁰ As a dogmatic thinker, Marx is far removed from Baconian

empiricism and Comtean positivism. His philosophical orientation was moulded by German nationalism, especially Hegelian dialectical thinking, and the French Enlightenment. His moral views are, in many respects, similar to the views of the French materialists in the Age of Reason. Marx's conception of alienation is a mixture of incongruous elements taken from both idealist and materialist analysis of moral evil. Most of his ideas of alienation originate from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Marx's belief in the 'original goodness of man' definitely has its origin in the humanism and rationalism of the French Enlightenment.³¹ Being the product of considerable eclecticism, Marx's ethical and moral views are far from being coherent. They are frequently marked by serious inconsistencies.

Like Althusser, I believe that there is a break in the development of Marx's moral ideas and that *the German Ideology* differs considerably from *the Manuscripts of 1844* not only in scope but also in substance. Unlike Althusser, however, I argue that Marx's moral criticism of capitalist ideology and his moral-humanistic conception of human society permeates all his writings. The normative character of Marx's moral criticism of capitalism is evident not only in his early writings but also in his later works. The non-moral interpretation of Marx's critique of capitalism, advocated, for example, by A. Wood, is, as Whelan indicates, 'at variance with the strong impression that Marx's readers receive from the moral sentiments, including attitudes of advocacy and indignation, that are frequently expressed in his writings.'³² It is true, in *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels develop a theory of historical materialism and sometimes represent morality as a form of ideology or ideological illusion which should have no place in communist society. Sometimes, however, even here morality is distinguished from ideology.³³

Admittedly, there is a shift in this work involving Marx's attitude towards morality but it is less radical than it appears. In my view, it is wrong to contend, as some commentators do, that Marxism rejects all morality.³⁴ Considering Marx's utterances about morality in *The German Ideology* as a whole, one is impressed by the time and energy he devotes to the analysis and critique of the morality of his time. The main target of his criticism in this work is utilitarian morality which, like the morality of bourgeois political economy, 'expresses moral laws in its own way'.³⁵ Utilitarianism, Marx indicates, is 'an insipid and hypocritical doctrine' and its hedonistic teaching must be rejected.³⁶

Marx's criticism of utilitarian morality in *The German Ideology* is reminiscent of his criticism of the ethics of bourgeois economy in *the Manuscripts of 1844*.³⁷ Both forms of morality are regarded as hypocritical, vile and alienating. Although in *the German Ideology* Marx and Engels criticise and deride not only utilitarian morality based on class interest and egoism, but also German idealist morality, including Kant's formalism, Stirner's egoistic morality, religious morality and mystical ethics of 'true socialists', their reference in the controversial passage implying the 'shattering of the basis of all morality' pertains primarily to utilitarian morality.³⁸ It is this morality that is treated as the 'philosophy of enjoyment' and is associated, like the morality of bourgeois political economists, with the 'continuous subordination of pleasure to money making' and pseudo-asceticism

– a theme that permeates *the Manuscripts of 1844* and *Capital*.³⁹ The meaning of the phrase ‘all morality’ is easily lost, if one overlooks the fact that by ‘the morality of asceticism or of enjoyment’ Marx and Engels have in their minds, above all, the class bourgeois morality of utilitarianism which sometimes appears in the form of false asceticism as well.⁴⁰

Most non-Marxist commentators agree that Marx is a difficult writer, especially when he speaks of morality, ethics and alienation.⁴¹ Many modern critics accuse him of vagueness, exaggeration, confusion and careless generalisation. Most references to ethics and morality in *The German Ideology* and in the *Communist Manifesto* are either ambivalent or obscure. As a result, if we interpret them literally, we run the risk of giving them a meaning different from that in the writer’s mind. If, however, we interpret them freely, we risk giving them a meaning which perhaps is more acceptable but may still be false.⁴² The fact remains that Marx’s conception of philosophy and morality is a mixture of incongruous elements, and, as a result, lacks coherence and clarity. In the Introduction to *the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* he speaks of the ‘negation of philosophy as such.’⁴³ It certainly would be wrong to interpret this ‘negation’ literally, as it is obvious from Marx’s writings that he has continued to philosophise.

It is unfortunate that Marx has failed to formulate a systematic moral theory, although a kind of moral theory is implicit in his writings, including *the German Ideology* and *Communist Manifesto*. Most commentators agree that Marx has not rejected all morality but merely ‘held a view of morality in which certain traditional works and concepts did not prominently figure, while others did’.⁴⁴ They also agree that Marx’s ethical theory has to be inferred from scattered remarks and from what he accepts without any question. Like Kant, Marx finds the existing moral and ethical theories to be nothing but ‘a disgusting medley’ of ideas patched up from any and every source, however inconsistent. Yet, unlike Kant, he fails to construct any systematic exposition along the lines of that in *The Metaphysic of Ethics* which Kant provides.

While sharing Kant’s belief that men should never be treated merely as means and that human dignity has an intrinsic moral worth, Marx categorically rejects the Kantian view that ‘empirical principles are entirely incapable of serving as a foundation for moral laws’.⁴⁵ Men’s feelings and inclinations, he thinks, are relevant to their moral life.⁴⁶ In this respect he follows Hegel who insists that ‘inclinations and impulses ought not be suppressed’ but harmonised ‘in conformity with reason’.⁴⁷ Both Kant and Hegel contend that morality cannot be analysed in isolation from metaphysics and that the laws of morality are essentially rational. Only man knows, Hegel says, what is good; the animal is simply ‘innocent’.⁴⁸ In opposition of Kant’s and Hegel’s idealist morality based on transcendental and divine laws, Marx advocates morality that has its origin in the ‘material conditions’ in which man lives and is dependent on material production and socio-economic relations.⁴⁹

Unlike Hegel who contends that all ideas, including moral ideas, possess reality independently of the material world and that they are the driving force of dialectical development in society, Marx maintains that the ideas are merely part

of the material world 'reflected by the human mind'.⁵⁰ Both Marx and Engels reject the ideas, moral norms and principles based on transcendental reality. 'We reject every attempt', Engels indicates, 'to impose on us any moral dogma whatsoever as an eternal, ultimate and for ever immutable ethical law on the pretext that the moral world has its permanent principles which stand above history.'⁵¹ He shares Marx's view that moral norms and principles in class society are unavoidably relative. Class relativistic ethics, therefore, cannot have place in classless society. In the class-divided society the common interests and moral aspirations are always expressed in illusory ideals which lead to self-alienation and egoistic absurdities. By contrast, in communist society, 'the only society in which the genuine and free development of individuals ceases to be mere phrase' moral practices and moral norms will be based 'on the consciousness of human dignity'.⁵²

The main weakness of Marxist ethics is the belief that moral ideas, including the ideas of good, bad, right and wrong, and moral consciousness itself are the product of material forces and that they are determined by these forces. Paradoxically enough, Marxism admits the existence and development of moral ideas and yet denies to them an independent status. On the whole, Marx and Engels merely criticise and scorn the views of their ideological opponents without offering any positive solution. In their conception of good and right, they vacillate between relativism and absolutism, subjectivism and objectivism, description and evaluation. While rejecting all forms of class-orientated morality, Marx and Engels do not regard all morality as subjective or a form of ideology. When Engels speaks of 'a really human morality which stands above class antagonisms' and Marx of 'independent morality', they imply that there can be morality that is not class-bound and thus is of absolute validity.⁵³ This interpretation is generally accepted by Marxologists in central and eastern Europe.

Acceptance of dialectical materialism and of Marx's sociology of moral norms and principles does not, in their view, commit a Marxist to moral relativism. While it is true, they argue, that dialectics contains the elements of relativism, subjectivism and scepticism, it cannot be reduced to relativism.⁵⁴ In this respect Marx and Engels follow Hegel. According to Hegel, moral principles are intrinsically universal and of absolute validity within a stable equilibrium of parts in the whole.⁵⁵ All morality is absolute in the sense that in every historical and dialectical stage the essence of man is realised. On the other hand, all morality is also relative because the realisation of moral principles and norms is a gradual process through historical and dialectical stages. The morality of every dialectical stage is, therefore, justified for that stage.⁵⁶

Like Hegel, Marx and Engels reject the separation of 'ought' and 'is'.⁵⁷ They believe that moral elements and moments cannot be scrutinised on the basis of 'what is' alone.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, nothing is said about the relationship between 'oughtness' and economic determinism. The fact that moral actions are primarily determined by human choice is entirely overlooked. Under the influence of Laplace and other determinists of their time, Marx and Engels fail to realise that predictions in ethics and sociology are hardly possible and that the representation of the moral and social world in terms of its exactly determined particulars can only be

hypothetical and guesswork. Laplace's claim that all future events could be predicted from knowledge of the present has been abandoned in the quantum theory.⁵⁹ As Werner Heisenberg indicates, one cannot predict both exact position and exact velocity of the electron at the same time. Because of the limitation and uncertainty of human knowledge, we are unable to know whether phenomena in the atomic field are determinate or not. We can only calculate probabilities for the future. Many critics of Marxism correctly remark that the assumption of some persistent features in nature is not only an inadequate premise for the establishment of natural science but that it is also an entirely misleading premise for the establishment of moral norms and principles.

Ethics is distinguished from the natural sciences in the sense that its propositions are not casual but value propositions. Being related to transcendental values, moral ideals cannot, as Kant demonstrates, exist in material things. By contrast, Marx and Engels relate their 'concrete ideals' to material forces. According to some Soviet Marxologists, this does not mean that they belittle the role of 'advanced ideals' in the moral life of men. They insist merely that these ideals are based on facts and connected with economic and material forces in society.⁶⁰ The communist ideal of the future classless society, in their view, is also a moral ideal.⁶¹ Indeed, it is only in the classless society that moral ends and ideals can be realised. Moral ends and means are parts of a single dialectical process, just as revolutionary ends and means are interrelated component elements of a single revolutionary process. Although violence, Lenin says, 'is alien to our ideals', revolutionary coercion is so related to the communist ideal that it must be seen as a moral means of struggle.⁶² All human actions, Marx and Engels insist, must be directed towards the realisations of high moral ends. Unfortunately these ends are never clearly defined. Vacillating between realism and utopianism, they sometimes regard communism as the end of human development and sometimes as a means or 'the real movement' which merely 'abolishes the present state of things'.⁶³

Just as Marx's materialistic teleology is ambivalent and obscure, so is his conception of rights, duties and justice. It is not surprising, therefore, that commentators differ considerably in their interpretation of these ethical categories in Marx's writings. While some western commentators believe that at least in *the Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx entirely rejects the concepts of rights and justice as 'ideological nonsense', Soviet Marxologists, on the whole, dismiss this bourgeois interpretation as being itself ideological nonsense. They maintain that communists being morally aware people are always willing to fight for the ideals of justice, goodness and human rights.⁶⁴ There can be no doubt that Marx's analysis of rights, duties and justice is one-sided and myopic. Being preoccupied with the critique of bourgeois rights, he hastily concludes that the 'so-called rights of man' are merely 'the rights of egoistic man separated from other men and from the community'.⁶⁵ In *the Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx makes contradictory remarks concerning justice. Unaware of self-contradiction, he compares socialist and communist distribution in terms of an ideal of justice and then scorns all appeals to justice as being nothing but 'obsolete verbal rubbish'.⁶⁶

Marx and Engels see all things in the world of men and nature in the process of

change and insist that in this process of change men and women must eliminate all distorted mediations and illusory goals. Human beings can be truly satisfied only in the secular world. By offering an illusory satisfaction, religion, they argue, diverts them from seeking real satisfaction here on earth. In opposition to idealist transcendentalism and theological projectionism, Marx and Engels are insisting on a purely naturalistic interpretation of religious beliefs. They overlook the fact that the 'religious reflex' has its origin and focal point in the spiritual structure of man and is unlikely to disappear from human consciousness. Everyone is aware of the fact that religion and religious morality have sometimes been class-orientated, but positive religion and positive morality always rise above class. Although there seems to be some correlation between Protestant ethics and capitalism, capitalism and proletarianism, as Weber correctly observes, are 'not expressible in a religious form' and the origin of religion cannot be related to either of them.⁶⁷

Both Marx and Engels reject categorically any religious basis for 'a truly human morality'. The denial of God, in their view, is a pre-requisite to proletarian classless morality and to 'proletarian scientific' research. Only 'proletarian science' can eliminate the religious reflex from the minds of alienated men. The scientist, Lenin insists, must be a dialectical materialist and the proletariat must enlist the science of communism 'in the battle against the fog of religion.'⁶⁸ Both morality and science must be subordinated to the 'interests of the class struggle of the proletariat'. In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels speak of 'a single science, the science of history'.⁶⁹ This science, however, is never described except in terms which are not scientific. Like Hegel, Marx and Engels believe that the 'inexorable dialectical laws' which operate in nature and society independently of human will are also relevant to scientific progress and moral behaviour. They fail to realise that no scientist, working in a country where science is a free activity, has ever invoked the principles of 'scientific dialectics' or of 'dialectical socialism' in support of his scientific theory. The fact remains that Marxist dialectical and revolutionary science is alien to natural sciences because it violates the principle of objectivity and inhibits scientific freedom. Dialectical materialism, Plamenatz correctly remarks, is 'a myth, a revolutionary slogan, the happy inspiration of two moralists who wanted to be unlike all moralists before them.'⁷⁰ The normative implications of morality cannot be based on the laws which are essentially deterministic.

Dialectical materialism is not only scientifically untenable but it is also in conflict with any moral theory that teaches the importance of conscience and of 'oughtness' in moral behaviour. Some Marxists, including Engels and Lenin, claiming the normative validity for their moral theory, however, speak of conscience as a moral regulator which negates egoism and immoral urges.⁷¹ The fundamental theses of Marxist theory, 'whose correctness has been confirmed by practice', Afanas'ev says, 'are absolute truth'.⁷² This truth is lacking from bourgeois science. By serving the interests of the ruling class and by defending wage slavery, the bourgeois and liberal science is immoral, and as such cannot play any positive role in classless society. This science and religion are reactionary forces

incompatible with communist goals. Capitalism is condemned on the ground that it generates alienation, worships the external wealth, preaches the ethics of pseudo-asceticism and misuses morality for egoistic and immoral purposes. In capitalism, Marx and Engels correctly remark, the whole emphasis is on 'naked self-interest and callous cash payment'.⁷³ Here, personal worth is transformed into 'exchange value' and living human relations are replaced by the relations of inanimate things.

In Marx's view, thoughtless or raw communism is merely the universalisation of capitalism and capitalist greed. It has a very limited standard and a very limited knowledge of real human goals.⁷⁴ 'True communism' is incomprehensible without philosophical knowledge. The fact is that the problem of communism remains a big dilemma for Marx. His analysis of the transition from capitalism to communism in *the Manuscripts of 1844* and in *the Critique of the Gotha Programme* is obscure, inconsistent and evasive.⁷⁵ The abyss separating the world of crude communism and the ideal world of philosophical communism is so great that Marx finds it necessary to transform his vision of 'communism as such' into the vision of 'fully-developed humanism'.⁷⁶ It is not 'communism as such', he says, but 'fully-developed humanism' that is capable of eliminating bestiality, prostitution, egoism and barbaric practices and of promoting culture and a truly human morality.

Marx had promised to write an 'independent pamphlet' on ethics but this has never materialised.⁷⁷ As a result, his views on ethics and morality have to be gathered from various passages scattered in his writings. In the absence of a systematic moral theory in these writings, disagreements among philosophers and sociologists as to the validity of Marx's views on morality are unavoidable. According to some Marxologists, Marxist ethics is essentially naturalistic, humanistic and revolutionary.⁷⁸ According to others, it is 'demonic and exclusively instrumental', always subordinated to the communist ideological goal which is believed to be implicit in history.⁷⁹ Indicating that Marx is, in fact, a passionate moralist, Berdyaev still believes that his moralism is demonic because it is based on the belief that 'good can come out of evil' and that hatred, malice and violence can lead men to social harmony.⁸⁰ Marx's moral theory, however, unlike the amoral theory of logical positivism, is opposed to subjectivism and contains normative elements which cannot be ignored.

Although Marx has failed to formulate a consistent moral theory, the social and moral aspects of his thought contain elements of truth which should not be underestimated. The main weakness of his moral theory lies in its defective anthropology according to which all spiritual and moral phenomena have their material roots in the activity of the brain. Marx does not realise that if man is merely 'the ensemble of social relations', moral choice and moral freedom are merely an illusion. Moral freedom, almost all moral philosophers agree, means spiritual independence. Without this freedom and without – as Kant puts it – 'a world invisible to us, the glorious ideas of morality cannot be the springs of purpose and action'.⁸¹ Marx rejects Kant's association of morality with the noumenal realm but agrees with Kant and Hegel that hedonism is essentially immoral and that the axiom of pleasure is inconsistent with the axiom of human dignity.