

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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MARX, FREUD, AND THE UNDERTAKINGS OF THOUGHT IN THE FUTURE*

There was the young Marx and the old Marx. There was the young Freud and the old Freud. There was Marxism and Marxisms, Freudianism and Freudianisms. There has even been a Freudo-Marxism. One speaks of Freudo-Marxism because it is after a certain level of understanding of Freud that one comes to Marx, in order to bring the two together in an articulated whole which admits of mediations between the two geniuses of reductive analysis of social man and of human society. *Hunger* and social effort to satisfy it, on one hand, *love* and desire aimed at satisfaction, related in an unfathomable way with death, on the

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other, are established as the constituents of the historic and social nature of Man and of humanity in general coming to grips with the great cosmic whole. (Both Marx and Freud seem to have overlooked the Will: the will to power, indeed the will to possess a will. But another, falling between them, included it: Nietzsche.)

Empirical Freudo-Marxism was born, naturally enough, in the German-speaking countries in the twenties. Wilhelm Reich with his writings: *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* (1929), *The Sexual Crisis* (1930), etc. was theoretically the initiator. He was followed by Herbert Marcuse who took up the broken thread with *Eros and Civilisation* (1955), *One-dimensional Man* (1964) etc. But the area of empirical genesis of Freudo-Marxism is none the less the non-topological area of its historical genesis. This is to be found in the *Economico-Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844), by Marx, and in *Malaise in Civilisation* (1929) by Freud, and in the legitimate if not necessary link that one may create between these two fundamental texts, that of the young Marx and that of the ageing Freud. (In general it is the totality of Marx's and Freud's writings which should be subjected to this reading which is both double and unique, this unifying interpretation. Here lies the starting point, and the meeting point.)

The young Marx dwells on the alienation of *Man*, who always lives within *Society*—and the ageing Freud dwells on the sickness of the society, which is always composed of men (among other things). Marx and Freud, both latter-day German-Jewish prophets, scrutinise the secrets of social Man, of human society. In saying that one is oriented in the main towards individual Man, and the other chiefly towards men's society, one is articulating a correct platitude, without adding anything more. Freud and Marx know that historic society is man-constructed, and men are natural and social products; and that Man is from the first formed both by nature and by society. Individual and Society, insofar as they are separate titles, are abstractions, and both Marx and Freud are aware of the fact. So that the perspective of both of them might, however, be extended in its own revealing and operative specificity, it is necessary that each should have clarified in the first place, and often to the detriment of other things, *a view of all that exists*, all that exists being

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such as it is, that is to say, being named, experienced, undergone, acted-upon and transformed by Man—Men, humanity—the passionate and active subject-object.

Marx and Freud belong to the period which began to live through the death of philosophy, historically and systematically completed as such. The third era of philosophy—whose end has not yet come—was and is the modern philosophy of subjectivity: *ego cogito*, the transcendental “I” of Kantian origin, the absolute Hegelian subject. Marx and Freud also belong, consecutively, to the era when science, meaning techno-scientific activities of an economic, historical, political, biological, psychological nature, are replacing philosophy, perfected, although based upon it, often being unaware of this dependency. Thus the one is a thinker and man of science, and the other a scientist who sometimes thinks. The science which is their authority, which they produce, and which they operate with, is integrally imbued with technology. Both are the theorists and practitioners of techno-scientific activity, which aims not at contemplative awareness, but at theoretical knowledge as an efficient and flexible instrument of practical transformation. The one wishes to cure an alienated human society, by means of social revolution and socialism; the other wishes to cure neurotic man by psychoanalytical techniques. Both stay within the framework which takes the *subject* as the centre. This subject, from being an individual and transcendental ego, becomes empirical and collective, in socialising itself; who, from the conscious ego, becomes I, plunged in the depths of the unconscious physicality of the id, source of impulses, and living in terror of a formative super-ego which imposes repressions and behaviour patterns quasi-unconsciously. The one, like the other, even though they are anchored in the historico-global phase of subjectivity which persists through all its fractures, and aims at measuring, calculating and changing objectivity, opens the way already for the by-passing of human subjectivity. In wishing to make known to the ego how biased it is, and to help it to overcome its own narcissism and egoism, in ceasing to feast on their own double, Marx and Freud inflict upon man the third great defeat since Copernicus and Darwin. What this disabused and rehabilitated man will do next, however, remains extremely problematical.

Marx and Freud start from an analysis which aims at locating the source of the trouble; from an articulate analysis of the contemporary human situation. Marx starts from the *economic* alienation (and exploitation) of man who, insofar as he is a worker, is exploited by those who possess the means of production as private property; he dwells on the analysis of the *political* alienation (and repression) where man, as a citizen, divorced from the private individual, is alienated by the state, an instrument of the endowed and dominant class; he goes deeper into an analysis of *anthropological* alienation where, in crucial human relationships, those between the sexes, having come before being, and possession before fulfilment; he arrives at an analysis of *ideological* alienation (and domination) finally; here, religion, poetry and art, politics, philosophy and science reverse the true relations which exist between theory and practice, in presenting a reversed image, which has a consoling purpose and is totally warped. Man's awareness is just as warped as his real nature which determines it. Freud starts from the analysis of the impersonal *id*, the bio-cosmic reservoir of the two basic impulses—eros and thanatos—repressed by the individualised *ego*, more or less, and rather less than more conscious, which in its turn undergoes the repression of the *super-ego*, social in origin, which is the source of the prohibitions and ideals of the ego, and which exercises power thanks to unconscious censorship and idealisation. Thus the free human being, who is healthy and aware, or considered so to be, and who, since the Renaissance, has gone forth to conquer the earth, and risen to challenge heaven, shows himself to be an alienated, exploited, repressed, dominated, unaware and neurotic being. Freud's work with its analytical edifice, is partly built on the terrain which Marx analysed. However, the difficulty remains: how does the individual define himself against the group, and how does collectivity arise from separate individuals?

Coming to grips with this situation, Marx and Freud wish to cure the evils and the malaise, and they put forward their *therapeutic techniques*. Marx calls on the proletariat to suppress private property in a more or less revolutionary way, with the help of the intellectuals in gaining a sense of the situation. This means that society should be socialised by the establishment of socialist communism, a society without class nor state, from which

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no ideological power, whether religious, artistic, aesthetic, or philosophic, would come to cloud the sky from the earth. In this way, the *logos-praxis* which was inherent in human history from the beginning, would be liberated at last, though one must add that it would be in the name of material and revolutionary praxis above all. In this respect, Marx is insanely optimistic, it is said, and believes in a final happy ending, even though, as a thinker with occasional lightning-flashes of intuition, he does not exclude the shadows of a sombre finale. For he goes as far as to envisage the possibility of a kind of communism which would not entail the radical suppression of private property, but of its generalisation. Sometimes Marx appears as the practical materialist that he would wish to be, one who does not manage to shake off the economic yoke, because even the future organisation of communism would be essentially economic; sometimes he is the theoretical idealist that he cannot entirely cease to be, since he admits of a sphere of activity whose place lies beyond material production, where ideas must rule humanity, after the suppression of private property; conscience outweighs the real movement. Thus the unity of *logos-praxis* is far from being envisaged as an effective possibility: it exceeds both the praxis (material) and the logos (theoretical). Freud asks of the sick individual that (aided by the psychoanalyst) he become aware of, and above all that he make an emotional counteraction to, his psychic conflicts, which start with early childhood and the Oedipal triangle—father, mother (or their substitutes) and child—to recognise in infantile frustrations precocious desires, and, further, needs. By going beyond the weight of primitive repressions, and his primary narcissism, which goes with his will to power, the individual will be better able to adopt and control the impulses which emanate from his id, and the regulations which come from his super-ego. In this way, the *eros-thanatos* motive power of human development will be, not entirely liberated, but at least a little better integrated. But the battle between them continues—there is no collective therapy—and the society which can never stop being repressive will continue to repress—more or less, that goes without saying—the impulsive forces of individuals, creating in this way an unbearable malaise of which the outcome is uncertain. In this respect, Freud is wisely pessimistic, it is said, and does not

put faith in a final solution, and happy end to the intra-, and inter-, human conflict. It does not appear that the eros-thanatos harmony need ever be effected, Marx and Freud, under different guises, of course, are the theorists of the non-fulfilment of Man and of history. To Marx, however, all of human history, which he calls prehistory, fundamentally incomplete, would experience its final phase of fulfilment, the end of prehistory. While for Freud, man was a deeply unsatisfied person, who lived much too long in a state of childish dependency, and never knew a final happy fulfilment.

Marx, even more than Freud, remained dependent upon the schema which guided prevalent progressive ways of thinking about human history. Both seem to presuppose a *good past* (something like a thesis or hypothesis or primary position) in which they, however, do not believe, and see in all developing human history a decline towards *evil* (something like an antithesis, a derived negation). Marx thinks that humanity will experience a future which will again be good (something like a synthesis, a negation of the negation which will connect with the past on a higher plane), while Freud, even he tried to do it, does not achieve the third step which one calls dialectic.

For Marx and for Freud, recognised in different ways and/or differently valued, the mythological powers, symbolic, imaginary and fantastical, play an important part in the whole of human history. According to the first, liberated and emancipated human beings would take these unconscious forces under their control, while for the other, they are part of human history and of society. Neither the individual man nor the society as a whole can entirely control this unconscious current—both individual and collective—which sweeps them up and carries them away. The mythological, symbolic, imaginary or fantastic powers which move us, elude us, and only reveal themselves where one does not expect them. Finally, as far as Freud is concerned, as distinct from Marx, there is more in Man and in the world than he can cope with.

On what theoretical or practical basis then, can a correlation between Marx and Freud be made? Cutting through all the structures, it is possible to see—aided or hindered by our wills and more particularly by our ability—how both of them

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developed as theorists belonging to the era of the end of philosophy and of the reign of a crushing subjectivity. They were theoretically dependent upon philosophy, and technoscientifically, they laid an analytical embargo on Man and his history, which was motivated and conditioned by the therapeutic project of practical transformation. In this are they paving the way for man to surpass himself, or are they making a bitter criticism of a particular kind of man, the bourgeois humanist? They do not seem to me to have heard the voice declaring the end of the human race (as such), not his empirical end, but his finishing-off, in a state of deep unreadiness, his limitation and mortal finiteness. It was Nietzsche, after Hegel had spoken of *the end of history*, who heard and spoke the words, *the end of Man*, an end which would occur in the time of the last men, who live for the longest time, and who have invented happiness, having no star left. And Nietzsche was also the visionary seer of the eternal recovery, as everyone knows, which should be considered as temporal, insofar as it is *different*. To understand and relate Marx, and Freud, they must be placed in the Aryan-Jewish star which makes up the dominant constellation of our firmament throughout various informal inquiries, twistings, changes and figurations: the *Hegel-Marx-Nietzsche-Freud-Heidegger* constellation, an all-embracing one which must be specifically understood, individually and as a group, before they can be integrated in a larger, more remote and future constellation of the planetary game.

Hegel shows the negativity at work, a negativity of the times, and the spirit, which poses as the logos-spirit (thesis and position) and becomes alienated in the cosmic universe (antithesis, negation), in order to be reintegrated in the history of the human spirit (synthesis, negation of the negation, and a resumption of the thesis at a higher level) which resumes, rejoins, and develops the dialectic of the spirit, logos, phenomenologically. Hegel's dialectic is at once unitary, trinitary, linear and cyclic, with beginning and end joining. Negativity, alienation, continue to operate in the whole of human history engendering something different every time, and achieving a reconciliation, a satisfaction, and a recollection of all the phenomena of the spirit, at the end (already present) of world history. With Marx, negativity is

essentially historic and social: it is the negativity of human endeavour, which is opposed to nature and sets men at odds, that is to say the classes, between them, create the alienated world of human riches in society which humanity should appropriate collectively after the suppression of private property, of the means of production and of the bureaucratic class of civil servants, which would allow of polytechnical human activity (whether a double or a unique activity) propagating itself materially and spiritually, as a game, in the universal reconciliation. Nietzsche saw in the will to power the greatest manifestation of negativity. It set the whole of human history in motion, and aimed at conquering and governing the planet Earth. It was the will to power that could transform Man into Superman, if he established himself as being capable of taking and experiencing the world, as a game, and not insofar as it makes sense, or, which amounts to the same thing, nonsense, nor as the area of universal frustration or reconciliation. With Freud, negativity is biocosmic and psychological: it is the manifestation of the life-force which seeks to deny what is opposed to it; it is the antagonistic and combined manifestation of death-impulses, which, denying life and love, cause the individual to regress to a stage prior to—and negative to—any movement, and to experience death, which alone is the final reconciliation, if one can call it that, otherwise refused to man. Heidegger sees negation as a manifestation of nothingness which is the essential anti-thesis to Being; it reduces Being and beings to nothing, in a world which has lived for two thousand five hundred years in forgetfulness of Being. The modern man's destiny makes him into a being without fire nor place, without a nation, a wanderer. Sometimes he seems to suggest, very tentatively, that an understanding of Being as a game rather than as a supreme being would open up a new horizon. Is a future reconciliation possible? Heidegger's answer remains ambiguous and ambivalent.

Does the Hegel-Marx-Nietzsche-Freud-Heidegger constellation, where all are not placed on the same level, help us to see the problems of the relationship between Marx and Freud more clearly? It is right that one aims at the economic liberation of alienated Man, who is exploited, repressed, dominated; this emancipation is the key to total liberation. The other aims at a

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relative erotic and aggressive and thanatic liberation. The two aims may be structured and articulated together and this is what gives rise to Freudo-Marxism. Such a synthetic vision remains correct, but common, as does all Freudo-Marxism which does not so much relate Marx *and* Freud, as Marxism and psychoanalysis. This vision is clouded by the overriding modern problem of the couple and the family. The vision demands an extreme degree of fluidification of sexual relations between men and women, and an advanced degree of social responsibility for the raising of children, on the basis of a socialist organisation of the economy and of the society. This is very relevant, either because of or in spite of the fact that it goes against the current. This is a beautiful and generous plan, which answers the most pious wishes of the weary human beings, who, after having suffered so much, would like to achieve social and psychic consolation, namely psychological and sociological. Utopia, the need for a reassuring and eschatological prophesy, and ideological constructions which are always promising a tomorrow which neither yesterday nor today could achieve, are not easily dislodged from the hearts, heads, and livers of human beings. It is not that this double and single emancipation, both economic and social, erotic and human, should not take place. Quite the contrary. But what will it, in its turn, lead to?

We have, almost imperceptibly, passed from our theme of Marx and Freud to a discussion of the Marxist socialist revolution, with its erotic and Freudian implications. For Marx and Freud were not the only ones, but brought about a most effective trivialisation of themselves: Marxism and Freudianism. A triumphant, and if one might put it thus, an institutionalised and official one, suppressed the Marxism which accepted the productive encounter with the most radical of psychoanalyses. This encounter might have been expected to lead to economic and social emancipation coupled with erotic and family emancipation. Instead, after a short interval at the beginning of the Soviet revolution, when free union was allowed, and heritage and the distinction between natural and other children was abolished (a curious distinction at the best of times), there was a return to sacrosanct civil society (of the kind generally described by Hegel in his late work: *Principles of the Philosophy*

of Right) which was still virtually impossible to overcome. It repressed Freudianism; even today, all official and governing Marxists, or those who profess to be official, disclaim psychoanalysis, which is, in their eyes, a pansexualist and individualist ideology, in essence bourgeois. In their turn, almost all the psychoanalysts turned Freudianism into a doctrine and a practice which accommodated existing things to the state. In other words, both Marxism and Freudianism were castrated in the impetus of their projects by the removal of the revolutionary element, as it may be called, as if historic and human reality could no longer be revolutionary, having arrived at the end of history, but was made up of an amalgamation of evolution and reform, which contributed certain correctives to civil bourgeois and petty-bourgeois society, generalised to embrace the whole planet (and maybe in the future other planets as well). It is as if, or excepting the fact that, Marx and Freud's original impetus was not so dawning, so new, or so pure: one can be sure that one does not mean this in the ethical sense, but in the sense that the impulse found itself carried along by another current which came from a greater distance, and travelled further.

Thus it was foreseeable that epigones should go astray where the Titans had failed. What, then, did the empirical Freudo-Marxists do? On the basis of Marx's liberating programme, whose vital aims had become invisible to them, they erected Freud's emancipatory programme, denying, as was necessary, the disturbing death-vibrations, advocating a happily Freudo-Marxist society which would be the happy end of world history. Freudo-Marxism, animated by the best intentions in the world, still remains limited in conception: it was and is not true to Man, or society, or the world, even though it puts forward sensible ideas, most of which were to become effective in approximation and compromise. Today it is a militant ideology: Freudo-Marxism tends to castrate the star of its five beams, removing from the rest of the star the two "privileged penes", the Marxist and Freudian ones, and castrating them as well. And so the world goes on crutches, and castrated.

The Marxists, left to their own devices, turned historic Marxism into a dogmatic, orthodox, official, challenging and rather hysterical doctrine, and started various pretty fantastic kinds of neo-Marxism which were taken up at different times, put

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themselves forward in turn in connection with, or mixed up with, the theory of Marxism, or its practice, or claimed to have achieved a dialectic unity, or upheld the politics of the best and the worst, spoke of concrete efficacy or of fidelity to abstract principles, of science, etc., etc. The Freudians, who had also remained isolated, employed psychoanalysis, sometimes in a conformist way, sometimes more negatively, and turned it into a theory, a technique, a language, a lucrative way of making a living. They experienced schisms, some repeated, groups, subgroups. Whether one wishes it or not, that is to say, whether one wishes to accept it or not, Marxism, the most incisive form of sociology in our time, and psychoanalysis, the most incisive form of psychology in our time, lived then, and will continue to live, conditioned by whatever determines them, and, which they will not manage to grasp, that thing from which their conquests and their setbacks derive. And the way in which Marxism and Freudianism expressed themselves still remained unexplored.

The difficulties encountered by Freudo-Marxism go back to Freud and Marx themselves, even when they do not recognise the fact. For Marx and Freud continued the whole dualist tradition of Western metaphysics, whether by reversing it and helping to exhaust its possibilities, or whether by claiming to have a unitary way of thinking. By subordinating the "ideal" world to the "real" world, they reversed the relationship between the "two" worlds, but were still dependent on that reversed relationship; this is what they did both with materialism, and with idealism. For them there were only soluble problems, and so they stopped short before impossible tasks. Since they considered all existence to be thinkable, and to be the object of human representation and action (objective), they emptied out the problem of the unthinkable and even of the unthought, and thus contributed to a finalisation, an exhaustion, of philosophic thought, for which nothing remained to be seized, since everything became an object of science and of the technique which happened to be in the ascendant on the planet. 'Being' had been brought to mean 'that which is extant, which in its turn came to mean 'substance,' which then came to mean 'the subject.' The subject was brought back to collectivity and unconscious forces, the subject-object of techno-scientific activities, and/or of the

unfolding of the imaginary. Thought, which was not philosophic either, could resume its rights, and, having taken one step back, could start marching again. And this not only insofar as it was theoretical thinking alone, since this subsumption of thought to the only theory takes place within the theory and practice distinction, and depends upon a technical interpretation of thought. Thus, in the middle of the reign of technology, the reign of Marxist and Freudian ideology was also consolidated. Marx and Freud, Marxism and psychoanalysis, however, could not avoid their fate; to become integrated, to see themselves taken on in a vaster and richer mode of thought which would know how to play the game of absolute knowledge.



One can demand that people see things double now; according to Marx, and according to Freud. It is even necessary to insist on this, it is not asking very much. The whole question still remains, however, and it concerns the united thought and its future aims. Between whiles, other games will appear: interpreting Marxism in a Marxist light, as well as in a psychoanalytic light; interpreting psychoanalysis in a psychoanalytical light as well as in a Marxist light; interpreting Freudo-Marxism in a Marxist light and in a psychoanalytical one. These fashionable games are all part of the combinative game which will be the favourite of the future. So you can invent other possibilities equally successfully.

Is the question, then, a matter of restoring Marx and Marxism (theoretical and applied), and Freud and Freudianism (theoretical and practised), to their essential *truth*, singly and together, and gaining a clear grasp of their historic world presence—a presence which seeks to cure omission—and communicate in a productive and questioning way with them as they appear, purged of false adjuncts? We are only just beginning to reach the centre of the problem. It shows itself, at last, to be a protean one. For the freeing of the truth in Marx and Freud—and in Marxism and psychoanalysis, would mean bringing them back to a much more basic *wandering*, a movement, which is based on nothing, but which assimilates and gives rise to substructures

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and meanings. Both Marx and Freud and their breed believe in reality for all they are worth. Bringing them back to reality would mean—over and above any universe of signs which would be proofs of representation—to bring them back to that wandering state of which they are a constituent. This state permits of the appearance and disappearance of truths, acting as pointers of its itinerant route. Any presence refers to an absence, and neither presence nor absence exist anymore. Philosophy, which is synonymous with metaphysics, not academic metaphysics, but the metaphysics of our understanding and metaphysical experience of the world, postulates the true being as a presence, a presence which conquers time, a presence, or, which comes to the same thing, an absence, which is perceived, felt, and thought of in and through conceptual or representative thought. Those who followed after the end of philosophy, as defined by Hegel, notably Marx and Freud, still operated with and upon presence, deplored absences, and grasped beings and things, whether spiritual, natural, human, or historical, by means of representation, and attempted to project something above and beyond what is, representatively. But how would it turn out if, at the continuous end of philosophy, of man, and of history, over and above any dictatorial and/or democratic dominion of presence, or any nostalgia aroused by absence, whether of the divine or the human, beyond the confines of representation whether it be realistic or idealistic, which is already narrow and saturated, truth-truly, reality-really, became what they really are, although they have never fully been this: to wit, the *constellations of unfixity*, those obscure ways it has of showing itself, and our constantly clumsy grasp of it, the various modes of existence of a being which does not exist, time always being taken as a three-dimensional whole, while it is unfolding, in short, the constellations of being, which are obstructed, and of time, which is enigmatic, and of totality, which is divided and split, and of the game without a player, and the world, never given in its entirety? There is a train of thought upon which it has devolved to say *That*. This is really the same thing as *Same*, and although it is necessary, the thought does not find an echo. It will not have to exercise an influence upon the techno-scientific world, or the world's current way of being, thinking, and acting.

Indissolubly both thought and experience at once, it is always attentive to the smallest detail, without losing itself in generalities. The contemporary world no longer needs philosophic thought, since it already relies on an existing philosophy, and is frenziedly galvanised as a result of it. One wonders whether that mode of thought which has a future and which lies hidden within the dissimulating present, that is to say, methodical, unitary and polyscopic thought, which announces the future from the depths of the present, and which is a mode of thought which speaks and thinks on a planetary level, and renders explicit a whole problematical ethic, will pass by like a meteorite, or whether it will build some historic and human resting place for itself.

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