MARXIAN COMMUNISM: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

by

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Perhaps the commonest mistake made by men and women of the free world today is to judge Communism strictly as an economic system. Many people see Communism only as a representative of the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeoisie represented by Capitalism. According to their reasoning, Communism can only be crushed by building Capitalism into a huge and powerful machine which will render Communism helpless, thereby, leading to its ruination and fall. Atlas missiles and hydrogen bombs are our only protection and salvation against the onslaughts of Russia and China.

To judge Communism only in the light of the above is a monstrous failure and blunder on the part of the Western world. Communism finds its strength and backbone not merely in its economic doctrines, but in its philosophical principles formulated and vitalized by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Before the revolutionary objectives of Marxian economics can be successfully refuted, its basic metaphysical and epistemological principles must be refuted. Perhaps, there is nothing that renders the defense of the Western world so inadequate as the misunderstanding of the position and principles and the under-estimation of the strength of Atheistic Communism.

Communism is a philosophy which denies the existence of God, and puts into practice the false axiom that the end justifies the means. Christianity, according to the Marxist,
is the sign of the oppressed. The moral law is an ancient and medieval superstition. Human dignity and common sonship under God must be replaced by the omnipotent state and omnipotent fate. Murder, lies, and deceits are justified and true if they contribute to the forward advancement of the ideal of Communism. The Communistic pseudo-ideal of justice of equality and fraternity conceals itself in a false messianic ideal entrapped by delusive promises. Because of their perverse ideals, the Communists have crossed the border-line of sanity, and we are dealing with a paranoic mentality beyond the reach of logic and reasonable appeal. If we attack only the externals of Communism, so to speak, and not the heart of its philosophy, we shall be like men swinging our fists at the wind.

The entire program of Communism shows a purposeful integrated unity that is not only comprehensible, but is almost mathematically predictable. Each one of its doctrines and theories logically proceed from its laws of the dialectics and from its basic epistemological principles. Marxian Communism can only be stopped by uprooting its pseudo-metaphysical and epistemological assumptions, and by restoring man and his mind to their true dignity intended by God.

It is our expressed purpose in this thesis to examine in detail the basic metaphysical and epistemological principles of the Marxian theory of knowledge. Marxism regards its theory of knowledge as extremely important to its whole system. Engles himself states that the great basic question of all
philosophy is that concerning the relation between thinking and being. After stating this theory of knowledge in chapter one, we shall endeavor to refute this theory in the light of Thomistic Epistemology in chapter two. However, we should realize that no philosophy is born in a vacuum. Usually, one integral system of philosophy is the result of several systems, and Marxian Communism is no exception to this rule. Karl Marx took some basic points from other systems, such as the "dialectics" of Hegelianism, the materialistic notions of Democritus and Epicurus, and the theories of some French and English sociologists, and gave them a new meaning in his own system. Therefore, we shall begin in the Introduction by examining these influences which gave character to Marxism. Also, we shall briefly examine the basic metaphysical principles of nature in the Marxian system, such as the "laws of the dialectics," which logically gave rise to the theory of knowledge. It will be seen that the basic epistemological principles and notions of Marxian Communism are anti-rational, and consequently, the whole system has no right to exist.

Before concluding this preface, I wish to state my conviction that the true adversary of atheistic Communism is not Capitalism in general or any particular country, but the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church realizes her sacred trust given to her by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to safeguard the true dignity of man and the moral law. Christ promised his Church, moreover, that the gates of Hell would not
prevail against it. Truly, Communism has tried again and again to undermine the truths of God and will continue to try, but in the end its efforts will be in vain and will lead to its own destruction. For how long God will permit men to spread this evil, we do not know. But in the meantime, we should not place all our trust in missiles and bombs alone, but in the truths of God. By spreading these holy truths, Communism will grow weak and finally disappear, and the scars it has left will one day be healed. I can only hope that this thesis, in some small way, will help the Church to conquer and overcome the ruthless attacks of Communism which today are being waged against her and all mankind.
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The doctrine of modern Communism, which is often concealed under the most seductive trappings, is in substance based on the principles of dialectical and historical materialism previously advocated by Marx, of which the theorists of bolshevism claim to possess the only genuine interpretation. According to this doctrine there is in the world only one reality, matter, the blind forces of which evolve into plant, animal and man. Even human society is nothing but a phenomenon and form of matter, evolving in the same way. By a law of inexorable necessity and through a perpetual conflict of forces, matter moves towards the final synthesis of a classless society. In such a doctrine, as is evident, there is no room for the idea of God; there is no difference between matter and spirit, between soul and body; there is neither survival of soul after death nor any hope in a future life. Insisting on the dialectical aspect of their materialism, the Communists claim that the conflict which carries the world towards its final synthesis can be accelerated by man. Hence they endeavor to sharpen the antagonisms which arise between the various classes of society. Thus the class-struggle, with its consequent violent hate and destruction takes on the aspects of a crusade for the progress of humanity. On the other hand, all other forces whatever, as long as they resist such systematic violence, must be annihilated as hostile to the human race.

--Pope Pius XI
Perhaps, before starting a comprehensive analysis of the immediate historical rise of Karl Marx and his peculiar materialistic and atheistic philosophy, it would be most profitable first to briefly consider the philosophical setting of a few of the previous centuries which gave rise to the radical views of the nineteenth century of which Marx was the most radical of all. Before the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, philosophers were somewhat concerned with the problem of method. But they did not, on the whole, seriously doubt that there is a common, independent, and objective reality which can to some extent be understood. Nor did they question whether or not there is an objective way of thinking, common to all men, which does not radically modify or distort the thing known. These philosophers expressed the conscious conviction about the adequacy of the rational faculty to grasp its object and the relation between the object itself and the thing-as-known. This pre-established harmony of the knowing mind and the real object of knowledge was looked upon as a divine miracle for which man must express his gratitude.

However, once the Renaissance, after the fourteenth century, had firmly taken hold of Europe most philosophers revolted against the established standards of Scholasticism. The old traditions of philosophy were pushed aside in favor of something radically different. The assumption of a pre-ordained correspondance between the mind and its object was
regarded as uncritical and too dogmatic. Gradually, most philoso- phers believed that the thinking subject himself preordains what conditions any object must meet if it is to be counted by us as "real". In short, it was believed that the thinking subject himself establishes the standards of objectivity. From the middle of the fourteenth century up to the nineteenth century, philosophers were mostly concerned with the problems of epistemology which found their vexing birth in the Renaissance. Consequently, philosophy divided itself into two main schools — Rationalism and Empiricism.1

However, during the first part of the nineteenth century, another reaction set in. Now many philosophers felt that the human as such was sacrificed too much by eighteenth century Rationalism. Gabriel Marcel gives us an account of his conviction concerning the inadequacy of Rationalism.

The unpardonable mistake of a certain rationalism has consisted precisely in sacrificing the human as such, without anything to take its place, to certain ideas, whose regulative value we certainly should not think of questioning, but which lose all their meaning if we attempt to make of them a world existing by itself where "the human as such" will be counted as nothing but dross and rubbish. Perhaps the human condition is characterized not only by the risks which go with it and which after all are bound up with life itself, even in its humblest forms, but also, and far more deeply, by the necessity to accept those risks and to refuse to believe that it would be possible—and, if we come to a final analysis, even an advantage—to succeed in removing them.2

1James Collins, A History of Modern European Philosophy (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 7-8

The radical subjectivism in the nineteenth century, however, was gradually modified by another factor which greatly influenced the thinking of most of the philosophers during the latter half of this same period. This prevalent influence was the theory of "dialectics" and its movement in the world. Reason now was something developing within history, and hence as something continually expressing itself through the changing conditions of individual and social life. This above absolute idealism of Fichte and Hegel came finally to rest -- but in an "upside down" position⁠¹ -- in the Dialectical Materialism of Karl Marx.

Of course, the above account is only a partial setting of the milieu into which Marx was born and nursed. There were also social and economic factors which greatly biased the thinking of Marx. A form of liberalism which originally started in the Renaissance, was now enticing every form of thought which eventually led to a radical divorce from conservatism.⁠² This liberalism tried to break away with most of the established ways of thinking and living, and have man himself pursue his appetites and interests in an unhindered manner. As a result of this, intellectual, moral, religious, political and economic liberalism exerted itself upon the minds of men and especially Karl Marx. Such were the times into which Marx was born, and later used to full advantage.

¹Karl Marx, Capital (Bruce Publishing Co, 1938), p. 25.
On the fifth of May, 1818, in the town of Trier in the Rhineland, Karl Marx was born. He came from Jewish parentage, but at the age of six, Karl was baptized in the Evangelical church of Germany.\(^1\) The Marx family had never practiced Judaism, nor did they inwardly accept Protestantism. They only embraced it for purely political, social, and economic reasons.

In 1830 Karl's first taste of formal education came from the Gymnasium at Trier. In 1835 Marx entered the University of Bonn for the purpose of studying law. It was during this year that he realized that his ambitions would only be satisfied with an academic career in the study of philosophy. Therefore, in 1836, he entered the University of Berlin in order, as he said, to "wrestle with the problems of philosophy". It was here in Berlin that Marx came in contact with Hegelianism which formed the back bone of his own peculiar philosophy.

In order to understand Marxism, it is necessary first to grasp Hegelianism in its simplest form -- the dialectic. Hegel had borrowed the term "dialectic" from Plato, but gave it a much broader signification. In Plato, "dialectic" is regarded as a certain kind of logical process.\(^2\) For Hegel, the term dialectic has a much wider meaning. He viewed the dialectic as consisting of three phases or movements. The three phases or movements in this triadic development are:

thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Fichte referred to them as: position, op-position, and com-position. Hegel's technical designations are: \textit{An-sich-sein} (being-in-itself), \textit{Aussersich-sein} (being-external-to-itself), and \textit{An-und-fur­sich-sein} (being-in-and-for-itself).\footnote{Collins, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 626.} According to Hegel, we basically begin with an abstract universal concept (thesis); this concept gives rise to a contradiction (antithesis); the contradictory concepts are reconciled in a third concept which, therefore, is a union of the other two (synthesis). To illustrate: one thought follows necessarily from the other; one thought provokes a contradictory thought with which it is united to form another thought.

However any movement in the dialectic can be analyzed in logical, ontological, phenomenological or historical terms. In its first meaning however, it is a logical process which proceeds from thesis to antithesis, and to a synthesis which combines them both. But, on the other hand, Hegel also regards the dialectic as more than merely a logical procedure in the sense in which verbal argumentation is a logical process. For Hegel it is an actual process which events in the world follow. Here is where we find the heart of the profound influence which Hegel exerted on Marx. All change, especially historical change, takes place in accordance with the law of the dialectic: a thesis is produced; it develops an opposition (an antithesis); a conflict between them ensues, and the
conflict is resolved into a synthesis which includes both thesis and antithesis. Thus, Hegel believed that he had established a necessary law of nature. Marx plagiarized this law for his own philosophy and called it Dialectical Materialism after he had formed his theory of matter. Marx's materialism is based on "standing Hegel on his head," and transforming the Hegelian idealistic pattern into a theory about the natural world. Instead of attributing the dialectical scheme to some Absolute or Objective Mind, as Hegel had done, Marx, in a naive simplicity, stated that it is in Nature alone that the process of overcoming contradictions takes place. However, Marx did not completely disregard the logical signification of the dialectics. Bertrand Russell points out this fact to us:

Marx continues to think that the world develops according to a logical formula. To Hegel, the development of history is as logical as a game of chess. Marx and Engels keep the rules of chess, while supposing that the chessmen move themselves in accordance with the laws of physics, without the intervention of a player.

It is important here to notice that in Marx's mind matter is the only reality. By analyzing Democritus and Epicurus, Marx, in the manner of a naive and uncritical pupil, accepted complete materialism; this is evident and runs throughout his doctoral dissertation. By wedding the game of Hegel to the complete materialism of Democritus and Epicurus, Marx

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felt at long last that he had discovered the riddle of philos­ophy. The technical jargon of both schools of thought be­came the gibberish of his own system. In his haste to pro­claim his new philosophy, Karl Marx completely overlooked its many pitfalls, contradictions and unanswered problems. How­ever, later on in this section, a more detailed outline will be given of the metaphysical nature of Dialectical Materialism.

Marx, because of his radical and unorthodox views, found himself a member of the Left-Wing Hegelians. These Hegelians taught Marx how to be more radical and unorthodox in his re­ligious, philosophycal and political opinions.¹ One of the mem­bers of this school came forward with a thesis which was de­stined to play a major role in the formation of Marxism. The work was Essence of Christianity and its author was Lud­wig Feuerbach. Feuerbach had rejected Hegel's stressing of ideas; instead, he urged a philosophy of material things, which would reject God, soul, spirit, and thought itself. Feuerbach summed it all up: "Man is what he eats," Marx, with great joy, looked upon this work as a refutation of orthodox Hegelianism and an invincible case for materialism. Feuer­bach pleased Marx because of his strongly anti-religious and materialistic version of Hegel, deifying man rather than God and reducing all knowledge to sensation. Feuerbach's main theme was "what man declares about God, he can in all truth­fulness assert about himself". This form of atheistic

¹McFadden, op.cit., p. 11.
humanism can be summed up in the words: *Homo homini deus est.*

Engels points out to us this profound influence of Marx.

Then came Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity.* With one blow it placed materialism on the throne again. The spell was broken. The (Hegelian) system was exploded and cast aside. One must have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much — in spite of critical reservations — he was influenced by it one may read in *The Holy Family.*

Having renounced the purely academic life, Marx decided to try his wits in journalism. In this new field of endeavor, he found an outlet for his radical and unbalanced views. He wrote a number of editorials on current social conditions and problems which later on he was unable to prove or defend. Because of his pseudo-knowledge on the true social conditions in Germany, Marx was forced by the government to leave his country in 1843. The few years Marx wrote for the radical paper, *Rheinische Zeitung,* one could never call him a constructive thinker; he was only an impetuous agitator and revolutionary.

Most social philosophers interested in the *Rheinische Zeitung* decided that Paris would be a more suitable climate in which to start publications again. Naturally, Karl traveled to Paris with the paper in order to further expound his views. While in Paris, he came in contact with Pierre Joseph Proudhon, an enthusiastic Socialist. During their many con-

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2Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
versations, Proudhon made Marx realize that the Hegelian dialectics, as Marx possessed it, was valueless as long as it could not be applied to real life. Upon examining the bitter opposition between the lower and upper classes, Marx saw that his materialistic dialectics could very neatly be applied to the class struggle. Proudhon is important because he hinted to Marx how his philosophy could become an integral system. Now society, as well as matter, was viewed as dialectical. Marx finally realized how he could apply his hodge-podge of ideas to reality. When he left Proudhon's garret-home, after this talk, Communism as a philosophy of society was born.¹

One last influence on Marx, outside of Hegel which contributed more to the final synthesis of Marxism, was Friedrich Engels. Some commentators on Marxism consider Engels to be Marx's alter-ego. Truly, Engels is deserving of this description because his thoughts, deeds and personal fortunes were closely associated with his comrade's beginning in 1844 and lasting until Marx's death in 1883.² So corresponding were their thoughts and views, that in 1883 Engels was able to take the place of his dead comrade and finish the work, Capital, dealing with communistic social theories.

Upon their second meeting in Paris in 1844, Marx and Engels built up a lasting and intimate friendship. Engles, just as Marx, had gravitated toward Hegelianism and socialism.

In order to devote most of his time in writing against the bourgeoisie, Marx had to depend heavily on his bourgeois friend Friedrich Engels for financial support and encouragement. Both philosophers considered themselves prophets announcing a new philosophy of nature and a new way of life, but to the rest of the civilized world they were madmen.

Now that we have briefly sketched the life of Karl Marx and the heterogeneous influences which helped shape his philosophy, we should now obtain a brief understanding of the metaphysical principles and notions of Dialectical Materialism as such before specifically treating of the Marxian theory of knowledge. As was previously stated, Marx borrowed heavily from Hegel and his dialectics in order to form the backbone of his own philosophy. But in order to put nerves and muscle on that backbone, so to speak, Marx looked to the materialism of Democritus and Epicurus, and also to the social theories prevalent in France and England.

However, before considering the dialectical method as such, some attention must be paid to the peculiar type of materialism of Marx and his collaborators. Marx is essentially an extreme activist because of his dialectics. Matter is not static, but always moving and changing. It is on this point that Marx and Engels sharply differed from the old classical school of Materialism. The old school stated that matter is inert, non-dynamic and too mechanical. Likewise, the modern school of materialism as formulated by Bacon and
Hobbes looked upon matter as the classical materialists did. Marx reversed this theory and stated that matter is intrinsically active and dynamic. In accordance with this, Marx stuffed this theory of matter into the triadic mode of the dialectics of Hegel.

Concerning the dialectics itself, Marx states that it is comprised of three laws: the law of the unity of opposites, the law of negation, and the law of transformation from quantity to quality.¹

Concerning the first law, namely, the law of the unity of opposites, all matter is said to contain its own contradictions. Everything embodies its opposite. Right away, it can be seen that this first law of the dialectics is a complete denial of the first principle which metaphysical or moderate realists hold: Being is not non-being. Logically, we could agree with Engles and Marx that when we posit any judgment, we also can posit its opposite as is evident from Aristotle's Square of Opposition. But, when we return to the extra-mental reality of this world, the law of opposites falls asunder because when we try to posit the non-existence of an existing thing, we are faced with a metaphysical zero. The law of opposites completely confuses the two orders -- logical and real. But ultimately, even the logical side of the first law of the dialectics demands and presupposes the first principle of thought and being, namely, the principle of non-con-

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 189.
tradiction. Marx in his narrow-mindedness completely overlooked the fact that only where the principle of non-contradiction is held could there be two different things, two opposites. If the principle were not valid always and everywhere, all differences would perish along with it. The fact of self-identity in nature and man is a prominent and important one. Yet, when the prime principle is denied, things of necessity taper into one another, and nothing retains a self-identity; nothing is itself. In such a case, one could even say, in the tradition of Heraclitus,¹ that nothing is. No reality could exist if it were not what it is, and in a nihilistic universe where nothing exists, nothing surely could be thought or spoken. Despite Marx, a denial of the principle of non-contradiction obliterates both identity and difference. Throughout his theory of knowledge, Marx scoffs and criticizes the skeptics for not accepting reality as it is; yet, it replaces the principle of non-contradiction, then logically following his theory, Marx would himself fall into complete skepticism.

Marx goes on to tell us that matter moves because it is self-contradictory, and this movement is not blind or aimless, but moves towards development. Motion is no longer the product of a push from God; on the contrary, it is an explosion, so to speak, from within matter itself which directs matter itself to development and improvement; matter is autodynamic.

¹Hirschberger, op. cit., pp. 18-21.
Marx is his complete narrowness tries to destroy the Prime Mover and First Ordainer of things by the first law, but in trying to do so, he completely fails to account for the fact that each reality progresses towards its proper end and perfection, and in so doing must imply a Supreme Intelligence and Lawgiver, Who is infinite and transcendent to matter, and Who must determine the end or perfection of all things.

Concerning the second law of the Marxian dialectics, the law of negation, material reality -- a unity of opposites in motion -- is looked upon as tending toward its own negation, and thus producing its own development. Marxism presents this second law for an explanation of the progressive character of material reality. Once more, Karl Marx plagiarizes the Hegelian law of negation, and instead of applying it to the Idea, he "stood Hegel on his head" and applied the law to material reality. In the Hegelian triad, the synthesis of the third stage meets with another antithesis, and so a synthesis at one level is the thesis for a new pattern of development.\(^1\)

Applying this law to matter, Marx contends that the nature of motion is such that a being in motion necessarily progresses towards its own negation. By its very negation, by its opposite, matter now "breaks forth" into a new and better reality than it previously had before the negation. One last important implication of this second law which Marx and Engels were quick to capitalize was the fact that this law offers an explanation

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\(^1\)Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
for the development of nature according to a law without postulating the existence of an Intelligence or Lawgiver transcendent to matter. Yet both men just stated this law as a matter of fact without rationally analyzing where this law ultimately and originally came from. Of course, one should realize that the Marxists had to close their eyes to one God above them in order to fit their idiosyncratic gibberish into a system which pleased their taste and which would be novel in the history of mankind.

The third and final law of the dialectics, the law of transformation from quantity to quality, states that a continuous quantitative development in a reality very often results in the production of an entirely new form. Because Marx was basically an activist, this third law of the dialectics was vitally necessary for his philosophy. A materialistic philosophy is basically a monistic philosophy. Now, Marx with this theory of development needed an explanation to account for change in reality. By trying to account for the differences in reality in spite of the singleness and sameness which monism requires, Marx radically differed from the other materialists.\(^1\) Also, this third law was a new explanation for the theory of evolution: all new forms are the result of a leap in nature; they are new qualities or qualitatively new realities produced after long evolution of matter. Marx constantly refers to this theory in his work, *Capital*. Even

\(^1\)Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
such phenomena as life and mind merely occur because of a "leap" or sudden turn in organic matter. Life and mind are at the top in the development of organic matter; they are only a highly refined state of matter.

Of course, the triumph of Marxian metaphysics is the so-called proof that true science has now pushed the antiquated God of Medieval times out of the picture. The different kinds of motion and changes do not result because of God's providence, but they can be easily explained by the third law. Of course, any man of common sense would naturally inquire into the question: "How can matter of itself explain change which leads to new forms and better development?" A Marxist wouldn't dare answer these questions. He would evade the issue by regarding the questions as a prototype of capitalistic thinking or an specimen of Medieval stupidity.

Having briefly probed into the primary points in Dialectical Materialism, it will be profitable to read a short summary of this atheistic metaphysics by Charles McFadden, O.S.A.

Matter has existed eternally and is, according to its first law, a unity of opposites, a composite of contradictory elements. Contradiction is necessarily productive of motion, and thus matter is, by its very nature, autodynamic.

By virtue of the second law of matter, the law of negation, the motion proper to matter produces at least the quantitative development of reality, that is, in the world of nature each reality tends towards its own negation in a manner which necessarily results in its development or increase — as when the grain of barley is negated and thereby reproduces itself a hundredfold.

Finally, the third law, the law of transformation, accounts for the emergence of all new
realities in the world. The human mind, for example, is just such an emergent, a product of a qualitative leap which occurred in nature after organic matter had evolved to a very high degree.

In such a philosophy, as Engels himself has said, "the last vestige of a Creator external to the world is obliterated."

Therefore, the world must be conceived as a unified whole. The Dialectical Materialists are representatives of monism in a two fold sense. They see the world as a unique reality (outside of it there is nothing, and, in particular, there is no God), and they see its principles as homogeneous (dualism and pluralism of any sort are rejected as false).

Now we are in a position to turn our attention to the most important phase of this thesis -- the Marxian theory of knowledge. It was first necessary to examine the period and influences which gave rise to Dialectical Materialism, and, in turn, to briefly analyze the metaphysical principles involved in the dialectics itself. Having done this, we are now in a position to comprehend how the Marxian theory of knowledge logically fits in and complements the whole scheme of Dialectical Materialism.

\[1\] McFadden, op. cit., p. 55.
The commonest mistake made in judging international affairs today is to think of Communism as an economic doctrine alone. The Communists have, it is true, their economic system, but primarily they are set apart from us by a different philosophy of life. Its origins are worth knowing.

-- Fulton J. Sheen.
It is our expressed purpose in this present chapter to enumerate the basic epistemological considerations which both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels considered to be of prime importance to their philosophy as a whole. At a first glance, one is apt to be impressed with the many similarities the Marxian theory of knowledge possesses with other systems of philosophy such as Thomistic Realism, Pragmatism and Relativism. But on closer scrutiny, fundamental and basic contradictions will be quite evident. However, before examining the similarities and disagreements between Marxian Epistemology and the above mentioned systems, we shall first discover where Marx drew the line between thinking and being, or the mind and its object, if, indeed, there is such a line. According to Marx, man is basically the same as the rest of reality. Therefore, man is matter and only matter. Of course, man does have a mind and can think, but the mind of man is only a highly developed refinement of matter which occurs after a long evolutionary process. Therefore, there cannot be a basic distinction between mind and matter because mind is matter. The so-called contrast between thinking and being has no value except for Epistemology as such.

As was previously stated, Hegel taught that Spirit or Mind was definitely primary and matter or Nature was secondary.

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1Smith, op. cit., p. 201.
2Collins, op. cit., p. 609.
Marx and Engels stood Hegel on his head and stated that matter is primary and mind is secondary. This view is definitely the heart of materialism. Lenin, a fiery Marxist to the point of mimicry, confirms the primacy of matter in Marxism by saying, "Matter is primary nature. Sensation, thought, consciousness, are the highest products of matter organized in a certain way. This is the doctrine of materialism, in general, and Marx and Engels, in particular."  

Therefore, Marx looked upon the Spirit of Hegel as only a logical schemata which is related to forms of thought alone, but which can never deal with being as it exists outside the mind in the external world. The form of being can never be created or derived by the mind, but only from things themselves. Likewise, principles cannot be the starting point of our investigation of Nature, as Hegel would have us believe, but they must be abstracted from nature herself. Nature or matter must not conform to these principles, but these principles must submit or conform to Nature because they flow from matter. Marx tells us that Hegel as well as all idealists fell into error because he put up an artificial barrier between mind and external reality. Mind and consciousness are only products of the human brain which, in turn, is a product of Nature. Therefore, according to Marx, we deduce the world schematism not from our minds, but only through our

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minds from the real world. In conclusion, matter is the primary datum, and consciousness (mind) is secondary; consequently, consciousness is not the determinant of matter but, vice versa, matter of consciousness.¹

So far, Marxian Epistemology sets itself up as an absolute naive realism. Marxian Epistemology agrees with Thomistic Epistemology in so far as both contend that external reality has an independent existence outside the mind, and the mind in no way forces its laws on Nature. But Marxism and Thomism part company on the basic issue of the mind. Mind is fundamentally a spiritual reality which is intrinsically independent of matter but which needs matter and the bodily organs to supply the material on which the mind operates. Therefore, the mind is a reality which is independent of matter according to the Thomist in the tradition of the Angelic Doctor. Not so, says the Marxist, mind is nothing more than a highly developed state of matter. Therefore, the Marxist is a monist in the sense that he admits only one reality — the material reality.

We are now about to ascend to the summit of the Marxian theory of knowledge by analyzing the process by which man comes in contact with reality. Marx insists that his materialistic knowledge-process involves two important phases or stages. The first of these involves reality by stating that

Nature is essentially active. The sense organs of man are constantly "hit" or subjected to a continual flow of stimuli coming from objects which result in a reflection or copy in the human mind of the object or objects resulting from sensation. The second phase involves the active character of the mind. The mind is not passive in receiving these stimuli but is very much active like Nature herself. Marx informs us that man can see, touch, smell, taste and hold with his hands an object. Man can perceive an object as concrete, structured in place and irreducibly distinct in time. The object imposes itself upon the senses, makes an impact on the body and commands the emotions. Man, on the other hand, acts when he receives these stimuli; he is not merely passive. Marx interprets the above as a contradiction or opposition between mind and matter, as a unity of opposites thereby completely following his first law of the dialectics.

Dialectical Materialism distinguishes itself and its point of view -- by its affirmation -- (a) of the reality and know-ability of the world of material reality; and (b) of the inseparable connection (unity in opposition) between the subjective activity of Man and the objective material activity, the reality, which it reflects.¹

By way of background, Charles McFadden notes that Engels and Lenin probably never completely comprehended what Marx meant by the active role played by the mind in its attempt to

grasp the true nature of reality. Although both Engels in his thesis, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, and Lenin in his thesis, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, treat profoundly the active character of matter on the senses, they completely overlook the active character of the mind. Other writers, such as Bertrand Russell, Sidney Hook, and C. E. M. Joad also substantiate McFadden's conviction that Engels and Lenin never fully grasped Marx's dialectical theory of knowledge. If Engels and Lenin did grasp Marx's theory, then it is difficult to understand why they only treated that part of Marxism which holds in common with the old materialism, and never discussed the active part played by the mind which is opposed to the old materialism. Although it should be noted that the omission of the active role of the mind does not contradict the final conclusions of Marx's Epistemology.

With the above introduction, we shall now turn our attention to the active role played by the object in the knowledge-Process. It will be remembered that nature is intrinsically active. Interaction, contradictions and oppositions are everywhere evident. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the senses of man find no rest from the stimuli traveling from the objects. Having received the stimuli, the sensation is then carried to the human brain. Therefore, mind or consciousness is nothing but an epiphenomenon, a copy, a reflection, a photograph of matter.

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1 McFadden, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-1.
Once more we are confronted with a distinctive Marxian interpretation of what is meant by a phenomena. The mind in possessing this image or copy does not possess merely a reflection of the phenomena or accidents of a thing, but it possesses the true nature of a thing as it exists in reality. There is absolutely no difference between the phenomena of a thing and its real nature. Consequently, knowledge results from the fact that copies, reflections or photographs of matter are present in the mind. The world is not unknowable but is thoroughly knowable.

Every mysterious, subtle, and insidious difference between the appearance and the thing-in-itself is an absolute philosophic fallacy. In fact each one of us had observed innumerable times the simple and palpable transformation of the "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us." This transformation is cognition.

Marx, however, does not stop here. Knowledge is not complete by just an understanding of things considered as individual entities. True knowledge seeks to know the relations which exist between one thing and the rest of reality. Engels tells us that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but a complex of processes. Knowledge, then, concerns the objective as well as subjective relations between ourselves and the world and between different concepts.

Turning our attention now to the active role played by the mind in the knowledge-process, we definitely see that

1Lenin, op. cit., p. 63.
Dialectical Materialism sets itself up against eighteenth century materialism. This older materialism stated that Nature alone was active in the knowledge-process and the mind was merely the passive recipient of sensations. Thought is merely an effect produced in a merely passive recipient by the activity of external reality.

Humbling himself, Marx acknowledges that the active side of the mind, in opposition to materialism, was developed by idealism. But, as he remarks in "The First Thesis on Feuerbach", idealism attributed an unreal, abstract and theoretical activity to the mind, not a human sensuous activity. Thus, idealism did not grasp the significance of the "revolutionary", of practical-critical activity. Therefore, in opposition to the old materialism and also to the contention of idealism that the mind partakes of an abstract activity, Marx contends that sensation is a two-fold process. First, external reality stimulates the sense organs which, in turn, is transferred to the brain. But, the mind upon receiving this sensation reacts.

Before considering precisely the nature of this mental activity, we should note that Marx in his third thesis on Feuerbach also criticized the older materialism for its stand that the material circumstances of life completely moulded human nature. On the contrary, Marx states that the circumstances are changed precisely by men. Man changes circumstances to better suit his purposes. But on the other hand, Marx insists in his main work, Capital, that man acts according
to his environment. In this light, Marx can be called an environmentalist. From his point of view, if most men have hitherto lived by the sword, this is not because they are instinctively aggressive, but because the circumstances of their social environment determined them to act aggressively. It is Capitalism, according to Marx, and not the love of power, which breeds imperialism and war. First of all, man determines his surroundings and circumstances and then, in turn, he is determined to act according to them. Of course, a more detailed study of the above is proper to the Marxian theory of society and the political state and not proper to the theory of knowledge as such. The above was only mentioned to show Marx’s divergence from the older materialism and also his leanings toward it.

Concerning the second phase of sensations, namely, the mind acts upon the sensations it receives, it will be remembered that there is an awareness on the part of the mind of external reality made possible through the images which sensations present to the mind. But, knowledge does not stop here. The innumerable relations and interactions among the different objects of sensations and also among the objects and the thinking subject must be grasped before true knowledge takes place. Man has a distinctive power of his mind known as "thought". Again Marx insists that thought is only the workings of the highly developed matter known as the brain. Therefore, thought is not a spiritual reality itself,
but only the product of a material entity, the brain. Since most of the objects along with their interrelations are highly complex, the mind is not able to immediately know it. Thought breaks down an object into its component parts, and examines each part separately. This power of analysis, known as "thought", is an important step in the mind's effort to grasp the nature of reality. Engels in conformity with Marx makes this point very clear.

Conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearances as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we have not a clear idea of the whole picture. In order to understand these details we must detach them from their natural or historical connections and examine each one separately, its nature, special causes, effects, etc.¹

After examining the component parts of an object, its various elements and aspects, the mind then analyzes the various elements in their interconnections and mutual dependencies which the object plays in external reality.

In the final stage, after the mind has grasped adequately the elements and interconnections of an object, it then moves to a process of synthesis by which it "glues together", as it were, the now-understood elements and inter-relations into a unity. This unity now renders the complex object intelligible in its many facets. By the process of analysis and synthesis, the mind possesses the true nature of reality, and consequently,

has true knowledge. At last, we have arrived at an understanding of the metaphysical and psychological process of the Marxian theory of knowledge. But again, our study will not end here. The above analysis of the dialectical theory of knowledge has far reaching conclusions which must also be examined in order to see the revolutionary character of this theory.

We must now examine what the Marxist considers the true method of knowing to consist in. According to the Marxist, if we deduce the world schematism not from our minds, but only through our minds from the real world, deducing the basic principles of being from what is, then we need no philosophy for this purpose, but positive knowledge of the world and of what happens in it. Consequently, positive science is the true method of knowing. In general, Marxism takes refuge in the empiriological method because it provides so-called public criteria of truth, or makes for mechanical process, or enables us to point to objects in experience to verify statements.¹ The perception that all phenomena of Nature are systematically interconnected drives science on to prove this systematic interconnection throughout, both in general and in detail. Only by means of science can man arrive at the concrete character of truth which is at one with existing being and not merely an abstract concept that is applied to reality from outside its boundaries. Therefore, sense knowledge along

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 371.
with rational thought to organize the experiential data is necessary for science.¹

Dr. Vincent Smith sums up well the spirit of Marxian scientism in the following passage.

The spirit of (Marxian) scientism reasons like this: Philosophers of the past, from the Greeks to the moderns, have failed to agree on ultimate issues and have proposed as solid and eternal truth what have really turned out to be the private systems spun from their own minds. They have in short enjoyed no such public tests of truth as the empiriological method has afforded men. In reality, the story goes, the ultimate is beyond experience, and there can be as many ideas on it as there are philosophers to devise them. Let us then, says (Marxian) scientism, be more modest and democratic; let us restrict the region of certitude, meaning, and science to the public world of experience where the so-called scientific method of experiment can be the judge of truth and mathematical equations can formulate the results into a universal and public language. In this fashion, scientism concludes, the ultimates cannot be scientifically formulated, but by empiriological tests there is at least an experimentable area of meaning and truth where all men can agree.²

Strenuous mental effort is required for the Marxist to penetrate the secrets of nature. Science requires painstaking efforts of analysis and synthesis. The Marxist must use the dialectical method with exactness in order to crown his research with true knowledge.

What now takes place once a person is in possession of true knowledge? Marx, true to form, will answer this question by stating that another interaction takes place. In

¹Bochenski, op. cit., p. 68.
²Smith, op. cit., p. 381.
Marxist this interaction is known as "the unity of thought and action". Thought and action are not one and the same thing, but thought and action are inseparably united. Knowledge by its very nature is destined to action. This is the heart of the "dialectical" theory of knowledge which ultimately leads to progress and development. Consequently, in the very act of acquiring knowledge an extremely important interaction or dialectic takes place. First of all, man himself is not merely passive in the knowledge-process, but is being changed by the knowledge which he is acquiring. Secondly, man, in the same act of acquiring knowledge, is simultaneously and necessarily utilizing this knowledge to change external reality. Therefore, Knowledge is not an end in itself; knowledge is ordered to action. The human being can be looked upon as a coiled spring waiting to jump into action whenever a stimulus from without touches the sense organs. Consequently, the action is of primary concern and the "knowing" is only incidental or a prerequisite which leads to action. Bertrand Russell points out in the following passage the activistic character of knowledge.

Watch an animal receiving impressions connected with another animal: its nostrils dilate, its ears twitch, its eyes are directed to the right point, its muscles become taut in preparation for appropriate movements. All this is action in relation to the object. A cat seeing a mouse is by no means a passive recipient of purely contemplative impressions. And as a cat with a mouse, so is a textile manufacturer with a bale of cotton. The bale of cotton is opportunity for action, it is something to be transformed. The machinery by
which it is to be transformed is explicitly and obviously a product of human activity. Roughly speaking, all matter, according to Marx, is to be thought of as we naturally think of machinery: it has a raw material giving opportunity for action, but in its completed form it is a human product.¹

We have previously seen that positive science affords a true method of knowing. How then can we be certain that the conclusions of science which force us to action will be true; that is, represent reality as it is? Marx, in a peculiar manner, answers that "practice" is the criterion of truth. Logically following his theory that knowledge necessarily leads to action, Marx must conclude that practice is the criteria with which we can test the truthfulness or falsity of our knowledge. If knowledge is true, then practice will produce the desired and expected results. In like manner, that knowledge is true which enables us to change matter successfully. Therefore, the correct, objectively verified correspondence between knowledge and practice will render our knowledge certain and reliable. The Kantian incomprehensible "thing-in-itself" reveals itself to us when experiment and industry, to use the words of Engels, proves the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it for ourselves.² Engels describes for us the final acid test of the certainty and reliability of all knowledge.

From the moment we turn to our own use these

²Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 32.
objects according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense perceptions. If these perceptions have been wrong, then our estimate of the use to which an object can be turned must also be wrong, and our attempt must fail. But if we succeed in accomplishing our aim, if we find that the object does agree with our idea of it, and does answer the purpose we intended it for, then that is positive proof that our perceptions of it and of its qualities so far, agree with reality outside ourselves.¹

However, Marx observes that some men will find difficulty in acquiring true knowledge for various reasons. Defective senses will not be properly tuned to convey the whole stimulus to the brain. Also, "common sense", that is, uncritical and unscientific observation of the world will arrive at hasty conclusions which do not correctly reflect reality. Last of all, class consciousness and class prejudice will dispose the mind to interpret reality to one's own subjective likings. True practice, the handmaid of truth, is needed to correct these above defects.²

Of course, Marx is not so foolish as to have the criterion of practice prove a given concept to be absolutely true. However, for the most part, we can usually achieve at least partial success in the application of our knowledge. Lenin observes this fact in the following passage.

²Mcfadden op. cit., p. 74.
human knowledge to become "absolute" and at the same time sufficiently definite to wage a bitter struggle with all varieties of idealism and agnosticism. If that which our practice confirms, is the sole, ultimate and objective truth, then it follows that the sole path to this truth is the road of science which stands by the materialist creed.1

Dialectical Materialism is thoroughly materialistic in its insistence on the primacy of practice as the criterion of truth. However, this peculiar type of materialism is reactionary against the old mechanical materialism of Hobbes and Bacon by its insistence on the activity of the mind in effecting practice. Likewise, Marxism is a staunch opponent of all forms of idealism and agnosticism by its insistence that knowledge is wholly derived from external reality and that the human mind can grasp this reality.

By a little reflection, one is able to ascertain that contemplative knowledge has no home with Dialectical Materialism. If according to Marx, knowledge is inseparably united to action, then contemplative knowledge is a contradiction in terms. B. Russell presents to us in the following passage the typical attitude of a Marxist toward contemplative knowledge.

Philosophy has taken over from the Greeks a conception of passive contemplation, and has supposed that knowledge is obtained by means of contemplation. Marx maintains that we are always active, even when we come nearest to pure "sensation": we are never merely apprehending our environment, but always at the same time altering it. This necessarily makes the older conception of knowledge inapplicable to our actual relations with the outer world. In place of knowing an

1Lenin, op. cit., pp. 113-14.
object in the sense of passively receiving an impression of it, we can only know it in the sense of being able to act upon it successfully. That is why the test of all truth is practical. And since we change the object when we act upon it, truth ceases to be static, and becomes something which is continually changing and developing. That is why Marx calls his materialism "dialectical", because it contains within itself, like Hegel's dialectic, an essential principle of progressive change.\(^1\)

However, the Marxist does not completely deny that there might be some form of knowledge which could be divorced from action. But, in final analysis, this knowledge would be completely useless because it would not lead to progress. In other words, this type of knowledge would not be true, so that there is no need according to the Marxist to discuss it further.\(^2\) Therefore, Marx considered the dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice as nothing more than a purely scholastic question because man can never know whether or not his mind has arrived at true knowledge until he analyzes the practical results which follow from the application of his knowledge.

At the beginning of this chapter, we stated that Marxism and Pragmatism had some points in common, but disagreed on basic issues as far as knowledge and truth are concerned. Some people erroneously conclude that Marxism and Pragmatism are basically identical because both insist on practice as the final stamp of true knowledge. Yet, a close scrutiny will show that these two systems are different as materialism and ideal-

\(^1\) Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
\(^2\) McFadden, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
ism are basically different. Concerning knowledge and the cognitive process, Marxism insists that all knowledge comes from the objective world whereas Pragmatism looks upon the relations between knower and known as a purely artificial setup. Knowledge for the Pragmatist has a purely subjective origin. William James stresses this point in his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Being a Pragmatist, James believes that pure knowledge consists in the production of salutary effects in the life of an individual.

True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.

The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification. Its validity is the process of its validation....Any idea that helps us to deal, whether practically or intellectually, with either the reality or its belongings, that doesn't entangle our progress in frustrations, that fits, in fact, and adapts our life to the reality's whole setting, will agree sufficiently to meet the requirement. It will be true of that reality.

The true, to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behavior.\textsuperscript{1}

Such gibberish, as a Marxist would call it, would completely annihilate the criterion of truth, namely, objective practice. Pragmatism destroys the real basis of all knowledge, and instead sanctions idealism and subjectivism.

When the Pragmatist speaks of practice he means subjective practice, namely, that which works for me personally, or that which appears attractive to me. Consequently, the true is reduced to the useful. Therefore, the Marxist states that the Pragmatist cannot be a realist in his epistemology, and is doomed forever to be "shut up" to solipsism. In this area of criticism I believe that any realist would agree with the contention of the Marxist. By practice Karl Marx meant objective practice which when applied to reality is productive of progress and development in the objective world of material reality.

Superficially, then, Pragmatism and Marxism may appear to complement each other by their insistence that practice is the criterion of truth, but, basically, both schools of thought are diametrically opposed to each other as are Capitalism and Communism.

In a similar fashion as Pragmatism, one is apt to confuse Relativism with Dialectical Materialism in a univocal sense because both schools stress the "relative character of truth". Concerning knowledge and truth, Relativism, a contemporary school of thought, states that truth is relative to particular ages and to particular circumstances. By this statement, it denies that there is a permanent basis of truth. Consequently, the only truth for a Relativist is the ever-changing circumstances which characterize each succeeding age and circumstances.

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1Bochenski, op. cit., p. 114.
Hence, what is absolutely true for me today may in a hundred years from now be absolutely false for someone else, and vice versa. Of course, any realist along with the Marxist will condemn such a theory as an argument for scepticism and subjectivism.

Dialectical Materialism, on the contrary, when speaking of the relative character of knowledge does not intend to destroy the permanent basis of truth, namely, objective reality. By such a statement, Marxism asserts that the content of knowledge possessed by each age is rooted in the circumstances of the time. The important word here is "content". The overall content of knowledge which the early Greeks, Phoenicians, Egyptians and Assyrians possessed certainly contained some elements of truth in it, but nevertheless, it was by no means complete. Consequently, their knowledge was relative to their age in the sense that their scientific instruments and cultural heritage were inadequate to penetrate all the secrets of Mother Nature. Nevertheless, these peoples were in possession of certain truths which they were intellectually and scientifically able to handle. In subsequent ages as the instruments of research were perfected or invented, men progressively advanced to a new and deeper understanding of the mysteries of nature. More of the truth was wrestled from Mother nature. Of course, today with our highly refined scientific instruments, we are able to penetrate matter in such a way that bespeaks great progress. We are in possession
of more truth today than any age before us. But this does not entitle us to believe that we have completely mastered the universe because undoubtedly in future years man will perfect and invent different instruments which will put our knowledge to shame.

In summary, then, man's knowledge of reality can be called quantitatively relative in the sense that more truth is grasped about reality than was possessed by former ages, while future ages will undoubtedly surpass the present state of knowledge. In another sense, knowledge and truth is qualitatively relative because the significance of knowledge now possessed will be enhanced from age to age as man progressively discovers facts related to other facts unknown at the present time.

However, in light of the above, one might wonder if man has completely and absolutely possessed truths which are unchangeable for all times. A Marxist will answer that such truths are comparatively rare and few. Such truths as twice two equals four, and that Montana is part of the United States are unchanging truths. But for the most part, human knowledge is relatively true and will be perfected by the countless generations which will follow us. It is in this way that progress and development are continually marching on. Lenin gives us a passage which typifies the Marxian view of the relative character of knowledge.

You will say that this distinction between relative and absolute truth is indefinite. And I will reply that it is sufficiently indefinite to
prevent science from becoming dogmatic, in the bad sense of the word, from becoming dead, frozen, ossified; but it is at the same time sufficiently definite to preclude us from espousing any brand of fideism or agnosticism.¹

Having completed our discussion of the metaphysical and psychological principles involved in the Marxian theory of knowledge and also having discussed the consequences of this theory, it will be profitable to give a brief summary of the important implications of the above in the words of Dr. Charles McFadden in order to realize the full impact of so revolutionary a theory of Karl Marx.

First, the theory involves the denial of a spiritual soul or mind. For Marxism, the mind is only a function of the brain; and the brain, which is matter organized in a very special way, is the product of a long process of evolution. Second, Marxism teaches that the human mind can and does arrive at a true knowledge of objective reality. This knowledge is, however, conditioned by such circumstances as the richness of an age's intellectual heritage, the dialectical character of Nature, and the degree of development in scientific instruments and methods of research.

Third, Dialectical Materialism offers objective practice as the ultimate criterion of truth. Knowledge is true if, when applied, it is productive of progress and development in the world.

Lastly, Marxism teaches that all knowledge is inseparably united to action. In this doctrine there is involved the denial of contemplative knowledge, that is, knowledge attained for its own sake. But, more important still, this doctrine makes Marxism a philosophy of necessary action and necessary progress.²

¹ Lenin, op. cit., pp. 107-8.
² McFadden, op. cit., p. 82.
By now I think that we should agree with Friedrich Engels when he stated that "the great basic question of all philosophy, especially modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being".¹ However, St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, living in the thirteenth century recognized long before Communism was born the prime importance of an epistemology to any system of philosophy. Any portion or section of an integral philosophy will flow indirectly, if not directly, from the basic epistemological notions or principles which that philosophy professes. Utilizing this same train of thought, an integrated philosophy can fall apart at the seams after being subjected to a critical investigation if its basic principles concerning the relation of thinking and being are proven false. Communism, is such an integrated philosophy. All of its theories, political, social, economical, cosmological, epistemological etc., fit into a well thought out and organized system; one depends upon the other for its sustenance. In this chapter, it is our expressed purpose to "lay bare" and expose the epistemological principles and assumptions of Dialectical Materialism, and in so doing, to substantiate that Communism is built on sand and false assumption.

However, before treating the basic faults of the Marxian theory of knowledge, we should briefly examine the truths contained in this theory which do some justice to the realist

¹Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 30.
position. First of all, the Marxist sets himself up against all forms of scepticism and agnosticism by insisting that the mind can know reality as it is. Moreover, the Marxian assertion of the identity of thinking and being, is remarkably similar to the Thomistic assertion, in the tradition of the Angelic Doctor, which states that the mind becomes that which it knows. Furthermore, the Thomist and Marxist agree that matter and mind are active. The image or phantasm, in scholastic terminology, correctly reflects reality, and the mind works upon this image in order to obtain knowledge of the object; Marxism and Thomism fully agree on this point. Jacques Maritain, a Thomist, throughout his thesis, The Degrees of Knowledge, upholds the teaching on the incomplete character of human knowledge in the sense that our knowledge represents a comparatively small portion of objective facts which remain absolutely eternal and unchangable for all times. The Marxist also agrees with this above point as was discovered in the first chapter of this thesis.

In opposition to the contemporary school of thought known as Relativism, Marxism contends that there must be a permanent basis for truth, and anything once proven absolutely true will remain true for all ages. The Thomist will also agree with the above. Likewise, Marxism attacks Pragmatism for trying to destroy the objective basis of knowledge and accuses a Pragmatist for being a radical idealist. Once more Thomism finds harmony with Marxism in attacking Pragmatism. Therefore, one
must agree that at least on some points, Dialectical Materialism corresponds to Thomistic Realism.

However, lest we look upon Marxism and Thomism as fellow comrades, we will see that both systems radically disagree with each other concerning the immateriality of the human mind. A Marxist, because he is a materialist, must maintain that the mind is only a highly developed piece of matter, whereas, the Scholastic or Thomistic philosopher will demonstrate that the mind must be entirely different from matter because its operations require or call for an immaterial principle. Charles McFadden has drawn up five cardinal points which form the structure upon which the Marxian theory of knowledge is built. However, if it can be established that the knowing mind is immaterial, then one by one the five cardinal points will fall, and, consequently, must be completely rejected. In the following paragraph McFadden enumerates for us the five cardinal principles of the Marxian Epistemology which the Scholastic philosopher cannot admit.

The Scholastic philosopher cannot admit: (a) that there is not an absolute distinction between mind and matter, that is, that all reality is ultimately material; (b) that a material "mind", through a process of analysis and synthesis, could arrive at a true knowledge of the nature of reality; (c) that knowledge is essentially activistic in character, that it must always overflow into action; (d) that there is no such thing as contemplative knowledge and, finally, (e) that objective practice is the criterion of truth.¹

¹McFadden, op. cit., p. 206.
However, if we can successfully prove that the mind is immaterial, then the first cardinal point will be shattered because there will be an absolute distinction between mind and matter. Likewise, an immaterial mind will establish that any system which only admits a material "mind" cannot account for the fact of knowledge. The third cardinal point states that knowledge is essentially activistic, that is, that it must necessarily overflow into action. If however, the mind is immaterial, then the mind because it is superior to matter, will have a life proper to itself. This is tantamount to saying that the contemplation of knowledge will be the primary activity of the mind, and action will only be a secondary consequence. Therefore, the fourth cardinal principle will fall with the third. Lastly, the fifth cardinal point, namely, objective practice is the criterion of truth, will have no validity if the mind is able to acquire truth and to contemplate it within itself without the knowledge being externalized.

As of now we should thoroughly realize that St. Thomas directly refuted materialism and indirectly Dialectical Materialism six centuries before Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were born. If Marx and Engels had been acquainted with the writings of St. Thomas, then atheistic Communism might never have scourged the earth as it is doing today. However, Karl Marx never approached epistemology with an open mind, or as we would call "the human approach". He was so clothed with the materialistic prejudice and false assumptions of Epicurus and
Democritus that he was blinded to the truth. How can one blind man lead another blind man?

The prejudice of materialism is based on the uncritical supposition that only what is material or corporeal exists. For Marx, as well as all materialists, the word "immaterial" or "spiritual" is synonymous with "non-existent", or is to be identified with fantasy. According to this view, centaurs, elves, Alice's Wonderland, goblins and leprechauns are considered to be "spiritual" because they are the fantastic products of a human imagination. Consequently, Marx can find no room for purely intellectual knowledge in his epistemology because it is immaterial in its manner of representing an object. Since, by supposition, only the material is real for Marx, he must admit that only a high type of sense knowledge can be valid.

Even in the ancient world of Greece, Plato had some harsh words for materialists. In his dialogue named *Theaetetus*, Socrates tells Theaetetus: "Take a look around, then, and see that none of the initiated are listening. Now, by the uninitiated I mean the people who believe in nothing but what they can grasp in their hands, and who will not allow that action or generation or anything invisible have real existence." Theaetetus answers: "Yes, indeed, Socrates, they are very hard and impenetrable mortals." If Plato could have known Marx, then undoubtedly, he would have classified him as a very hard and impenetrable mortal because of his materialistic prejudice.
Even some of the early Greek philosophers realized that there must be some immaterial power in man because his actions bespeak it.

After this brief but important digression from our main concern, we shall now examine the true nature of the knowledge-process in opposition to the Marxian theory. It is sufficiently clear to us from experience that in the knowledge-process the mind assimilates material reality in some way or other. The word "assimilation" taken from the science of biology refers to an organic process whereby a living body takes in food from without for the purpose of developing itself and perpetuating its existence. In a living body this above process is known as "metabolism". Can we use the same word "assimilation" as it is used in biology to refer to the knowledge-process? We can not use it in an univocal meaning but only an analogical meaning because we know for a fact that when we partake of the act of knowing, we do not assimilate material reality the same way a living organism does. The mind does not assimilate the material substances themselves so that the latter cease to exist outside the mind which knows them. On the contrary, once the mind knows an object, the object still exists outside the mind.

Right away we are faced with a serious problem which has caused ship-wreck to many an epistemology. We must now examine the nature of this assimilation in the act of knowledge if we are to resolve the problem. However, before long it
will be seen that this mental assimilation is an immaterial action of an immaterial mind, and that the object will have intentional existence in the mind.

Before we examine the knowledge-process as such, we must find out just what the nature of the mind is which knows reality. In order to do this we must state the principle that "action follows being" (Operatio sequitur esse). For example, we know that the action of "barking" does not take place in a tree or stone because it is not the nature of a tree or stone to bark. Only a dog barks because it is its nature to do so. Applying this principle to the mind, we shall see that there is no contradiction in the nature of the mind to form and know universal, abstract and immaterial concepts. We can define a universal concept as the intellectual representation of a species or genus of a common form or attribute that can be in many individuals in specifically (or generically) the same perfection and can be predicated of many individuals in exactly the same (a univocal) sense. An abstract concept is a concept which represents an attribute of a real subject as though separated and subsistent apart from that subject.¹ An immaterial concept can be described as that which represents an object which is intrinsically free from matter. From experience we know that the mind knows such terms as man, house, animal and action. These terms are certainly universal terms. Also, the mind can know the meaning of humanity, truth, and

principle; likewise, these terms are abstract and universal. Such immaterial terms as substance, spirit, and relation are also understood by the mind. Therefore, applying the principle that "action follows being", we must conclude that the mind itself is immaterial and not material because claiming that the immaterial can be grasped by the material is tantamount to claiming that an effect can be greater than its cause. Even Engels himself, a Dialectical Materialist, permeates immaterial and universal concepts through his writings. The following paragraph is an example of this.

Are there any truths which are so securely based that any doubt of them seems to amount to insanity? That twice two makes four, that the three angels of a triangle are equal to two right angles, .... that a man who gets no food dies of hunger, and so forth? Are there then nevertheless eternal truths, final and ultimate truths? Certainly there are.

Hence, such universal and immaterial concepts as are contained in the above passage can only be the product of an immaterial mind which is not chained to particulars alone, but which has the power to formulate abstract and universal statements (operatio sequitur esse). Therefore, the mind can be defined broadly as "the faculty of thought". Its major operations can be classified in the formation of concepts, judgments and reasoning processes, along with the capacity for reflection and self-consciousness. We shall now see that each one of the

2Ibid., p. 163.
major operations of the mind demands an immaterial faculty. We have already stated that the mind can form universal concepts, but we must now examine the nature of a universal concept. By an universal idea or concept is meant an essence, a meaning, an essential definition, which can be predicated of and found verified in each and every case of that class of beings. We need not predicate the meaning we know (the concept) of every individual, but, since the concept represents what is actually found in every individual, we could so predicate it if we wish. Taking the example of the concept of a "triangle", we can apply it to any triangle regardless of its size, color or exact shape, and regardless of the "stuff" from which it is made. Consequently, our idea of triangle must be immaterial because of itself it has no shape, no size, no material parts, and can be applied of any triangle. Likewise, all such concepts necessarily transcend the power of the senses, of the imagination, and of every other material faculty. Because action follows being, immaterial concepts necessitate the existence of an immaterial mind.

From the fact that the human soul knows the universal nature of things...it follows that it must be immaterial...Otherwise it would be limited to the particular and be incapable of arriving at a knowledge of the universal.

Concerning the second major operation of the mind, judgments also require an immaterial mind because first of all

every judgment contains a universal concept. Secondly, in the act of judging we unite two concepts and affirm or deny that this is the way they are found in the world of things outside the mind. Therefore, every judgment involves the apprehension in an abstract manner of the relation existing between two concepts, that is, between the subject and predicate of the judgment. Now, the understanding of this relation as a relation definitely requires an immaterial mind (operatio sequitur esse). Only an immaterial mind could understand the subject and the predicate as one inasmuch as they are parts of one proposition.

In the process of reasoning, the mind is capable also of proceeding from the understanding of one truth to that of another so as to gain explicit knowledge of another truth implied in the first. In its simplest form, reasoning involves two judgments. First of all, the mind must grasp the relation between the two concepts in each judgment. Then the mind must also comprehend the abstract relation of one judgment to another. Clearly, then, an immaterial mind is needed in order to participate even in the most simple form of reasoning.

Perhaps, one of the finest proofs for the immateriality of the mind may be drawn from the ability of the mind to reflect upon its own conscious states. This ability of reflection can be looked upon as a bending back of ourselves upon

2Koren, op. cit., p. 183.
3Ibid., p. 183.
ourselves acting. Personal experience will confirm reflection as an act of the mind. On the contrary, the "material mind" of the Marxist could never perform such an operation because such a mind would only be matter. Matter cannot reflect, that is, bend back perfectly upon itself because it has extension, namely, parts existing outside of parts. It would be just as impossible for a "material mind" to reflect upon itself as it is for an eye to see itself. Consequently, analysis will reveal that one can not only know an object, one can also reflectively know the very act of knowledge in which he knows. Such complete turning back on itself, perfect reflection, shows the immateriality of the mind.

As of now, it should be perfectly clear that the human mind is immaterial. Throughout all our proofs on the immateriality of the mind, we have utilized the principle that "action follows being", and have proceeded to demonstrate that the actions of the mind are immaterial and abstract in nature and, therefore, must require an immaterial principle from which they flow. How Karl Marx could have overlooked this above basic fact in his Epistemology that the human mind must be immaterial, can only be answered by remembering that Marx was a materialist. A monist of this nature cannot admit anything immaterial because of his prejudice which closes his eyes to the true facts. Such a philosopher can only build his philosophy on false assumptions.

1Hassett, Mitchell, Monan, op. cit., p. 74.
Now that we have proved that the human mind is immaterial, our next concern will be to examine on what condition the mind can assimilate reality. Since things which exist in reality are material, as is evident from experience, then it would seem that an immaterial mind could not know them as such. However, this predicament can be resolved only if the material object loses its material conditions in some way and assumes the nature of the knowing mind. Hence, the mind can know reality only on condition that it be dematerialized. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen gives us a brief summary of the psychology of intellection on the knowledge-process whereby the mind dematerializes its object.

The thing (material object) acts on the sense organs and alters them; the thing is thus present to the sense organs in its action. Modification of sense organs produces a sensible likeness on the sense power; this is called the sensible species. External sensation sets off perception. Thing is perceived as a unified and sensed whole. Perceptual process terminates in a phantasm expressing the thing as sensed and perceived. Since the phantasm represents the thing sensed, it specifies the act of the intellect. But the phantasm cannot activate the intellect, because: (a) Intellect, being spiritual, can only be actualized by a spiritual species. (b) Thing, as present in the phantasm, is present with the conditions proper to its material existence. Active intellect is needed to disengage the intelligible species from the material conditions surrounding it in the phantasm. The intelligible species puts the intellect into act, so that it can operate, and it specifies this act by presenting the thing to the intellect. The intellect operates and thus knows the thing.  

As is evident from the above passage, the mind does not exercise directly its power of dematerialization on the material object itself. It acts directly on an intermediary, known as the phantasm or image. Although this image correctly reflects the object, it is nevertheless a sense-image steeped in matter. Consequently, the reality which it reflects remains only potentially knowable in it.\(^1\) In order for the mind to actually know the object which is only potentially knowable in the phantasm, the agent intellect or abstracting power must dematerialize the phantasm and bring forth its intelligible species which is stripped of all its individuating notes.

The mind now in possession of the form knows the nature of the reality. However, the mind first obtains a universal idea, namely, the essential nature which this object has in common with all other realities of its kind. Therefore, in order to have a knowledge of a singular or individual thing, the mind must reflect back to the object which it knows in a universal and general way, and thereby, know the individual entity as such.

Species lacks individuated matter; therefore, it lacks existence. Intellect can grasp existence of the thing whose species activates it only by reflecting to the phantasm and to sensation where the thing is grasped concretely as it is.\(^2\)

Now we can say that the mind truly knows its object. This act whereby the knower becomes the known, whereby the known

\(^{1}\) McFadden, op. cit., p. 217.
\(^{2}\) Wilhelmsen, op. cit., p. 99.
exists for the knower, is what the Thomists call the act of intentional existing. This act is knowledge itself. The object exists in reality as a material entity, and when it is known, it has a second existence in the mind of the knower known as intentional existence.

Marx completely failed to understand the mind with its power of abstraction. His theory of knowledge contained faulty conclusions because his eyes were closed by his strong determination to be a materialist. However, the Marxian theory of knowledge by its process of analysis and synthesis did come close to the Thomistic position by stating that the mind breaks down the image by analysis, and then reverts to the image by synthesis in order to know reality.

Charles McFadden recounts for us the important consequences resulting from the immateriality of the mind.

Immateriality is, as we have seen, the necessary condition or basis of all knowledge: on the part of the knowable object, it must be dematerialized before it can be actually known; on the part of the knowing mind, it is its power to abstract the immaterial form from the material object and to assimilate it which makes knowledge possible. The presence of an immaterial mind in man directly implies the falsity of two major points in the Marxian theory. For, since there is an immaterial mind in man, there must be an absolute distinction between mind and matter. And, since the process whereby man acquires knowledge is activity of an immaterial nature, it follows that it must be attributed, not to a material "mind", but to an immaterial mind. ¹

Concerning the Marxian statement that truth is whatever

¹McFadden, op. cit., p. 220.
leads to success, and objective practice alone constitutes the criterion of truth. I. M. Bochenski notes that Marx fell into a contradiction when he paralleled the above statement with his copy theory of knowledge.

Marxist epistemology sets itself up as absolute naive realism of the usual empiricist type. The peculiarity of Marxist materialism lies in the fact that it combines this realistic outlook with another one, the pragmatic, (in the non-philosophical sense). From the notion that all contents of our consciousness are determined by our economic needs it follows equally that each social class has its own science and its own philosophy. An independent, non-party science is impossible: the truth is whatever leads to success, and practice alone constitutes the criterion of truth.

Both these theories of knowledge are found side by side in Marxism without anyone trying very hard to harmonize them. The most they will concede is that our knowledge is a striving for the absolute truth, but that for the moment it is simply relative, answering to our needs. Here the theory seems to fall into contradiction, for if the truth were relative to our needs then knowledge could never be a copy of reality -- not even a partial copy.\(^1\)

Before, we terminate this thesis, one last and important consequence of the immateriality of the mind must be discussed in detail. This important consequence is the validity of contemplative knowledge. It will be remembered that Marx flatly refused to admit of any type of knowledge which is divorced from action. His attitude towards contemplative knowledge might be well summed up in two statements: (a) if there be any such thing as contemplative knowledge, it is certainly useless knowledge and (b) it is impossible for us either to prove or disprove the existence of contemplative knowledge. Marx's

\(^1\)Bochenski, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
materialistic philosophy of action and progress quite naturally sees no value in a type of knowledge which does not culminate in progressive action upon the world. Therefore, a Marxian truism is that contemplation or speculation is non-operable. Consequently, man in this system must resign himself to being a machine doomed to forward progress. Lenin resolves this question of contemplative knowledge in the following passage.

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the "this-sidedness" of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or nonreality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.¹

Contemplative knowledge is destroyed by the Marxist because of the false contrast or antithesis he sets up between thought and action. If man had a purely "material mind" then this antithesis would be justified. However, by proving that the mind is immaterial, Thomistic philosophy states that there is no opposition between thought and action. We proved that the mind is superior to, and independent of matter, and consequently, its activity is thought. Thus, St. Thomas regards "thought" as the most intense and vital form of action.

There is a twofold class of action: one which passes out to something beyond...and another which does not pass outwards, but which remains within the agent, as to feel, to understand, to will; by such action nothing outside is changed, but the whole action takes place within the agent.²

¹Lenin, op. cit., p. 111.
²St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 54, a.2.
Therefore, the mind is capable of "immanent action" because it can reflect upon itself and can understand itself. Thus, in opposition to the older Materialism, Marx saved the human mind from its damnation to be purely passive in receiving stimuli from the external world, but he refused to give it its rightful place in the higher life of contemplation. Life "par excellence" was refused to the imprisoned mind.

It is true that man first derives his knowledge from the material world because his mind has an extrinsic dependence for data from the objective world, but, because the mind is an immaterial cognitive power, it is intrinsically independent of material reality in its vital actions. Because of this independence in its vital operations, the mind can contemplate the truths it possesses without externalizing them in action.

Intelligence is capable of an operation which is accomplished without any corporeal organ at all. This is the intellective soul, for intelligence is not effected by a corporeal organ. Consequently, it follows that this principle whereby man understands, namely, the intellective soul, which surpasses the condition of corporeal matter is not wholly encompassed by and merged in matter...This is indicated by its operation, in which corporeal matter has no part.¹

Consequently, since the mind can contemplate truth as an end in itself without externalizing it, the Marxian theory that objective practice is the criterion of truth is easily disproved. The proper object of the mind is the essence or quiddity of a thing, and as soon as the intellect comes in

¹St. Thomas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 68.
contact with its proper object, it immediately ascertains the truth and can act upon it by externalizing it in practice or it can contemplate its truth. Therefore, the mind is capable of both contemplation and action. We might "stand Marx on his head" and say that a thing is not true because it works, but rather it works because it is true. The mind's aptitude to know reality and to seek this knowledge as an end in itself is primary. It is only accidental whether or not knowledge be ordered to operation.

Since man's mind is intrinsically independent of matter in its vital operations and its activities, it is the most perfect of all human activities; hence, it follows that man's natural happiness will consist in leading a life of both contemplation and action. Action is necessary because man is not purely an intellectual being subsisting on contemplation, but must make some of his knowledge operable in order to exist in this world. However, man's supernatural happiness in the life to come will consist entirely in contemplating God his ultimate and final end. This contemplation is truly the highest type of life possible for man.

The last and perfect happiness, which we await in the life to come, consists entirely in contemplation. But imperfect happiness, such as can be had here, consists first and principally in contemplation, but secondarily, in an operation of the practical intellect directing human actions.

2 St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, 1-2, Q. 3, a. 5.
By now, it should be evident to us that Communism is built on illusions. Its whole theory of knowledge is anti-rational and weak. By denying the immateriality of the mind, Marxism has fallen into one contradiction after another, and no reasonable being has an excuse for being a Communist because of it. Because man's mind is immaterial, man is free to contemplate his creator. However, the Marxist would have man only a step higher than the apes because of his so-called "material" mind. Fortunately, Communism must fall from the face of the earth because the truth will conquer in the end since it has reason, facts and history on its side.
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This Thesis has been Approved for the Department of Philosophy

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