

# Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

## Introductory note

Marx (1818–1883) and Engels (1820–1895) first met in Cologne in 1842, but their most productive working period was in Britain from 1845 on, in both Manchester and London. These extracts from *The German Ideology* (written, 1845–46; published, 1932) illustrate what they regarded as a materialist view of history in their first large-scale attempt to formulate the bases of their disagreement with the ideas of G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) and his imitators, the young Hegelians. Principally in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Hegel had conceived of the historical process as the working out of a dialectic whereby meaning and truth are never fixed entities, but are rather staging posts in a progress towards a basic unity or *Geist* ('Spirit') when there would be an absolute knowledge that the world was really an emanation of spiritual understanding or contemplation. Reason is an important tool in this, but it is only that: *Geist* is the highest form of enlightenment, and its attainment is the goal of all historical striving, a process of periodic *Aufhebung*, or upheaval/cancellation that introduces emergent social forms amidst residual practices – but the motive force is thought guided by reason.

This reassuring sense of history, that it is a record of gradual improvement as Man develops an awareness of others, reflected well on much of the nineteenth-century's rapid material progress, yet Marx and Engels were more struck by the unequal distribution of its benefits, and that history seemed to provide more of an account of material struggle and occasional decline. The theory of history they favoured is most clearly expressed in the Preface to Marx's *A Critique of Political Economy* (1858–59), where a consideration of 'material conditions of life' is a way of understanding many abstract and apparently separate beliefs: 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.' Furthermore, in order to be socially and materially productive (in 'the social production of their life'), Man enters into 'definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will' (*Karl Marx: selected writings*, ed. David McLellan [1977], p. 389) The basic – and systemic – economy of life, how one produces and under what conditions, is the prime motive force, refracted within superstructural prohibitions and supposed freedoms allowed by legal and educational systems as well as religious codes. The Base determines human behaviour in ways that are often hidden from individuals by superstructural forces that give the impression that they are open to change and evolution; if they are, then their effect will not be significantly different so long as

the capitalist system prevails. In many of the writings collected together in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (first pub. in 1932; trans. 1959), it is clear that Marx was struck by the alienation that the working classes experienced, a desperation so deep that it created a hopelessness about any changes to their condition. Appropriating the work of Ludwig Feuerbach, most consistently his views in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), Marx and Engels drew a clear line between their investigations and the Enlightenment faith in rational self-improvement, noted in Rousseau and Condorcet as well as Feuerbach. The object of philosophy is to have a material effect on the conditions of life, not to accustom men and women to their lot. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) and *Capital* (vol. 1: 1867; trans. 1886; vols. 2 and 3: 1885, 1894 [ed. Engels]; trans. 1907, 1909), Marx and Engels developed their sense of the workings of ideology, its inevitable and pervasively restraining forces of containment. In short, history moves forward towards an eventual overthrow of this system through a process of dialectical materialism, that is, a set of antithetical turns, action and reaction, all conditioned ultimately by materialist concerns – and not in accordance with a rational and incremental grasp of the situation, where individuals can be sure to determine the course of events.

*The German Ideology* never found a publisher in its authors' lifetimes. (It eventually appeared in 1932.) It is a clear expression of just what the 'realism' of their undertaking might be, how investigations should start at those social relations that determine how artists produce art, how it is distributed, how it is read or seen, and how it reflects a relationship to prevailing ideology. To this end, art can never be disinterested or simply created for its own sake. Artists may indeed believe that, but a materialist analysis will show that that is a faith that rarely survives the study or studio. Artworks have a place in a real world, and even the most spiritual sentiments take a particular form in it, derived from actual labour in its production. Raymond Williams was to extend this sense of materialist perspective to the practice of imaginative creation; the book is a product, part mental, part physical, and its presence in the canon (now) and on the bookshelves then as now, is not an effect of natural selection, but rather the effect of certain interests (see his 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' [1973]). The raw materials for artistic production are transindividual, even if expressed in an apparently original way: 'we have to break from the common procedure of isolating the object and then discovering its components. On the contrary, we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions' (*Problems in Materialism and Culture* [1980], p. 47). The most significant works are, therefore, not simply those that deploy strikingly original or complex art, but those that allow readers or spectators to realize the specificity of their historical situation and that strengthen a belief in collective human action and possibility.

### Cross-references

- 7 Fanon
- 9 Brecht
- 15 Foucault
- 18 Williams
- 21 Said

33 Jameson

48 Eagleton

### Commentary

Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (1965; trans. 1969)

Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in his *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1970; trans. 1971)

Raymond Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' – first given as a lecture in Montreal in 1973, then written up for *The New Left Review*, 82, (Nov.–Dec., 1973), and reprinted in Williams's *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (1980), pp. 31–49

Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (1977)

Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: narrative as a socially symbolic act* (1981)

Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: an introduction* (1991), especially pp. 63–91

William Adams, 'Aesthetics: liberating the senses', in Terrell Carver (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Marx* (1991), pp. 246–74

Alex Callinicos, *Making History: agency, structure and change in social theory* (2004)

Ross Abbinnett, *Marxism after Modernity: politics, technology and social transformation* (2006)

## The German Ideology

### PREFACE

Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts. Let us teach men, says one, to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man; says the second, to take up a critical attitude to them; says the third, to knock them out of their heads; and – existing reality will collapse.

These innocent and childlike fancies are the kernel of the modern Young Hegelian philosophy,<sup>1</sup> which not only is received by the German public with horror and awe, but is announced by our philosophic heroes with the solemn consciousness of its cataclysmic dangerousness and criminal ruthlessness. The first volume of the present publication has the aim of unclinking these sheep, who take themselves and are taken for wolves; of showing how their bleating merely imitates in a philosophic form the conceptions of the German middle class; how the boasting of these philosophic commentators only mirrors

<sup>1</sup> Exemplified by Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) and Max Stirner's *The Ego and its Own* (1844), the Young Hegelians regarded human action as the result of an unfolding of mind or spirit (*Geist*), a potential that, eventually, could be said to guide all action and material development.

the wretchedness of the real conditions in Germany. It is its aim to debunk and discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality, which appeals to the dreamy and muddled German nation.

Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. His whole life long he fought against the illusion of gravity, of whose harmful results all statistics brought him new and manifold evidence. This honest fellow was the type of the new revolutionary philosophers in Germany. . . .

### THE PREMISES OF THE MATERIALIST METHOD

The premisses from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premisses from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premisses can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premiss of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself – geological, oro-hydrographical, climatic, and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.

This production only makes its appearance with the increase of population. In its turn this presupposes the intercourse of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production.

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour, and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognized. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to

which the division of labour has been carried.<sup>2</sup> Each new productive force, in so far as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known (for instance the bringing into cultivation of fresh land), causes a further development of the division of labour.

The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labour. At the same time, through the division of labour inside these various branches there develop various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labour. The relative position of these individual groups is determined by the methods employed in agriculture, industry, and commerce (patriarchalism, slavery, estates, classes). These same conditions are to be seen (given a more developed intercourse) in the relations of different nations to one another.

The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership, i.e. the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labour.

The first form of ownership is tribal ownership. It corresponds to the undeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by the rearing of beasts, or, in the highest stage, agriculture. In the latter case it presupposes a great mass of uncultivated stretches of land. The division of labour is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the natural division of labour existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves. The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, both of war and of barter.

The second form is the ancient communal and State ownership which proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a city by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Beside communal ownership we already find movable, and later also immovable, private property developing, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal ownership. The citizens hold power over their labouring slaves only in their community, and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal ownership. It is the communal private property which compels the active citizens to remain in this spontaneously derived form of association over against their slaves. For this reason the whole structure of society based on this communal ownership, and with it the power of the people, decays in the same measure as, in particular, immovable private property evolves. The division of labour is already more developed. We already find the antagonism of town and country; later the antagonism between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests, and inside the towns themselves the antagonism between industry and maritime commerce. The class relation between citizens and slaves is now completely developed.

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<sup>2</sup> Marx's explanation, here, suggests a rather more predictable evolution of capitalism, yet it is in the nature of all dialectical theories of history that there may be unpredictable clashes of interest along the way. Crucially, the gradual divorce of the particular form of labour in which one is involved from the self is fostered by market capitalism; see section 3, 'The Method of Political Economy', in the *Grundrisse* (1857–58).

With the development of private property, we find here for the first time the same conditions which we shall find again, only on a more extensive scale, with modern private property. On the one hand, the concentration of private property, which began very early in Rome (as the Licinian agrarian law proves)<sup>3</sup> and proceeded very rapidly from the time of the civil wars and especially under the Emperors; on the other hand, coupled with this, the transformation of the plebeian small peasantry into a proletariat, which, however, owing to its intermediate position between propertied citizens and slaves, never achieved an independent development.

The third form of ownership is feudal or estate property. If antiquity started out from the town and its little territory, the Middle Ages started out from the country. This differing starting-point was determined by the sparseness of the population at that time, which was scattered over a large area and which received no large increase from the conquerors. In contrast to Greece and Rome, feudal development at the outset, therefore, extends over a much wider territory, prepared by the Roman conquests and the spread of agriculture at first associated with it. The last centuries of the declining Roman Empire and its conquest by the barbarians destroyed a number of productive forces; agriculture had declined, industry had decayed for want of a market, trade had died out or been violently suspended, the rural and urban population had decreased. From these conditions and the mode of organization of the conquest determined by them, feudal property developed under the influence of the Germanic military constitution. Like tribal and communal ownership, it is based again on a community; but the directly producing class standing over against it is not, as in the case of the ancient community, the slaves, but the enserfed small peasantry. As soon as feudalism is fully developed, there also arises antagonism towards the towns. The hierarchical structure of landownership, and the armed bodies of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs. This feudal organization was, just as much as the ancient communal ownership, an association against a subjected producing class; but the form of association and the relation to the direct producers were different because of the different conditions of production.

This feudal system of landownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organization of trades. Here property consisted chiefly in the labour of each individual person. The necessity for association against the organized robber barons, the need for communal covered markets in an age when the industrialist was at the same time a merchant, the growing competition of the escaped serfs swarming into the rising towns, the feudal structure of the whole country: these combined to bring about the guilds. The gradually accumulated small capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country.

Thus the chief form of property during the feudal epoch consisted on the one hand of landed property with serf labour chained to it, and on the other of the labour of the individual with small capital commanding the labour of journeymen. The organization of both was determined by the restricted conditions of production – the small-scale and

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<sup>3</sup> The Licinian Rogations (376–367 B.C.) aimed to lessen the gap between plebeians and patricians by admitting the former to some consular powers, even the office of consul itself, and also inaugurated a process of land-sharing and small-scale land owning.

primitive cultivation of the land and the craft type of industry. There was little division of labour in the heyday of feudalism. Each country bore in itself the antithesis of town and country; the division into estates was certainly strongly marked; but apart from the differentiation of princes, nobility, clergy, and peasants in the country, and masters, journeymen, apprentices, and soon also the rabble of casual labourers in the towns, no division of importance took place. In agriculture it was rendered difficult by the strip-system, beside which the cottage industry of the peasants themselves emerged. In industry there was no division of labour at all in the individual trades themselves, and very little between them. The separation of industry and commerce was found already in existence in older towns; in the newer it only developed later, when the towns entered into mutual relations.

The grouping of larger territories into feudal kingdoms was a necessity for the landed nobility as for the towns. The organization of the ruling class, the nobility, had, therefore, everywhere a monarch at its head.

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production.<sup>4</sup> The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are, i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions, and conditions independent of their will.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.<sup>5</sup>

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to

<sup>4</sup> Another swipe at the Young Hegelians, yet at the cost of relegating ideology to a mere set of reflexes and reactions. Note, also, the struggle in defining the empirical: is it just a synonym for the real, or a statistical, and thus factual, record? See below, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> The *camera obscura* image has often been portrayed as a rather mechanical figure, whereby a simple inversion of the Hegelian perspective would produce a more realistic sense of how society and history operate. Marx was to grant ideology rather more power in *A Critique of Political Economy* (1859): ideology is not simply a false consciousness, as it provides an inevitable forum and basis for a struggle of ideas, the end of which is to render the human subject as active and self-forming.

arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premisses. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting-point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as their consciousness.

This method of approach is not devoid of premisses. It starts out from the real premisses and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premisses are men, not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity,<sup>6</sup> but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

Where speculation ends – in real life – there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men. Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history. On the contrary, our difficulties begin only when we set about the observation and the arrangement – the real depiction – of our historical material, whether of a past epoch or of the present. The removal of these difficulties is governed by premisses which it is quite impossible to state here, but which only the study of the actual life-process and the activity of the individuals of each epoch will make evident. We shall select here some of these abstractions, which we use in contradistinction to the ideologists, and shall illustrate them by historical examples.

Since we are dealing with the Germans, who are devoid of premisses, we must begin by stating the first premiss of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premiss, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to ‘make history’. But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing, and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life. Even when the sensuous world

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<sup>6</sup> i.e. Man cannot exist in a sphere of ideas alone.



is reduced to a minimum, to a stick as with Saint Bruno,<sup>7</sup> it presupposes the action of producing the stick. Therefore in any interpretation of history one has first of all to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance. It is well known that the Germans have never done this, and they have never, therefore, had an earthly basis for history and consequently never an historian. The French and the English, even if they have conceived the relation of this fact with so-called history only in an extremely one-sided fashion, particularly as long as they remained in the toils of political ideology, have nevertheless made the first attempts to give the writing of history a materialistic basis by being the first to write histories of civil society, of commerce and industry.

The second point is that the satisfaction of the first need (the action of satisfying, and the instrument of satisfaction which has been acquired) leads to new needs; and this production of new needs is the first historical act. Here we recognize immediately the spiritual ancestry of the great historical wisdom of the Germans who, when they run out of positive material and when they can serve up neither theological nor political nor literary rubbish, assert that this is not history at all, but the 'prehistoric era'. They do not, however, enlighten us as to how we proceed from this nonsensical 'prehistory' to history proper; although, on the other hand, in their historical speculation they seize upon this 'prehistory' with especial eagerness because they imagine themselves safe there from interference on the part of 'crude facts', and, at the same time, because there they can give full rein to their speculative impulse and set up and knock down hypotheses by the thousand.

The third circumstance which, from the very outset, enters into historical development, is that men, who daily remake their own life, begin to make other men, to propagate their kind: the relation between man and woman, parents and children, the family.<sup>8</sup> The family, which to begin with is the only social relationship, becomes later, when increased needs create new social relations and the increased population new needs, a subordinate one (except in Germany), and must then be treated and analysed according to the existing empirical data, not according to 'the concept of the family', as is the custom in Germany. These three aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as three different stages, but just as three aspects or, to make it clear to the Germans,<sup>9</sup> three 'moments', which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today.

The production of life, both of one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social, relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter

<sup>7</sup> The founder of the Carthusian order, dedicated to an austere and self-sacrificing life. St. Hugh of Grenoble helped him plus six others to found their first hermitage on the wooded slopes of Chartreuse. They later moved to Torre in Calabria.

<sup>8</sup> Marx and Engels were at pains to differentiate the bourgeois concept of the family, which encouraged its members to be a series of functions (as wife or marriageable commodity or future wage-earner) from the most revered of relations that opposes capitalistic exploitation. See section II ('Proletarians and Communists') of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848).

<sup>9</sup> Marx and Engels both wanted to answer Stirner's view that, in fact, they were disciples of Feuerbach. In that they shared with him a reliance on a dialectical explanation of historical change, there are similarities, but this extract takes issue with the widespread idealism that was coming to typify German thought.

under what conditions, in what manner, and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force'. Further, that the multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society, hence, that the 'history of humanity' must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange. But it is also clear how in Germany it is impossible to write this sort of history, because the Germans lack not only the necessary power of comprehension and the material but also the 'evidence of their senses', for across the Rhine you cannot have any experience of these things since history has stopped happening. Thus it is quite obvious from the start that there exists a materialistic connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production, and which is as old as men themselves. This connection is ever taking on new forms, and thus presents a 'history' independently of the existence of any political or religious nonsense which in addition may hold men together.

Only now, after having considered four moments, four aspects of the primary historical relationships, do we find that man also possesses 'consciousness', but, even so, not inherent, not 'pure' consciousness. From the start the 'spirit' is afflicted with the curse of being 'burdened' with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into 'relations' with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness concerning the immediate sensuous environment and consciousness of the limited connection with other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. At the same time it is consciousness of nature, which first appears to men as a completely alien, all-powerful, and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beasts; it is thus a purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion) just because nature is as yet hardly modified historically. (We see here immediately that this natural religion or this particular relation of men to nature is determined by the form of society and vice versa. Here, as everywhere, the identity of nature and man appears in such a way that the restricted relation of men to nature determines their restricted relation to one another, and their restricted relation to one another determines men's restricted relation to nature.) On the other hand, man's consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him is the beginning of the consciousness that he is living in society at all. This beginning is as animal as social life itself at this stage. It is mere herd-consciousness, and at this point man is only distinguished from sheep by the fact that with him consciousness takes the place of instinct or that his instinct is a conscious one. This sheep-like or tribal consciousness receives its further development and extension through increased productivity, the increase of needs, and, what is fundamental to both of these, the increase of population. With these there develops the division of labour, which was originally nothing but the division of labour in the sexual act, then that division of labour which develops spontaneously or 'naturally' by virtue of natural predisposition (e.g. physical strength), needs, accidents, etc. etc. Division

of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears. (The first form of ideologists, priests, is concurrent.) From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. But even if this theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. comes into contradiction with the existing relations, this can only occur because existing social relations have come into contradiction with existing forces of production; this, moreover, can also occur in a particular national sphere of relations through the appearance of the contradiction, not within the national orbit, but between this national consciousness and the practice of other nations, i.e. between the national and the general consciousness of a nation (as we see it now in Germany).

Moreover, it is quite immaterial what consciousness starts to do on its own: out of all such muck we get only the one inference that these three moments, the forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness, can and must come into contradiction with one another, because the division of labour implies the possibility, nay the fact, that intellectual and material activity – enjoyment and labour, production and consumption – devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labour. It is self-evident, moreover, that 'spectres', 'bonds', 'the higher being', 'concept', 'scruple', are merely the idealistic, spiritual expression, the conception apparently of the isolated individual, the image of very empirical fetters and limitations, within which the mode of production of life and the form of intercourse coupled with it move.