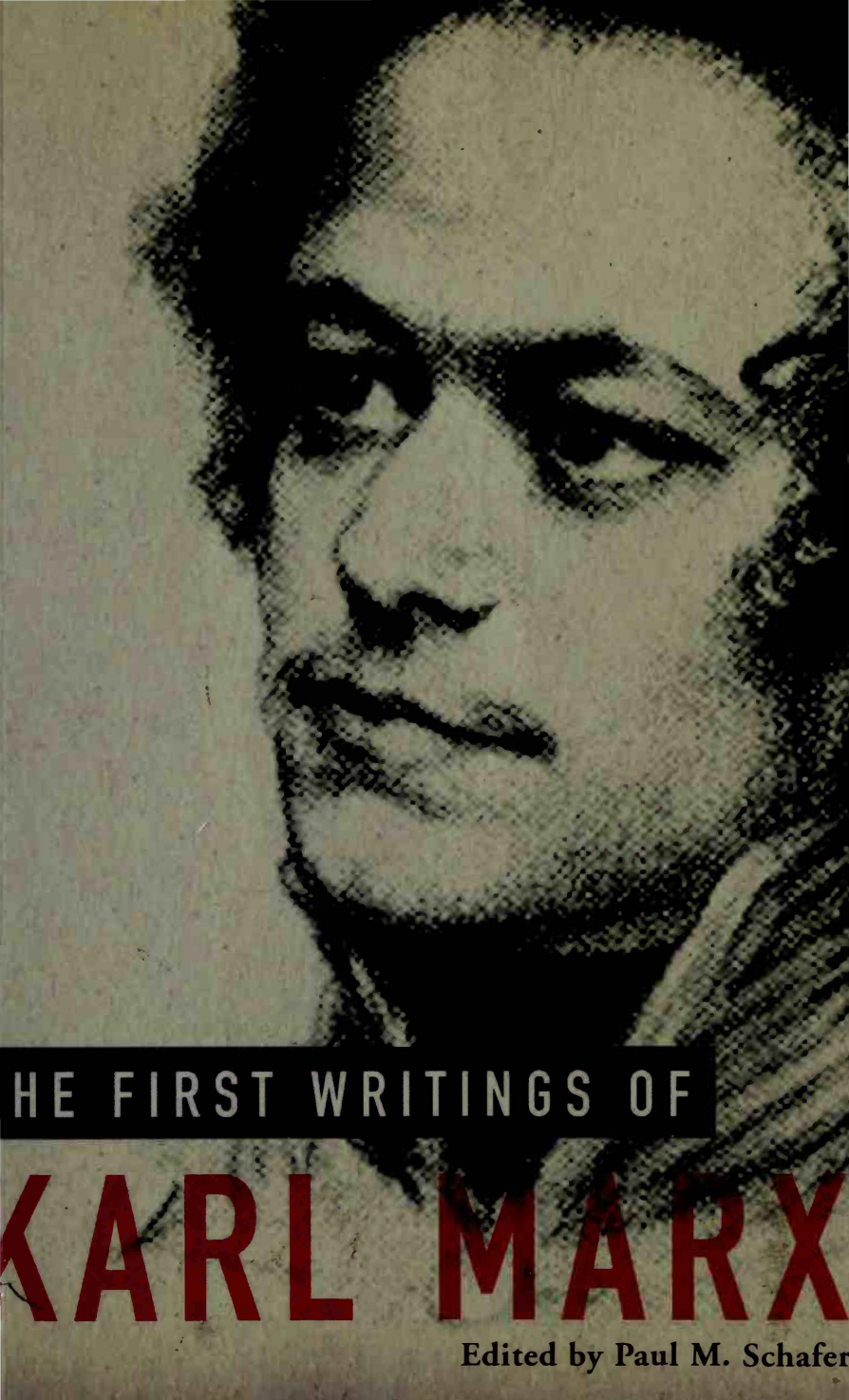

HE FIRST WRITINGS OF

KARL MARX

Edited by Paul M. Schafer

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Brooklyn, New York

Printed in Columbia
First edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Ig Publishing
178 Clinton Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205

www.igpub.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Marx, Karl.
The first writings of Karx Marx / by Karl Marx ; edited by Paul M. Schafer.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN-13: 978-0-9771972-2-4
ISBN-10: 0-9771972-2-0
1. Democritus. 2. Epicurus. 3. Philosophy, Ancient. I. Schafer, Paul M., 1965- II. Title.
B3305.M72E5 2006
182'.7—dc22

2006016309

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The First Writings of Karl Marx is the first complete single-volume edition of Karl Marx's doctoral dissertation to appear in English. It includes the full text of Marx's dissertation, and is accompanied by a small selection of his correspondence from the same period (1836–1841), as well as selections from the philosophical notebooks he prepared in advance of the dissertation. Taken together, these materials comprise the earliest period of Marx's intellectual life, and offer a detailed portrait of the genesis of his philosophical worldview. The Marx who emerges in these writings is a precocious, fiercely passionate student who, at the University of Berlin, found himself in the midst of the most fertile and contentious philosophical scene in Europe in the 1830's and 40's. Despite their youthfulness, these writings are lit with ambition. They were conceived in the spirit of Hegelian dialectical philosophy, yet muster intellectual force all their own; it is no exaggeration to claim that they contain the seeds of Marx's mature system of historical materialism.

Aside from the inclusion of a couple of letters written shortly after his departure from the university, all the materials in this volume were composed between 1837 and 1841 when Marx was a student in Berlin. The centerpiece of our edition is the dissertation itself: a short and densely written text devoted to a comparative analysis of the atom theories of Democritus and Epicurus. Marx submitted his finished treatise in early April 1841 to the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Jena, whose members warmly endorsed it, and he was awarded a doctoral degree *in absentia* on April 15, 1841.

The present volume also includes selections from the so–called *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy*, which Marx

prepared during the several years he spent researching ancient philosophy for his dissertation. The *Notebooks* are comprised of extensive quotations from the various texts Marx used to conduct his research, along with his interpolations and analysis of them. Though much of their substance is raw academic research and of only marginal interest today, the notebooks are sprinkled with philosophical insights, and they contain a number of fascinating digressions. As such, they offer a perspective on the machinations of Marx's mind, and help us as well to make out the broad contours of his nascent philosophical worldview. Additionally, our edition puts in the hands of the reader a number of letters written by Marx during this period. Among these is a long and detailed letter the young scholar wrote to his father in November 1837, at the conclusion of his first year of study in Berlin. Perhaps more than anything he ever wrote, this letter offers a portrait of Marx's mind at work. In fascinating detail, it describes the emotional and intellectual vicissitudes of a yearlong intellectual odyssey that culminated with his conversion to the dialectical philosophy of Hegel. We have included as well two letters addressed to Marx in Berlin from his father and a couple of Marx's own letters from the first part of 1841, when he was deciding the post-graduate course of his life.

The text of the dissertation was not published during Marx's lifetime, though he had planned to do so a couple of times shortly after his graduation, before deciding that the political climate in an increasingly reactionary Prussia would not allow him to pursue the academic career he had been hoping for. Most of the dissertation's text first appeared in a 1902 German edition prepared by Franz Mehring, which collected some of Marx's lesser known literary works. The full text, including the *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy*, was published in the first volume of the momentous *Marx/Engels His-*

torisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe in 1927, which also included Marx's critical commentary on Hegel's philosophy of the modern state. Unfortunately we do not possess the entire text of the dissertation; neither the last two chapters of the dissertation's first part nor the Appendix are extant. From these sections only a small fragment from Marx's notes to the missing fourth chapter, and two fragments from the Appendix have been preserved. All of these are included in the present edition.

A near-complete English translation of Marx's doctoral dissertation appeared as the appendix to a 1967 monograph by Norman D. Livergood, entitled *Activity in Marx's Philosophy*. Bits and pieces of the dissertation and (more commonly) of the *Epicurean Notebooks* have appeared in various English editions over the years, but before the appearance of the present book, readers would have needed to turn to the first volume of the *Marx-Engels Collected Works* to have all of Marx's student writings under a single cover. Scholars may still turn there, if they wish, though it is no longer so easy to find individual copies of the *Collected Works*, and at over 800 pages the first volume is rather cumbersome. Nonetheless, the book now open in the reader's hands has not only utilized the excellent translations of the *Collected Works*, it has also taken advantage of its critical apparatus, which remains a reliable source of Marxian scholarship. My own contribution to this slender volume has been limited to composing the *Editor's Introduction*, which follows these opening words, selecting the dissertation-related writings that are included here, and translating several of the letters.

Finally, I'd like to offer thanks to my former teachers at DePaul University, who encouraged me to take up the topic of Marx's first writings in my doctoral dissertation—to Peg Birmingham, Bill Martin, Angelica Nuzzo, and, most of all, to Stephen Houlgate.

Paul M. Schafer

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I

The first blow struck by Karl Marx in the construction of a master-work of intellectual and historical magnitude, a synthesis of ideas on which he worked his entire life and which became the basis for revolutionary programs of thought and action around the world, occurred when he was a student at the University of Berlin. A precocious and inspired teenager with only eighteen years of life's experiences under his belt, including a wild and indulgent previous year at the University of Bonn, Marx arrived at the Prussian capital in October of 1836.[1] He was freshly (and secretly) engaged to his childhood sweetheart Jenny von Westphalen, who would remain in their Rhineland hometown of Trier until wedding bells rang in the summer of 1843. His head was filled with esoteric romantic poetry, and his ears were ringing with the advice of a father concerned that his son might repeat the prodigal mistakes of Bonn. He didn't. It was a remarkable time for the budding radical, a fresh start, and he met its challenge with a ferocious burst of energy. In the four and a half years between his matriculation at the university and the completion of his doctoral dissertation in early 1841, Marx threw himself into the fertile intellectual life of Berlin. He read and wrote furiously. He laid poetry

1. Notoriously, Marx was arrested for drunken disturbance of the peace after a particularly raucous evening in Bonn spent carousing with members of the student club he belonged to. On another occasion Marx was cut above the eye during a duel with some Prussian aristocrats with whom university students had a running feud. After hearing of these events and observing his son's extravagant expenses, Heinrich Marx decided that one year was enough at Bonn, and had his son transferred to Berlin.

aside and shifted his academic focus from law to philosophy. He experienced an emotionally intense conversion to the dialectical philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, whose ideas still dominated Berlin intellectual discussions at the turn of the decade, though Hegel had died in 1831. He became a prominent member of a student-faculty club devoted to radical interpretations of Hegel's philosophy. And from out of this maelstrom of ideas and experiences, unperturbed, with the painstaking dedication to intellectual work that would characterize his entire life, Marx produced a work of original philosophy.

That work, Marx's doctoral dissertation, does not seem terribly promising on the surface. Its title, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature," is as uninspiring now as it was then, and reminds us of the countless academic exercises undertaken every year by novice philosophers carrying out the initiation rites of the discipline. Turn to a random page of the present volume, read a few lines, and even the most curious reader may be convinced that this dense little book is nothing more than an exercise of academic pedantry. Not only is it composed in the opaque, dialectical style of the Hegelian School, but the topic itself is obscure and utterly devoid of social or political content, hardly what one would expect from a young man by the name of Karl Marx. Indeed, as the title suggests, the dissertation is a work of comparative natural philosophy. Beginning with a brief study of their respective scientific temperaments, it examines the difference between the atom theories of Epicurus and Democritus. Marx preferred the Epicurean theory because it attributes a swerving motion to the atom; in his mind, this inexplicable movement is what distinguishes Epicurean atomism from other materialist philosophies, including

that of Democritus. It suggests that the matter composing the natural world is something more than just a complex arrangement of parts, that there is a kind of self-generating vitality at its root. Most of the dissertation is devoted to analyzing the atom's defining qualities, among which are motion, size, weight, and time. In each case, Marx deftly sorts through the opinions of ancient and modern writers, marshalling the evidence in order to demonstrate the superiority of the Epicurean system and its swerving atoms. A cursory survey of its contents will reveal little more than these arcane few ideas, none of which offers much of a purchase for the reader acquainted with the Marxian canon.

Yet the student Marx was no pedant, and the composition of his doctoral dissertation was directed toward something more than a piece of parchment inscribed with his name. Past the opaque Hegelian terminology, past the many citations of its two Greek protagonists and the numerous references to historical commentaries, past all the meticulous scholarship, a remarkable account of atoms and nature awaits the patient reader. The fact that its primary subject is the natural rather than the political world should not diminish our interest in the work, for the ideas it expounds contribute to the formation of a sophisticated materialist worldview. Indeed, for the young Marx (as for Epicurus), the material composition of the natural world necessarily and definitively circumscribes our humanity, whether the latter is expressed through morals, arts, or otherwise. To grasp the nature of the atom is to grasp our humanity; it is to understand the substance, the shape and limit of what we are and, on that basis, of what we can and should be. Questions of morality and politics are not central to Marx's dissertation project, but they are clearly on his mind, occasionally pushing to its fore. Just as the Epicurean

philosophy of life is rooted in the physics of atoms and the material world,[2] so too does the young Marx's practical philosophy find its footing in the incontrovertible logic of nature. Any doubts about the practical intentions of his project are dispelled in the dissertation's Forward, which boldly concludes with a declaration of the Promethean spirit of philosophy: "But to those poor March hares who rejoice over the apparently worsened civil position of philosophy, it [philosophy] responds again, as Prometheus replied to the servant of the gods, Hermes:

> 'Be sure of this, I would not change my state
> Of evil fortune for your servitude.
> Better to be the servant of this rock
> Than to be faithful boy to Father Zeus'."[3]

This Promethean spirit, expressed so forcefully in the dissertation's Forward, is present as an underlying current throughout the body of the work. Although the dissertation's self-declared task is one of comparative natural philosophy, Marx's interest in classical theories of the atom was motivated by his own instinctive humanism. As the cited passage from *Prometheus Bound* suggests, this humanism is

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2. This thought is neatly captured by Lucretius in his masterful Epicurean poem *On the Nature of Things*. "For, just as children tremble and fear everything in blinding darkness, so we even in daylight sometimes dread things that are no more terrible than the imaginary dangers that cause children to quake in the dark. *This terrifying darkness that enshrouds the mind must be dispelled not by the sun's rays and the dazzling darts of day, but by study of the superficial aspect and underlying principle of nature*" I have used the edition prepared by Martin Ferguson Smith (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2001), 2. 57–62; emphasis added.

3. See page 90 of this volume. The quotation is from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (965–969).

most obviously present in the exclusion of divine and theological modes of explanation. There should be no doubt that atom theory appealed to Marx because it provided a naturalistic, non-theological framework for understanding material phenomena. Better to attach oneself to acorns and seashells than to Olympian gods, for devotion to the gods comes at the cost of diminished humanity and ultimately loss of freedom. The humanist spirit of Prometheus is also present in the dissertation's rejection of Democritean atomism. For Marx, the deterministic atom theory of Democritus robs humanity of its freedom no less than belief in meddlesome gods, for it subsumes all physical events, including human actions, under the laws of strict mechanical necessity. It reduces human agency to something like the colliding action of billiard balls after being struck by the cue ball. The atomism of Epicurus, by contrast, with its emphasis on the inexplicable swerve of the atom, opens the door to a conception of human action that allows for novelty and chance. Taken together these Promethean and Epicurean elements formed the basis of a new, active, and humanist conception of philosophy.

Yet the project of Marx's dissertation is broader and more ambitious than these undercurrents of liberal humanism suggest; for its primary aim is to grasp the truth of nature by deciphering the hidden logic of the atom. Shunning traditional brands of philosophical idealism and empiricism, Marx proceeded by means of the dialectical approach to truth that Hegel had crafted in the preceding generation of German philosophy. According to this manner of thinking, the truth of an object is determined by a process of resolving all of the inadequate conceptions of it until an absolutely self-sufficient conception emerges. In the case of the atom, the results of this sort of analysis are

especially illuminating because the object in question is "unsplittable matter," what we conventionally think of as the elementary particle and building block of nature. To grasp the atom dialectically requires one to subject such conventional definitions to critical inspection in order to determine whether they actually mean what they claim. As it turns out, the conception of the atom as a static, self-enclosed entity—the conventional "building block" of nature—fails to express its world-building power. Marx's analysis uncovers the atom's dynamic core and traces the logic of its relation to other atoms and to the resplendent visible world made possible by their interaction. Accordingly, the atom is best understood as a sort of pregnant vitality, that is, as the seed that blossoms into a copious world. Its truth is not to be found in any fixed conception, some elementary this or essential that, but rather in the evolving expressions of its inner form. This view implies that all the richness and diversity of the natural world is implicit in the single atom. In fact, Marx's account will demonstrate that the rationality of the world, indeed, of the entire natural universe, is prefigured in the rationality expressed in the being and motion of the elementary atom. The *logic* of the atom, as the Hegel-inspired student might say, is an expression of the rudimentary form of nature; thus, the logical forms that are disclosed when we consider the atom will also be found in magnolia trees, mosquitoes, and meteors, if in a more developed mode. Following the trail blazed by Epicurus, Marx pursues the analysis in this way up the scale of nature, considering ever more complex embodiments of atomic logic, ultimately concluding that the atom's truth is expressed in the unified system of celestial bodies.

The clue that enabled Marx to unlock nature's elemen-

tary secrets was precisely that atomic swerve that distinguishes Epicurean natural philosophy from the mechanistic materialism of Democritus. The idea of a swerving atom, thought Marx, expresses a more robust and satisfactory reality, because it demonstrates the implicit freedom of the natural world. In swerving, the atom negates its external determination, declaring, so to speak, that it is something more than a raw material whose being is defined by whatever agency set it into motion in the first place. It says: the atom is *not* an entity whose being is subject to and depends upon some external agency; on the contrary, it is an entity whose agency is immanent, and whose reality is characterized by self-sufficiency. Indeed, the swerve posits a kind of primitive identity of the atom, for in negating all relation to externality, the swerving atom establishes a sufficiency of its own. Marx will go so far as to say that in swerving and in the corresponding interplay with other atoms, the atom demonstrates the first form of self-consciousness. This is not to claim that atoms are themselves conscious or self-conscious entities, but that in their action they express the logical form of consciousness.

No simple catch phrase describes this bold re-interpretation of classical atomism. It is a materialist conception of nature, to be sure, though not from the same mold as the theories of 18th century French materialists like La Mettrie and D'Holbach. Unlike these mechanistic materialists, who viewed nature as a magnificent machine whose every move and aspect was determined by some physical impulse, and, hence, by something extrinsic, Marx conceived nature as essentially free, and found the symbol of this freedom in the swerving atom. According to the deterministic account, there is no freedom in nature because all natural bodies are moved by external impulse. The motion of the atom, for

example, would be explained by its collision with another atom, or else it would be explained in reference to the agency that set it into motion in the first place, by some Prime Mover or God (or, as we might nowadays say, by some Big Bang). It is precisely such deterministic and mechanical conceptions of nature that the atom negates by its swerve. This insight clearly captured the imagination of the young student, and it is all the more powerful a conception of the natural world because it is firmly rooted in the simplest form of nature imaginable: the atom. For Marx, self-sufficiency and freedom are neither presuppositions nor illusions, for they arise from the very cradle of nature, from the elementary atom.

Of course the same arguments can be made about the status of human nature, which for the French materialists is understood to be no less a product of predictable natural events than an afternoon rain shower. Though this view is sometimes associated with the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism, and, indeed, is very close to the deterministic conception of human nature expressed in the later writings of Friedrich Engels and to the subsequent views of orthodox Marxists like Karl Kautsky and Georgi Plekhanov, it was never quite so simple for Marx.[4] The legitimacy of canonical Marxian ideas like "revolutionizing practice" and

4. George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p. 252. "One may say that the originality of Marx's standpoint consisted in this: while the French materialists had entangled themselves in an insoluble problem by postulating a human nature passively dependent on the environment, and then superimposed on this depressing picture an optimistic doctrine of progress, Marx pointed out that the key to the desired transformation lay in man's ability to rearrange the world of which he formed a part . . . the subject of the historical process educated himself in the course of his activity which was nothing but the progressive unfolding of his own being."

even "dictatorship of the proletariat" hinges on the free, self-conscious power of man to transform the world to which he belongs.[5] If such revolutionary consciousness is illusory, as the mechanistic materialists must insist, then the idea of a classless society can only be understood as the result of an evolutionary historical process; that is, as an event that is deducible from cast iron laws to which human behavior necessarily conforms. That may have been the view of Engels, and there is certainly some ambivalence present in Marx's later expressions of materialist dialectic, but such a rigidly determinist conception of the relation of man and society is contrary to the revolutionary spirit of Marx's philosophy.[6] We see the genesis of that revolutionary

5. This is made clear in the third of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that it is essential to educate the educator himself . . . The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionizing practice." Cited from *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1978), p. 144. I have slightly modified the translation.

6. This is a complex subject that cannot be fully examined here. Marx certainly conceived *Das Kapital* as a scientific work, whose aim was "to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society," as he puts it in the Preface to the first German edition. Yet, lest we misunderstand the dialectical character of this science (as many reviewers of the first edition had), Marx clarifies the nature of the dialectic in the Afterword to the second German edition. In its proper rational form, he writes, the dialectic "includes in its comprehension an affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, *and is in its essence critical and revolutionary*." Cited from *Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 297 and p. 302 (*emphasis* added).

spirit in these earliest writings, first of all as it is prefigured in the swerving motion of the atom, and, secondly, in the concept of the praxis of philosophy that Marx developed in the notebooks he prepared for his dissertation.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the ideas expressed in these writings are the creations of a philosophically mature mind, or that they embody a prototype of the systematic vision to come. Marx was an intensely precocious twenty-one year old when he completed his dissertation, but his ideas were still inchoate. The student Marx was certainly no Marxist, and his bookish intellect would require the worldly experiences of the next five or six years to coalesce into a more fully realized worldview. This fact has often been noted by celebrated scholars who point out that the esoteric philosophical ideas of Marx's youth were exchanged for more practical ones as he turned his attention from philosophy to politics and economics. Atoms would be exchanged for social and economic classes, democracy for communism,[7] philosophical analysis for social criticism, etc. Both his journalistic experiences as writer-editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* and a brief but stimulating sojourn in Paris would prove to be decisive events in the redefinition of philosophy

7. The precise character of Marx's political sensibility is not entirely clear from his student writings, though his association with the Berlin Young Hegelians certainly aligned him with political radicals. Our best guess is that at the time of writing his dissertation Marx considered himself a progressive liberal or democrat, both of which, we must remember, were radical and even dangerous political persuasions in Restoration Prussia. What we know for certain is that Marx advocated a form of radical democracy in an examination of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* that he worked through in the summer of 1843. Even before 1843, during his brief post-graduate journalistic tenure with the *Rheinishe Zeitung*, Marx advocated political ideas that provoked the Prussian censors and pushed the limits of the paper's liberal Rhineland audience.

as something active and concrete, that is, as a kind of social practice. There is no doubt that the turn from more abstract philosophical topics (like atoms and self-consciousness) to worldly and political ones (like modes of production and class struggle) represents a profound shift in Marx's thought. What scholars have often neglected, however, are the philosophical assumptions of the doctrine that emerged from this new and deeply anti-metaphysical way of thinking. Marx may have abandoned academic philosophy in the years after he left the university, but this by no means implies that he rejected the fundamental insights of the dissertation. Moreover, considering that the topic of the dissertation is a materialist theory of nature and that its method is dialectical, there is every reason to believe that it represents the genesis of Marx's mature philosophical worldview.

The remainder of this introduction will be broken into four pieces. Part II describes the relation of Marx's first writings to the dialectical philosophy of Hegel. Part III surveys the basic principles of Epicurean philosophy, before focusing on those ideas that attracted Marx's interest the most; in particular, Epicurus' understanding of the role of sensation and intellect in the acquisition of knowledge. Part IV offers a more detailed picture of the dialectical atomism that is the dissertation's heart. Here we see Epicurean materialism and Hegelian dialectics converge to form a sophisticated and original concept of nature. Finally, Part V focuses on the praxis of philosophy that Marx describes in his dissertation notebooks and in a crucial footnote to the text.

II

When Hegel died suddenly at the age of sixty-one in 1831, his philosophy pervaded much of the intellectual life of

Germany and was influential across Europe. His encyclopedic philosophical system was unprecedented in the history of ideas, and its authority reached well beyond philosophy. Hegelian thought penetrated the disciplines of theology, law, and history, and it extended even to the upper levels of the Prussian government. In 1817, Karl Freiherr zum Altenstein, the newly appointed Minister of Culture, had worked personally to lure Hegel from Heidelberg to Berlin. The two evidently had much in common (including the same year of birth, 1770) and Altenstein was an enthusiastic reader of Hegel's philosophy. What figures like Altenstein, legal scholar Eduard Gans, theologian David Friedrich Strauss, and all the other prominent Hegelians of this period saw in the philosophy of Hegel was an expression of the systematic power of reason. Contrary to Kantian idealism, which had set strict limits to the use of reason, Hegel's thought was conspicuously comprehensive and, as he called it, "absolute." Unlike the metaphysical idealists of the Classical or Christian world, however, his philosophical absolute was concrete and historical; indeed, for Hegel, it was manifested above all in the spiritual achievements of human civilization. He demonstrated that reality has inherent truth and meaning, yet he insisted that the cultural and intellectual productions of humanity—especially in art, religion and philosophy—represented the fullest expression of that truth. This made of truth an actual, knowable thing, quite unlike the abstract and metaphysical conceptions that had become so prominent in the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas, for example, had insisted that although we might know and even prove God's existence, our natural reason could never grasp the essential nature of God as trinity, a truth which could be known by faith alone. Yet for Hegel the notion of a Trinitarian God expressed the rational core

of Christianity, for it acknowledged the concrete, human presence of God in the world. Far from transcending all rational thought, the notion of the Trinity is precisely what allows the essence of God to be grasped by reason. For Hegel the truths of human spirit and the truths of being and nature are all, ultimately, aspects of a single truth, which he called Absolute Idea. From the simplest particles of nature to historical events like the end of South African apartheid to theological ideas such as St. Anselm's Ontological Argument, everything finds its place within the rational system of the Idea. Things make sense, and the reason of things is evident in every avenue of Being: in logic, nature, civilization, religion, and, especially, in philosophy. Indeed, it was this notion that led to Hegel's famous pronouncement that "what is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational."[8]

Reality is intelligible, and its intelligibility is disclosed in our thinking. This claim dominates Hegel's mature system of philosophy from beginning to end, and his every

8. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 20. To avoid misunderstanding, we hasten to add that Hegel did not mean this to be taken in the literal sense that *every* thing (or event) is rational. Such a suggestion would not only be horrifying in its conclusions, it would also enervate the concept of rationality. Though no one has suggested that Hegel meant to rationalize, for example, the "actual" event of a particular twig falling off of a tree at a particular time and landing at a particular spot, there was and has been much debate over the political implications of his famous declaration. Conservative Hegelians tended to emphasize the rationality of the status quo (in Hegel's time this meant, among other things, support for the Prussian state), while liberal Hegelians tended to criticize existing states of affairs for their lack of rationality. Each side thereby claimed part of Hegel's original thought; the conservatives focusing on the phrase "what is actual is rational," and the so-called Left Hegelians focusing on its flip-side, "what is rational is actual." Naturally, as a member of the left-wing Young Hegelians, Marx sided with the latter interpretation.

utterance is an attempt to demonstrate its truth. Against Kant, whose avowedly critical philosophy *uncritically* assumes that thought does not disclose the nature of things in themselves, Hegel insists that "the true objectivity of thinking consists in this: that thoughts are not merely our thoughts, but at the same time the *In-itself* of things and of whatever else is objective."[9] Hegel was himself a critical thinker in the Kantian sense, insofar as he affirmed that all experience is necessarily mediated by concepts of the mind. In this way, Hegel must be considered a full representative of the school of German Idealism that was founded with the publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. An eager participant in Kant's so-called "Copernican Revolution," he agreed that truth and objectivity are not "out there" in the world, but "in here" in the mind. Yet Hegel did not for that reason restrict the categories of thinking by assuming that the knowledge they make possible is merely subjective, that is, that it is good and true only for me, but not for the things as they really are. In fact, Hegel did not believe it made logical sense to claim—as Kant did—that the ultimate truth of things is something distinct from the way we experience and think about them. This was the conclusion of his landmark *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a book that was completed in October 1806 on the eve of the French victory over Prussia at the Battle of Jena in the Napoleonic War. Hegel's phenomenological analysis shows that "if consciousness or spirit as a whole is to achieve the knowledge which it claims for itself, it must give up the idea that being

9. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic. Part I of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991), p. 83 (§ 41, Addition 2). This sentence is quoted in *The Hegel Reader*, ed. and introd. Stephen Houlgate (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p. 13.

or 'truth' is something other than itself to which it stands in relation, and must conceive of the very nature of being as determinable from *within* thought itself."[10] The dialectical path leading from ordinary consciousness to absolute knowing describes a movement from uncritical naïveté to full self-awareness. At the culmination of its phenomenological journey, consciousness is no longer characterized by the old antithesis between being and knowing; "the separation of knowing and truth . . . is overcome," and it acquires the "form of simplicity which knows its object as its own self."[11] Consciousness has graduated from the world of ordinary thought to "speculative" thought, and it is at this point that philosophy in the Hegelian sense may properly begin.

In the course of its phenomenological education, consciousness realizes that the being or substance of reality is not something that stands over and against it as an alien other. The graduating consciousness understands that truth and being are disclosed "within thought itself," as Stephen Houlgate puts it in the passage cited above. "This is not to say," Houlgate continues, "that the truth can be found within any mode of thought whatsoever, but that it will be found within the mode of thought which thinks *properly*—whatever that may turn out to mean. The first task facing absolute knowing or philosophy is thus to establish what it is to think properly, and in so doing to discover within thought (properly understood) the true character of being."[12] The Hegelian brand of idealism described here provides an

10. Stephen Houlgate, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 47.

11. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 21 & 22.

12. Stephen Houlgate, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 127.

extraordinarily powerful point of departure for philosophy; the "objectivity of thinking" claimed by it allows for comprehensive and systematic explanations of things. A glance at the full spectrum of Hegel's encyclopedic project provides ample evidence of this fact.[13] In the course of disclosing the true nature of being, which is the task of the *logic*, speculative philosophy concludes that its initial abstract, logical conceptions are incomplete and that being must be understood as actually and materially existing—that is, as *nature*. Likewise, in its analysis of the natural structure of things—of space, time, motion, matter, etc.—thought realizes that the truth of nature is to be found in *spirit*. Finally, Hegel demonstrates that spirit is visible in the progress of freedom in history, and that it has its highest expression in the forms of art, religion, and philosophy. From the minimal thought of pure being Hegel leads us all the way to Caravaggio, Luther, and the Categorical Imperative.

Like the phenomenological process through which consciousness recognizes the coincidence of knowing and being, the form of the encyclopedic process described in Hegel's works on logic, nature, and spirit is *dialectical*. The dialectical approach to philosophical thought strives to reveal the invisible lattice-work of reality by articulating the conceptual development of the ideas utilized to grasp it. For those who are willing to master its rigorous precision, dialectical reasoning offers a concept-world that expresses the structure of reality from the inside out. The dialectical

13. Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* is composed of three parts: the logic, the philosophy of nature, and the philosophy of spirit. Taking into consideration his amplification of it in the lectures of the 1820s, the philosophy of spirit incorporates Hegel's philosophy of history, his philosophy of right, as well as the philosophy of absolute spirit (which is itself divided into a study of art, religion, and philosophy).

thinker proceeds by means of a critical delineation of our ideas about reality; the hidden implications of those ideas are brought into focus and examined in order to see if they correspond to the realities they intend to express. Concepts that fail to express the reality they intend are dismissed, and new concepts are formed from out of the contradictions or limitations of the old, failed ones. For example, dialectical examination of the concept "being" in the opening pages of the *Science of Logic* reveals that the thought of being implies its opposite: "nothing." Indeed, according to Hegel's account, if we reflect on the idea of pure being we find that, in fact, we are thinking about nothing at all. The simple thought "being" fails to express the substantial reality it intends, and consequently turns into the thought of nothing. Dialectical progress may be said to occur in this way as our inadequate conceptions of an object are resolved and replaced by more fully self-sufficient conceptions.

As this brief overview suggests, Hegelian philosophy represents the ultimate consilience, to borrow the expression of the 19th century English polymath William Whewall. It presents a theoretical perspective that unites different forms of knowledge into a single theoretical system. So powerful was this philosophy that, despite the notorious obscurity of its expression, it attracted a great diversity of followers. This became clear in the years after Hegel's death, when his disciples split into schools representing the conservative, moderate, and radical interpretations of his thought. During his first year in Berlin, as might be expected, Marx fell in with a radical group known as the Doctor's Club, whose ideas were avowedly anti-theological and tended to emphasize the active and critical role of reason in the determination of reality. Though he later turned against his Young Hegelian colleagues (whom he would judge preten-

tious and elitist), as we can see in the brilliant polemical works *The Holy Family* (1845) and *The German Ideology* (1845–46), it is clear enough that Marx's philosophy was shaped by the critical rationalism of left-wing Hegelians like Bruno Bauer and Karl Friedrich Köppen. The youthful Marx was no less systematic a philosopher than Hegel, but, unlike the master, for whom philosophy was understood primarily as the comprehension of reality, he viewed philosophy in active terms, as a process of critical engagement with existing reality. This is clear both in the Forward to his dissertation, where he emphasized the "world-subduing and absolutely free heart" of philosophical activity, and in the dissertation's notebooks, where he sketched a practical, worldly conception of philosophy called the "praxis of philosophy."[14] It is evident in both cases that Marx had consciously steered away from the conservative core of Hegel's speculative idealism, and it is easy to see the future course of his thought taking shape in these views. In the dissertation itself, however, we find Marx steering a course much closer to the scope and method of Hegel's dialectical philosophy.

Two Hegelian-inspired assumptions may be said to underlie the reasoning of Marx's dissertation. First of all, Marx conceived nature as *inherently* meaningful and vital. Just as Hegel had emphasized the rationality of the real, whether of conceptual reality (like the idea of cause and effect) or historical reality (like Egyptian polytheism), Marx emphasized the rationality of nature's reality. His materialism, like that of Epicurus, viewed the natural world from the inside out, starting from the imperceptible reality of atoms and extending to the far away reality of meteors. It

14. Marx's idea of the praxis of philosophy is explored in more detail in part V of this introduction.

disdained conceptions of being that relied upon divine or metaphysical explanation, positing instead a world whose immanent truth was apparent in the physical reality of things. The countless objects of the natural world, those that are visible to the naked eye, like strawberries, and those that are not, like bacteria cells, are all manifestation and evidence of nature's inner truth. This materialism is contrary, as well, to the epistemological skepticism inherent in empiricist approaches to nature. Like Hegel, Marx emphasized the underlying continuity of appearance and meaning, which, for him, is expressed by the Epicurean claim that "all senses are heralds of the true."

The dogmatic acceptance of sense experience is directly related to the second of Marx's Hegelian-inspired assumptions. Marx believed not only in the inherent meaningfulness of nature, but also in the capacity of human thought to grasp its truth. To comprehend the truth of natural phenomena is not a matter of individual or cultural perspective, but of discovering the universal forms of thought appropriate to the objects in question—a task for which philosophy above all is suited to pursue. For this task Marx employed the dialectical method of Hegelian philosophy, a method of thinking that aims to delineate the rationality of the concepts that are used to describe reality. In his dissertation, dialectical thought is utilized to unravel the rational implications that are bound up in the concept of the atom. Ideas that fail to live up to the atomic reality they intend to express are superseded by ideas that articulate that reality more effectively. This project involves some far-flung implications about the relation of man and nature, and of ideas and reality. It implies that nature is not something discontinuous of mind, some inaccessible "thing in itself," nor, by this view, does it make sense to say that nature is some kind

of inert, raw matter into which might be poured the vitality and spirit of human production. The meaning and logic of nature is a continuation of the meaning and logic of mind (and *vice versa*). These manifestly Hegelian thoughts represent the key to Marx's earliest thinking.

That the dissertation is the expression of a young man heavily influenced by the so-called speculative idealism of Hegel cannot be doubted. Yet Marx was by no means a born Hegelian. It was only after a dramatic conversion during his first year in Berlin that he was brought around to the dialectical approach of Hegel's philosophy. And even then there were doubts in his mind about the value of a philosophy that preferred the passive comprehension of reality to critical confrontation with it.

As an adolescent, Marx had shown a prominent streak of humanitarian idealism, and as a young man he had already passed through a passionate phase of Romanticism. At home, he had been raised in an atmosphere marked by enlightened, liberal thinking; his father Heinrich was schooled in the eighteenth century Rationalism of Voltaire and Rousseau, and several of his schoolteachers were Kantians. The progressive humanism of these ideas clearly shaped Marx's earliest philosophical reflections, as we can see in the following passage from the conclusion of an essay he wrote shortly before graduating from the Trier Gymnasium:

> The main principle, however, which must guide us in the selection of a vocation is the welfare of humanity, our own perfection. One should not think that these two interests combat each other, that the one must destroy the other. Rather, man's nature makes it possible for him to reach his fulfill-

> ment only by working for the perfection and welfare of his society.[15]

While at the University in Bonn, he had taken two classes with August Wilhelm von Schlegel, a prominent figure of early German Romanticism and brother of the more famous Friedrich Schlegel. Whether through the influence of Schlegel or not, the student Marx fashioned himself a romantic and he began to cultivate a taste for writing poetry, though his romantic vision and the esoteric images that accompanied it did not find the right audience back home. Heinrich Marx admired his son's abilities, but worried about the professional prospects for an ordinary poet; Marx's beloved Jenny von Westphalen, meanwhile, was overwhelmed by her Karl's poetic imagination, which left her feeling anxious and miserable. In Berlin Marx continued to write poetry, but over the course of his first year of study his intellectual palette changed. Magic harps and flower kings were traded in for the grit and substance of dialectical reasoning, and Marx's fledgling romanticism was transformed into something more mundane and serious.

This is not to say that he abandoned idealism altogether; yet during his first year in Berlin, due in large part to a prolonged immersion in the writings of Hegel, Marx came to realize that for ideas to have value, for them to be substantial and efficacious rather than dreamy and romantic, they must be sought in connection with reality. Idealism, in other words, is neither theology nor metaphysics, if by those terms we

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15. "Reflections of a Youth on Choosing an Occupation" (1835), in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. and trans. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1967), p. 39.

mean to describe a mode of thought that transcends phenomenal reality. In the Hegelian sense, idealism refers to the meaning of reality itself. There is no assumption of divorce between reality and truth-of-reality, as in the Platonic tradition, where truth is taken to be something that transcends the phenomenal and the real, something divine and ideal. Nor is it accepted that the "things in themselves" are beyond the grasp of thought, as in Kant's famous and influential formulation. For Marx, Hegelian idealism implied that the bearer of meaning and truth and reason is none other than reality itself. This insight, described in a fascinating letter written to his father at the conclusion of his first year in Berlin, in November of 1836, might be taken as a motto for the doctoral dissertation:

> From the idealism which, by the way, I had compared and nourished with the idealism of Kant and Fichte, I arrived at the point of *seeking the idea in reality itself*. If previously the gods had dwelt above the earth, now they became its center.[16]

It is true that there is nothing terribly original about deriving ideas from reality. Replace the names "Kant" and "Fichte" in the passage above with "Socrates" and "Plato" and you have a line that might well have been uttered by Aristotle. Nor was Marx the first by far to utter declamations against the "theologizing intellect," as he puts it in the Forward to his dissertation. But Marx did not mean to reject metaphysics entirely. Like Hegel, whose notorious comment about the relation of the actual and the rational was certainly part of the philosophical vocabulary of any

16. "Letter from Marx to His Father in Trier." See page 78 of this edition. *Emphasis* added.

serious student in Berlin in the 1830's, Marx embraced the notion that ideas and reasoning are, at least in some sense, in the things of the world. Or, to put it the other way around, worldly things—both natural things and human or social things—are rational. This is not the rejection of metaphysics, certainly not if we take metaphysics to imply systematic philosophy, but the assertion of a kind of metaphysics of reality. Accordingly, mind and matter are not fundamentally distinct from one another, but are like two sides of the same coin. To see the truth of this claim and to comprehend its significance is to think dialectically; for the dialectical thinker comprehends reality by investigating the concepts that are used to describe it. The question for Marx is to discover the extent to which the ideas used to define reality are as real as they purport to be. In the case of his doctoral dissertation, more specifically, the question is whether and to what extent the concepts that are used to express the reality of the atom actually express the reality they claim to express.

To make his point Marx utilized the views of Democritus and Epicurus, for he understood these two giants of Antiquity to represent two different modes of comprehending the natural world—one dialectical and the other not. His analysis of the difference between Democritean and Epicurean atomism is an exercise in what philosophers have traditionally called "natural philosophy," that is, the study of and reflection about the physical world. Yet, curiously, it is not with atoms, pelicans, marshes, or any other natural object that the dissertation begins. After a few preliminary points about the relevance and scholarly history of his topic, Marx begins his dissertation with an analysis of the psychological and epistemological differences between Epicurus and Democritus. It is mind, not matter that sets the

argument's tone—and it is the mind of Epicurus that serves as a guide and model for apprehending nature's truths.

III

> This man neither the reputation of the gods nor thunderbolts nor heaven's menacing rumbles could daunt; rather all the more they roused the ardor of his courage and made him long to be the first to burst the bolts and bars of nature's gates. And so his mind's might and vigor prevailed, and on he marched far beyond the blazing battlements of the world, in thought and understanding journeying all through the measureless universe; and from this expedition he returns to us in triumph with his spoils—knowledge of what can arise and what cannot, and again by what law each thing has its scope restricted and its deeply implanted boundary stone.
>
> (Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 1.68–77)

"This man," of course, is Epicurus, a legendary figure whose audacity in the face of gods and thunderbolts, and whose verve and intellectual brilliance are proclaimed in the verses of Lucretius' classic poem. One of the most influential philosophers of Antiquity, Epicurus was born in Athens shortly after Plato's death, in 341 B.C.E. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, both of whom are systematic thinkers whose primary philosophical aim is to articulate the nature of reality, Epicurus is an ethical thinker who places the individual human being at the center of his philosophical worldview. Though he was certainly interested in understanding "what can arise and what cannot," as Lucretius puts it in the passage quoted above, such knowledge was valuable more for

its affect on our human lives than for metaphysical enlightenment. Not the profound, but the mundane captured his intellectual curiosity; accordingly, recondite ideas like Plato's "the Good" or Aristotle's "Unmoved Mover" are set aside in favor of ideas about the ordinary experiences of life. Indeed, Epicurus is best known for his views on pleasure and happiness, which comprise a comprehensive philosophy of life that was championed by his numerous followers and perpetuated by schools of Epicureans for centuries after his death. To be happy, maintains Epicurus, one must be rid of anxiety, and to accomplish that difficult task one must observe four principles of good living. A version of the Epicurean "four-part cure" was discovered by archeologists on a piece of papyrus salvaged from a villa that had been destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E.:

> Don't fear god,
> Don't worry about death;
> What is good is easy to get, and
> What is terrible is easy to endure.[17]

The embrace of these four tenets is sure to yield happiness, insist the Epicureans, because they alleviate the primary sources of anxiety and suffering. They encourage us to find contentment in satisfying our most basic needs and to place our trust in what is irrefutable: our own perceptions. For Epicurus, it is on the basis of individual feeling and perception that sound reasoning stands, and we must neither ignore nor disparage the simple evidence they present. At

17. Philodemus, Herculaneum Papyrus 1005, 4.9–14. Cited from D.S. Hutchinson's "Introduction" to *The Epicurus Reader*, ed. and trans. Brad Inwood and L.P. Gerson (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 1994), p. vi.

the same time, we ought to distrust the many fabulous stories about the involvement of gods in human affairs, about after-worldly destinies, and the like. With no basis in sense-perception such myths are designed to brand our souls with fear and to make us prisoners of superstition. Keep it simple and keep it real, advise the Epicureans, and the joys of life will flow forth as naturally as a mountain spring in May. Accounts of Epicurus' own life reveal that he was no hypocrite, for he was said to have been content with water, bread, and an occasional indulgence of cheese.[18] Armed with these confidence-inspiring principles, cloudy days and toothaches and neighborhood disputes all lose their depressing potency. Even the specter of death is palliated by this Epicurean medicine, as the life of the master himself attests. Though he died from kidney stones after an illness of fourteen days, neither the painful affliction nor the fear of death disturbed his famous ataraxy. According to the testimony of Hermippus, Epicurus passed his last moments in the same peaceful state of mind that characterized his whole life. After the long period of suffering, "he got into a bronze bathtub filled with warm water, asked for unmixed wine, and tossed it back. He then bade his friends to remember his teachings and died thus."[19]

Despite being the subject of Lucretius' beautiful didactic poem *On the Nature of Things*, Epicurus' philosophy of nature is little known in comparison with the more renowned views on pleasure and happiness. Yet understanding the possibilities and limits of the physical world was a

18. This claim is found in Diogenes Laertius' short biography of Epicurus in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Volume II* (11.11–3), trans. R.D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 193), p. 541.

19. As reported by Diogenes Laertius (10.15–16). Cited from *The Epicurus Reader*, p. 4.

central task of Epicurean philosophy; indeed, it was considered by the master to be a precondition for living the good life.[20] Resisting the temptation to resort to supernatural forces in order to explain the nature of worldly phenomena, or to presume a divine plan in order to understand the purpose of things, placing trust in sense experience and logic instead, Epicurus believed it must be possible to offer an account of the world rooted in physics. Accordingly, the project of Epicurean natural philosophy is to construct an account of the material world from the ground up, beginning with atoms and the void, and culminating with the starry heavens above. In the eyes of his Roman admirer Lucretius, the result was triumphant: an expedition of the mind across the measureless expanse of universe, an imaginative feat of observation and logic that in effect "burst the bolts and bars of nature's gates." These results also impressed a mid-nineteenth century German student, a young man by the name of Karl Marx.

It is easy to imagine Marx's attraction to the philosopher described by Lucretius, not only because of kinship in their understanding of the material world, but also because of a shared skepticism regarding metaphysical authority, and a corresponding spirit of philosophical freedom. Here was a man whose defiant nature was nicely suited to the humanistic and irreligious sentiments competing for

20. In his *Epicurean Notebooks*, Marx had written out the following passage from the tenth book of Diogenes Laertius' biography: "It is impossible to banish fear over matters of the greatest importance if one does not know the essence of the universe but is apprehensive on account of what the myths tell us. *Hence without the study of nature one cannot attain pure pleasure.*" Cited from *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Collected Works* (MECW) (Moscow: International Publishers, 1975), I, p. 409. *Emphasis* added.

prominence in Marx's fertile mind. Though he no doubt felt an affinity for the principles of right living that form the heart of Epicurean philosophy, it was evidently the latter's fierce and uncompromising humanism, if we may call it that, that piqued his philosophical interest. For Epicurus, to center one's life around otherworldly gods in whose hands our fate is determined is neither the right way to live (if one is interested in happiness) nor the right way to think (if one is interested in truth). To believe, with the masses, that the gods are mixed up in the affairs of men, playing Athena to our Odysseus, for example, as Homer describes the relation of the meddlesome goddess to her pet favorite in *The Iliad*, is to sacrifice human freedom to divine caprice. As Epicurus insisted and as the youthful Marx instinctively recognized, little is gained for humanity by such fatalist beliefs, and much is lost. Knowing that our divine benefactor might be lured away at a time of need, as Ares was distracted from his cherished Trojans on the fields of battle by cunning Pallas Athena, or else fretting that our words or deeds may aggrieve some tender-prided god, our souls will never cease their anxious worry, and happiness will elude us. Against such god-fearing superstition, writes Marx in the Forward to his dissertation, cries the free heart of philosophy:

> Philosophy, as long as a drop of blood shall pulse in its world-subduing and absolutely free heart, will never grow tired of answering its adversaries with the cry of Epicurus: 'Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them, is truly impious.'[21]

21. See pages 89–90 of this edition.

For peace of mind, certainly, but even more so for the sake of truth and freedom, we must abandon the life-and-freedom-denying views of the multitude and "acknowledge human self-consciousness as the highest divinity."[22] Such was the bold path of Epicurus, and with the concepts and language of his Berlin Hegelian comrades in hand, Marx set out in the same direction.

In order to illuminate the salient features of Epicurean philosophy, Marx utilized a simple organizing principle: comparison and contrast. Drawing from original sources as well as historical commentaries, he compared the ideas of Epicurus with those of his fifth century B.C.E. predecessor, Democritus, the well-known originator of the atom theory. In its essentials Epicurean atomism is remarkably similar to the theory of Democritus, whose ideas clearly influenced the later philosopher. Yet, as Marx points out, although the rudimentary physics of their theories, as expressed by the principle of atoms and the void, is the same, they are "diametrically opposed" in all matters of truth, certainty and human knowledge. One emphasizes the role of empirical observation in the determination of knowledge, and the other, of imagination and thought. But the contrast Marx intended to represent is not the familiar textbook platitude that wants to distinguish the idealism of a Plato from the realism of an Aristotle. Both Democritus and Epicurus are materialist philosophers of a kind, as we can see in the fact that both constructed an account of the natural world from the ground up, without resorting to religious fables or metaphysical designs. Moreover, they both emphasized the necessary role of the senses in the acquisition of knowledge about the world. The differences are more epistemological,

22. See page 90 of this edition.

as we might nowadays say, and have to do with the certainty of knowledge and with the relation between thought and its object. In the interpretation of Marx, Democritus is a skeptic regarding the possibility of certain knowledge, as Pyrrho's summation of the latter's viewpoint illustrates: "Of truth we know nothing, for truth lies at the deep bottom of the well."[23] For Democritus, what we can know, the evidence presented to our senses, is only an unreliable semblance of the atomic principles underlying the phenomenal world. The appearance of things but not their reality is what we perceive through our senses. Reality itself—those atomic principles underlying the appearances—remains shut off from sensory inspection, lying hidden "at the deep bottom of the well."

By contrast, Epicurus is a dogmatist who accepts the evidence of the senses at face value, and for whom, therefore, the phenomenal world is most certainly real. What you see is what you get, is his motto, and this is meant to be taken quite literally. One cannot help smiling at the subtle incredulity with which Cicero, no fan of Epicurean physics, reacted to this unscientific manner of thinking in the following sentence describing the difference between the Democritean and Epicurean manner of perceiving of the sun:

> The sun seems large to Democritus, because he is a man of science well versed in geometry; to Epicurus it seems to be about two feet large, for he pronounces it *to be* as large as it *seems*.[24]

23. As reported by Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, p. 485.

24. As quoted in Marx's text. See page 99 of this volume.

Two atomists, but the one a skeptic about sense certainty and the other a dogmatist. Not surprisingly, this divergence of epistemological views struck Marx as a significant factor in properly grasping their natural philosophies, and, more specifically, for understanding the differences in their respective theories of the atom. It also seems to have sharpened his appreciation for the scientific temperament of Epicurus and for the philosophical reasoning resulting from it.

The difference between Democritus and Epicurus may be expressed more simply if we enlarge our frame of reference slightly, in order to describe in broad strokes the scientific outlook or, as we might say, the "standpoint" from which each man studies the surrounding world. The standpoint of Democritus may be described as a kind of mechanistic empiricism, while Epicurus is a dialectical thinker for whom the activity of thought is crucial in the determination of knowledge. Democritus sees the world as an assemblage of parts, an extraordinarily complicated puzzle to be deciphered by the scientific observer. Indeed, Democritus played the observer's role expertly himself, for he was a uniquely experienced man whose erudition extended across all of the known arts and sciences. Marx quotes from the testimony of Eusebius to make the point:

> I have among my contemporaries, [Democritus prides himself], wandered through the largest part of the earth, investigating the remotest things. I have seen most climates and lands, and I have heard most learned men, and in linear composition with demonstration no one surpassed me, not even the so-called Arsipedonapts of the Egyptians. [25]

25. Cited according to Marx's quotation. See page 100 of this volume.

Yet, ultimately, the world must remain mysterious for the Democritean scientist, since he assumes that "the principle does not enter into appearance," as Marx puts it. Though the world may be constructed of atoms, the atoms themselves in no way emerge into the world of sensation. One is left with the appearances only, but those, as it turns out, are unreliable indicators of the invisible truth that lies beneath them. Consequently, the unseen atomic reality may be intuited by reason alone, without the aid of sense experience. As Marx demonstrates, this is an odd and even contradictory position for an empirical-minded thinker like Democritus.

For Epicurus, knowledge is ultimately a creation of the philosophical-scientific observer, whose aim is not so much to decipher a puzzlingly recalcitrant material reality as to build a satisfactory and pleasing worldview. Not surprisingly, this view led him to spurn the wanderlust of scientific scholars like Democritus in favor of the sort of philosophical reflection that can be performed anywhere, anytime, but preferably in a peaceful place among friends. As Marx puts it, "Epicurus has nothing but contempt for the positive sciences, since in his opinion they contribute nothing to true perfection."[26] Yet true perfection, happiness, peace of mind—these are, or at least they should be, the ultimate standards of all intellectual activity. Indeed, this was the practice at the Epicurean "Garden," the famed community founded by Epicurus at a small estate on the outskirts of Athens in 306 B.C.E. In the case of such untroubled reflection, the role of thought is active and constructive, and it was this aspect of the Epicurean epistemology that attracted the young Marx.

True perfection and right understanding are the province of the human mind, which is free to explain the

26. See page 101 of this volume.

sensations it receives from the surrounding world in any way that does not contradict the sensuous facts presented to it. Yet this could not be so if the sensations preceding our moral and philosophical speculations were doubtful or suspect in any way. If simple sensations, what Epicurus takes to be the raw materials with which all thinking necessarily begins, were inherently suspect, then philosophical reflection would be just as fruitless as the scientific wandering of Democritus and just as unsatisfying as the metaphysical musing of Goethe's tragic hero Faust. With such considerations in mind, Epicurus reaches the fantastic-sounding conclusion that the world presented to our senses is infallibly true and real. Scorned by Cicero, among others, it is this view that led Epicurus to accept such seeming nonsense as that the sun is about two feet large.

Marx explains this oddity by once again contrasting the views of Epicurus and Democritus. For Epicurus, our experience of the sensuous world is characterized not by subjective semblance, as was the case for Democritus, but by *objective appearance*. Sensory impressions are not merely appearances, appearances, that is, that may or may not be true. They are not, as Marx puts it, the semblance of something that we presume to have a truer, more objective reality. If this were the case, then all of our subsequent reflections, based as they are in sense experience, would either be groundless assumptions or superficial inferences. For a materialist philosopher who wants to take the facts of the natural world seriously, neither of these options is acceptable. This is why Epicurus takes the opposite view. When we see (or hear, touch, taste, or smell) something—the setting sun, for example—the mental image in our mind, the perception "sun," is considered objective. If I perceive the descending sun to be two feet across, then the sun really is two feet

across. Sensation is accepted as an absolute standard and nothing can refute it, neither a different perspective on the same object, nor another variety of sensation (e.g., feeling or touching the sun), not even reason. Every sensation is its own verification. By this account, objects that appear to me in dreams, and even the lunatic visions of a madman, are all equally objective, and, hence, irrefutable. Accordingly, not only is the phenomenal world apparent, as Democritus claims, it is also *true*.[27] As Epicurus puts it in an oft-repeated sentence, "all senses are heralds of the true."[28] Sensation is the standard of certainty and truth. If I feel it, then it is so. Rather than running away from this conclusion in search of more and diverse experiences, none of which get any nearer to certainty, Epicurus embraces it. The truth of the natural world will never be disclosed in the relentless quest for empirical knowledge, Epicurus might have said, for this can never amount to anything more than a collection of impressions. And without the unshifting standard of sense certainty, any collection of impressions is vulnerable to being displaced by some other, newer set of experiences. While the skepticism of Democritus takes us no further than that, Epicurean dogmatism opens the door to the perfecting and humanizing function of philosophy.

Thoughtful observers of the Epicurean conception of sense certainty may have decided by this point in our summary that his views are somewhat dubious. After all, who

27. Marx points out that although Democritus is a skeptic regarding the truth of sensuous phenomena, he does not doubt the reality of our perceptions. This leads him to the contradictory conclusion that while our perceptions are real for us, they can never be real in themselves. See pages 97–98 of this edition.

28. Marx quotes here from Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*. See page 98 of this edition.

would ever really defend the idea that the sun is a mere two feet across? Such is the conclusion of a dogmatist, for whom sense knowledge is true by definition, and it would be quick and easy work to compile a list of similarly outrageous conclusions. In a modern world characterized by the careful, critical scrutiny of all things, to be dogmatic is to be unscientific and, consequently, to be condemned and dismissed by more enlightened minds. A proto-modern himself in many ways, this, essentially, was Cicero's judgment of Epicurus, and as Marx's many scholarly citations demonstrate, his verdict was not unusual. Cicero and company notwithstanding, Marx does not question the legitimacy of Epicurean dogmatism. In fact, the opposite is true, for he seems to have discovered in it a fundamental truth, namely, that the key to understanding nature is not to be found in collections of empirical facts, but in the purposive activity of the human mind. In other words, true understanding has as much to do with the state of mind of the perceiver as with the entities and objects themselves. Moreover, following in the wake of such philosophical idealism is an additional claim, one that captures the essence of the entire Epicurean philosophy. Reminding us that he is above all a moralist and a humanist, Epicurus insists that it is not the certainty of things in themselves that is paramount, but the peace and serenity of the human mind.

Though Marx did not accept these views without qualification, Epicurus is a philosopher much closer to his own heart than Democritus. Both the idea that sensuous appearance is objective and real, and the idea that the thinking subject plays a definitive role in the determination of knowledge had a powerful appeal to the young radical. Such ideas corresponded surprisingly well with the basic premises of Hegelian philosophy, and they lent support to

the concrete idealism that was germinating in his mind. In the letter he had written to his father at the end of his first year in Berlin, Marx describes his nascent philosophical project as "seeking the idea in reality itself." Now we can see that the doctoral dissertation takes this project a step further; its embrace of Epicurean humanism gives play to the un-Hegelian idea that peace of mind has an overriding role in the determination of truth and reality.

IV

The center of gravity of Marx's doctoral dissertation is a dense and difficult analysis of Epicurus' atom theory. Here we find the Hegelian and Epicurean influences converging to form an outline of natural philosophy that, at the risk of sounding clever, might be described with the expression "dialectical atomism." The term finds its justification in the unusual and even paradoxical nature of the task pursued by the dissertation's Greek protagonist, and in the innovative use of dialectical reasoning employed by Marx to carry the task to its conclusion. Speaking roughly, we can say that the dissertation's substantive core, that is, its atomist or materialist content, is Epicurean, while its analytical approach, that is, the dialectical method utilized to think those core ideas through, is Hegelian. The result is a fascinating hybrid that provides an illuminating picture of the genesis of Marx's philosophical worldview.

Both Democritus and Epicurus had aimed to construct a *materialist* theory of nature, that is, one that posits elementary physical entities—atoms—upon whose foundation the entire natural universe might be explained. It was important for the success of the endeavor, in both cases, that no "unnatural" or extraneous elements be introduced

into the exposition. For Epicurus, in particular, it was critical that no metaphysical wine or theological whisky contaminate the sober, naturalistic reasoning that he sought to articulate. In his mind, atom theory should be understood as an exercise in physics, rather than metaphysics, or, alternatively, as an instance of natural philosophy, rather than natural theology. Such naturalistic reasoning is certainly one of the elements that attracted Marx to the Epicurean system. We need only remember the lengthy letter the dutiful son had written to his father at the end of a long first year in Berlin, in which he had expressed a newfound desire to seek ideas in reality. The young Marx had no intention of abandoning the idealizing and perfecting impulses of his philosophical conscience; his aim, rather, was to realize those impulses by demonstrating the extent to which ideas and rationality are inherent in reality. In the case of the dissertation the aim is made even more specific: ideas are sought in the material particles that compose the foundation of the natural world—in atoms.

Yet there is an illuminating irony hidden in the unreflected claim that atoms are material entities. As Democritus, Epicurus, and Marx all knew just as well as Neils Bohr would later know, atoms are not (not directly) observable entities, and cannot, therefore, be considered as empirical facts. Whether we view sensory experience as a subjective semblance, like Democritus, or as an objective appearance, like Epicurus, is irrelevant in this case, since there are no sensations of atoms to begin with. But if they are insensible, how can atoms be considered the material foundation of the world? The entire argument would seem to rest upon a paradox, namely, that what is solid and sensible is composed from something abstract and insensible. Faced with this dilemma, the empiricist finds himself at a loss. If he is

honest, his only reply is to shrug and admit that since the atom does not enter into sensory experience, it must be characterized as a necessary assumption. That, essentially, was the approach of the skeptic Democritus, who conceded that the true principles (the atoms) lie hidden and unknowable "in a well," as the proverbial Greek expression goes. With Epicurus, however, it is otherwise, since his primary concern is not for empirical knowledge, but for the peace and serenity of the mind. So long as our explanations of physical phenomena do not contradict the objective facts of sensation, they are acceptable. That atoms do not appear directly to the senses is irrelevant; what is important is that our conception of the atom expresses the reality apparent to our senses without contradiction, and that it produces an understanding conducive to pleasant living.

The Epicurean emphasis on peace of mind had an over-riding influence on the approach and outcome of his entire philosophy, including the atom theory. For Marx it implied that intellect or mind would be valued over sensation in the determination of knowledge, and that, consequently, the Epicurean approach to truth would be characterized more by philosophical reflection than by empirical research. The priority of intellect is evident even in Epicurus' understanding of pleasure and happiness. Although the feeling of pleasure may be a paramount good, the means of producing and maintaining it are more closely aligned with thought than sensation. This claim, which is nothing more than common sense to anyone who has reflected upon the nature of pleasant living, is particularly well-expressed in his famous *Letter to Menoeceus*:

> For it is neither drinking bouts and continuous partying and enjoying boys and women, or consuming

> fish and the other dainties of an extravagant table, which produce the pleasant life, but sober calculation which searches out the reasons for every choice and avoidance and drives out the opinions which are the source of the greatest turmoil for men's souls.[29]

Of course this does not change the fact that our experience of the world necessarily begins with the "objective appearance" of sensation. After all, the sober calculation referred to above is meaningless if not preceded by the sip of wine or the taste of raw oysters. Nonetheless, although the facts of sensation serve as a guide and limit to our conceptions of the natural world, neither sensation nor the empirical knowledge following therefrom can properly explain it. Lucretius declares several times over in his resplendent Epicurean poem that understanding the nature of things is a task for which thought alone is equipped. Only "penetrative reasoning," as he puts it, can reveal the truth of such insensible objects as mind and spirit.[30] Likewise, the underlying and superficial elements of the infinite universe are illuminated not by daylight and eagle eyes, but by rational study, that is, by the sort of reflection that is only possible when the mind has been liberated from anxiety and fear.[31] The atom itself is a product of such reflection, and so too is our knowl-

29. *Letter to Menoeceus* in *The Epicurus Reader*, p. 31.

30. *On the Nature of Things,* 1.131.

31. Ibid., 1.147–149. The line in question is worth quoting here in full: "This terrifying darkness that enshrouds the mind must be dispelled not by the sun's rays and the dazzling darts of day, but by study of the superficial aspect and underlying principle of nature." As Martin Ferguson Smith, the editor-translator of the Hackett edition, kindly notes, this line is repeated several times throughout Lucretius' classic work. See also 2.59–61, 3.91–93, and 6.39–41.

edge of the infinite expanse of matter and space that, according to Epicurus, extends beyond the regions occupied by our earth. As the poetry of Lucretius attests, the exploration of such remote places can only be accomplished by the free and spontaneous intelligence of an untroubled mind:

> For, since the totality of space out beyond the ramparts of our world is infinite, my mind seeks the explanation of what exists in those boundless tracts which the intelligence is eager to probe and into which the mind can freely and spontaneously project itself in flight.[32]

One can hardly imagine a skeptic like Democritus uttering such words, which convey the conviction of a man who believes in the power of thought to articulate the nature of things, even when those things extend far beyond the scope of our senses. For Marx, this lofty conviction is the manifestation of a fundamental insight, for it suggests that the conceptual substance of philosophical reflection and the material substance of the universe coincide in the expression of a single reality. Moreover, to take the suggestion a step further, we can see that, according to the views of Epicurus, such a coincidence could be achieved only by an unencumbered mind, one that is free from anxiety and fear. Indeed, we may imagine Epicurus' own account of the atom as the product of such an untroubled mind. As Marx puts it, the philosophy of Epicurus expresses "the serenity of thought satisfied with itself, the self-sufficiency that draws its knowledge *ex principio interno*."[33] As we will see in more

32. *On the Nature of Things*, 2.1043–1048.
33. See page 107 of this volume.

detail below, the product of the serene philosophical consciousness is an account that lays bare the atom's inner logic, and it does so in such a way that worldly phenomena are explained without contradiction.

In its most elementary form, Marx (following Epicurus) will say, the atom is *not* nothing; that is, to put it in the language of the ancient atomists, it is *not* the void of empty space. Equally certain, considering the motion and change so evident in the visible world, the atom is not static, but moves. Between these poles—nothing and something, static and dynamic—the truth of the atom comes to light. Leaping more often than stepping, Marx follows this Epicurean pathway all the way from atoms to meteors and, finally, to the unified system of celestial bodies. As it turns out, the atom's truth is expressed in the heavenly bodies; or, put the other way around, heavenly bodies are the realization of the atom. This, in a nutshell, describes the trajectory of the dissertation analysis.

Though his approach may at first blush seem more like the lyrical fancy of Lucretius than like careful (or modern) philosophy, Marx did not view his pursuit of atomic truth in this way. It is clear enough that such ideas are not the products of empirical observation. Nor did Marx consider them to be assumptions by which the truth of nature is made intelligible to our curious and idealizing minds. In his hands, the Epicurean version of atoms and the physical world is *dialectical*—and the account of it in the doctoral dissertation represents the first instance of dialectical reasoning in Marx's written corpus. Epicurus had intuitively grasped the atom's dialectical essence, and Marx set out to make his intuition explicit. This would involve him in an ambitious attempt to disclose the logical determinations that are implied in the concept "atom," and, thereby, since

atoms are the material basis of all things, to grasp the rationality of the natural world. Against the empiricist's reliance on the evidence impressed on the mind by the senses, and against the idealist's flight from the imperfection of sense experience to the *a priori* perfection of the rational forms that are assumed to underlie it, Marx's dialectical approach sought to disclose the *immanent* rationality of material things. His aim was to see the reason *in* nature, rather than the reason behind or beyond it. Accordingly, the key to unlocking nature's inherent rationality is not the unbiased observation of the scientist, but the unbiased thinking of the philosopher.

This approach claims that what is required to understand the atom, and with it the entire system of nature, is to grasp its reality without resorting to presuppositions. When I hold the idea "atom" in my mind, when all else falls away and only *a-tomos* (literally, "the unsplittable") presents itself, what am I really thinking? For Marx, the answer to this question leads straight to a rich and troublesome contradiction, whose unraveling would determine the course of his analysis from start to finish. It had been the innovation of the Milesian atomist Leucippus to insist that the idea of unsplittable material elements is tenable only against the background idea of an empty void within which such particles exist and move. Attached to the idea of the atom is the corresponding idea of the void. Indeed, for both Leucippus and Democritus, it was proper to say of both the atom (what is) and the void (what is not) that they exist. Yet this implies that being (the atom) and not-being (the void) are partners in giving rise to the diverse plenitude of the material world. Marx recognized that this seemingly contradictory thought is the key to unlocking the truth of the atom. And it is an acceptance of this contradiction along with all

of its implications that distinguishes the atom theory of Epicurus from that of Leucippus and Democritus.

Marx's dialectical atomism shows us that the idea "atom" is not as simple as we might have assumed, for the thought of the atom clearly presupposes the thought of the void. It demonstrates that the simplest possible conception of the atom involves a negation: the atom is *not* nothing, *not* the void. The atom, it turns out, is not merely the elementary particle of matter that we learn about in our high school chemistry classes. It is just as much "not nothing" as it is "fundamental matter." Indeed, for Marx, it is both at once, both form and matter as he puts it. To understand the atom is to grasp this double logic in all of its incarnations, that is, to see how the negation at the heart of the atom leads to further, more elaborate, and more complete determinations of its being. Such a procedure is dialectical because it originates and develops by virtue of a contradiction, that is, with two opposing terms—in this case, the atom and the void. Dialectical reasoning seeks to unlock the contradictions implicit in our conceptions of an object of inquiry, in order to grasp its truth from the inside out. Utilizing this method, an inheritance from his intellectual mentor, Hegel, Marx sought to delineate the entire Epicurean natural philosophy, from atoms to meteors. If successful, he will have demonstrated that the celestial bodies are, in a sense, nothing more than the realization of atoms—atoms turned utterly and completely inside out!

Marx was most attracted to that feature of Epicurean atomism that had been consistently scorned by critics down through the centuries, by ancient doubters like Cicero and Plutarch and modern ones like Pierre Bayle and Immanuel Kant. In Marx's mind what the skeptics dismissed as bogus—the swerving motion of the atom—was actually the

pivotal idea of Epicurus' theory, for it suggested that the form of nature is determined by nature itself—that is, by the unrestricted interplay of its fundamental elements. Unlike Democritus and his many followers, who had restricted atomic motion to straight lines, Epicurus insisted that atoms must deviate from this regular motion, and that the deviating impulse originates within the atom. Here again the reasoning is dialectical, for this definition of atomic motion is the expression of an intrinsic negation. In swerving, the atom effectively negates the relative existence and non-self-sufficiency that is expressed by its unilinear motion in the void. It frees itself from strict uniformity, and in doing so establishes a primitive identity for itself, an "abstract individuality" as Marx calls it. As such, the atom is no longer characterized negatively, as *not*-being-the-void, but affirmatively, as pure being-for-self. It is only here, says Marx playfully, that we see the "real soul of the atom," for it is in the act of deviation that it acquires an identity that does not hinge on its relation to other things. By negating "all motion and relation by which it is determined as a particular mode of being by another being," the atom is reflected back into itself.[34] Conceived in this way, as reflectedness-into-self, it attains an identity that is not merely relative and external, but is its own. Indeed, as we shall see in more detail below, the atom's abstract individuality—its being-for-self—is characterized by the same logical form as human consciousness.

While the atom attains an initial individuality by virtue of its swerving away from externality, it does not realize itself concretely. Such realization is possible only when the atom differentiates itself from other atoms like itself in the act of repulsion. By abstracting itself from the otherness opposing

34. See pages 112–114 of this volume.

it, the swerving atom has related itself to itself and thereby acquired a sense of identity that is its own. But in this case its identity hinges on the negation of externality rather than on the interaction with it, a self-conception with obvious shortcomings. It is as if the swerving atom, in the light of its act of defiance, had scurried home, wishing nothing more than to be alone with itself. Yet the self-enclosed atom cannot hide from its formative negation; after all, it is the deviating motion that established the atom's self-sufficiency in the first place. The swerve has simply brought the negation home. What was once an immediate negation of pure externality (*not*-the-void) is now a moment of the atom's own self-conception: it is a negative unity that relates to itself as to its own other. It is not the negation of externality that defines this atom, nor is it realized as a simple being-for-self; on the contrary, the atom is positively established only when it is brought into negative relation with other atoms like itself in the act of repulsion. In repulsion the atom realizes its inner essence and fulfills its own law.

Though the topic of Marx's doctoral dissertation may at first glance seem obscure and its conclusions irrelevant to the ideas of even the so-called "early Marx" of the 1844 *Paris Manuscripts*, it should now be clear that this is far from the case. The substantive core of the dissertation—what we have called its dialectical atomism—provides an original demonstration of the immanent rationality of the natural world. It demonstrates that atoms, the so-called building blocks of reality, are properly understood not as a form of undifferentiated matter, but as a negative self-relation that unfurls and realizes its substantive being in a dynamic series of atomic forms. The essential role of negation in the determination of the atom's being is nicely illustrated by the Epicurean conception of atomic motion. The

swerving atom negates the simple linear motion attributed to it by Democritus and his followers, thereby allowing for the unpredictable collision and combination with other atoms that gives rise to the natural world.

If this account is correct, then it follows that the fate of atoms is determined not by some pre-ordained natural order or external agency, but by the swerve that is an expression of their own being. For Marx this idea was charged with significance, for it demonstrates that atoms embody the kind of self-sufficiency that necessarily underlies human consciousness and free will. Ultimately, as we know from his later writings, Marx was not interested in atoms or the nature of consciousness, but in human action and the social forms that determine its context. Yet by demonstrating the logical thread linking nature and consciousness, he prepared the way for a naturalistic theory of human action. Moreover, in considering the atom dialectically, that is, in the light of its inherent negations (*not* the void, *not* the other atom, etc.), Marx set up a pattern that he would follow for the rest of his life. Though he may have dropped all interest in overtly philosophical topics like "being" and "consciousness," he did not drop the manner of philosophy that attempts to understand the truth of things by thinking through and resolving their contradictions. In essence, the dialectical approach is just as characteristic of the magnum opus *Capital* as it is of the doctoral dissertation.

V

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the

> form of the object or of *contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, praxis*, not subjectively.
>
> The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that it is essential to educate the educator himself . . . The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionizing praxis.*
>
> The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.
> (Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*)[35]

Marx wrote these well-known "theses" in the spring of 1845, as he was settling intellectual scores with his former Hegelian colleagues in Berlin, and as he came to terms with the anti-Hegelian philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach. Whatever subtleties and insights may be hidden in these sentences, it is plain even to eyes unschooled in the intricacies of 19th century German thought that they express an urgent new vision of philosophy. Having already rejected the abstract and uncritical philosophy of Hegel in the years immediately following the completion of his doctoral dissertation, the Marx we read here is no less dismissive of the detached, contemplative approach typical of every sort of materialism, including, as he makes clear, the anthropolog-

35. Cited from *The Marx-Engels Reader* (translation slightly modified), pp. 144 & 145.

ical materialism of Feuerbach.[36] In their place, we find no definitive new ideology or comprehensive system of ideas, but rather signposts proclaiming the transformation of philosophy. The message expressed is terse and provocative: philosophers must aim not only to interpret the world, but to change it. In order to accomplish this aim philosophy must adjust its focus; it must replace inert abstractions like Hegel's "Spirit" and Feuerbach's "Species Being" with real sensuous objects. And its grasp of sensuous reality must be critical—it must intend not only to grasp the reason of things, but to make things more reasonable. When philosophers submit their thoughts to the test of reality, those initially abstract thoughts acquire the worldly substance that is necessary for them to be realized in practice.

The seeds of this "revolutionizing praxis" are already present in his dissertation writings. Though Marx was certainly under the spell of dialectical philosophy when he prepared his dissertation, we must remember that his attraction to Hegel was never uncritical. He admired the master's concrete idealism, with its emphasis on the rational structure of things, and with its insistence on thought's active role in the determination of reality. But for Hegel reality is philosophically relevant only insofar as it reflects reason, and the work of the speculative philosopher is focused on ideas and concepts rather than on things. Consequently, sensuous objects and worldly events are of interest as the expression of an underlying rationality rather than as phenomena with their own push and pull on the nature of

36. Marx's definitive break with Hegel came in the summer of 1843, during the course of an intensive study of the political doctrine from the latter's *Philosophy of Right*. See "Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State" in *Karl Marx: Early Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

things. As Marx realized, Hegelian idealism offers little critical resistance to the organization of human life.

By contrast, Marx's earliest philosophical thoughts are animated by just such a critical spirit. We see evidence of this first of all in the Forward to his dissertation, where Marx declares Prometheus, that mythic hero who dared to steal fire from the gods, as "the most eminent saint and martyr in the philosophical calendar." Epicurus, too, is embraced as an iconoclastic hero, for his "world-subduing" views spurn all theological dogma in order to make human happiness their central feature. Such expressions of critical humanism set a clear tone for the main body of the dissertation and are especially noteworthy in a work whose self-proclaimed subject—Greek atom theory—is so seemingly unpractical.

It is in the research notebooks of the dissertation and in an interesting footnote that we find the practical spirit of philosophy worked out in detail. In preparation for his dissertation Marx filled seven notebooks with his own thoughts and with lengthy excerpts in Greek and Latin summing up his research on the history of ancient philosophy. Most of this research is narrowly focused and very textual, and, therefore, of limited interest. The sixth notebook, however, contains several pages of commentary on the necessity of the practical emergence of philosophy in the wake of a total philosophy like that of Hegel. Similar ideas found their way indirectly into the body of the text in an extraordinary and revealing footnote from one of the missing sections of the first part of the dissertation. On these pages, we find that Marx had begun to develop a conception of philosophical practice that would prepare the way for a decisively new world view. The "praxis of philosophy," as he called it, requires philosophy to be turned as will against the world. And in the course of its critical encounter

with worldly reality, by virtue of the impact of that reality on its own concepts, philosophical theory must inevitably be transformed. For an increasingly self-conscious world, a world characterized by unprecedented power and riches (and their inevitable corruption), the owl of Minerva must hand over its wisdom to the heirs of Prometheus. Philosophy must once again steal fire from the gods.

In order to fully grasp this early conception of philosophical praxis, it will be necessary to draw forth some of the implications of Marx's critical interpretation of the Epicurean philosophy of nature. The dialectical analysis of the relation of matter and consciousness forms the necessary background for comprehending the relation of man and nature, and for understanding the proper role of human action in the world. With this background in hand, we can turn to the details of Marx's newly-formed reconciliation of theory and praxis.

As we have seen, Marx's analysis of the atom prepares the way for a dialectical re-consideration of nature as a whole. It suggests that the physical universe should be understood as the necessary manifestation of the atom's inner logic, and, consequently, that the logical forms characteristic of atomic being are present in some form in every kind of being. Indeed, this dialectical atomism demonstrates that what is implicit in our simplest conceptions of the atom becomes explicit by the time our thoughts arrive at the highest reaches of nature. For example, the abstract individuality of swerving atoms becomes concrete and universal in the form of heavenly bodies whose motion establishes the natural order of all bodies. But if we turn this grand formulation around, we see that these meteors (as Epicurus calls them) are nothing more than fully realized atoms.

Like Epicurus, Marx was less concerned about the cosmic dimension of natural philosophy, than its human

dimension. Specifically, Marx was interested to see if in any common ground might be discovered between the logic of natural bodies and the logic of human consciousness. As it turns out, there are some important parallels, and these are best illuminated by returning to our earlier account of atomic motion. We have seen that the Epicurean atom establishes a kind of abstract individuality in deviating from the regular motion of the straight line. In swerving away from the norm, the atom establishes a rudimentary identity of its own, thereby acquiring the form of what the Hegel-influenced student calls being-for-self. The swerve demonstrates that the atom's being is not dependent on some external agency, but is rather "for itself." Indeed, in swerving the atom negates all relation to otherness and it is literally a being-for-self.

Atomic being is further realized in the act of repulsion. In repulsing other atoms, the atom's identity is positively determined through a negative relation to other beings like itself. It is as if the one atom were saying "I know I am me, because that other atom is not me." But since the other atom is like it (insofar as it is also an atom), the relation established is effectively a self-relation. When relation-to-other becomes self-relation, then identity acquires the form of self-consciousness. By means of this negative self-relation, the atom arrives at the first form of self-consciousness. As Marx puts it, it corresponds "to that self-consciousness which conceives itself as immediate-being, as abstractly individual."[37]

Marx's elaboration of this point is frustratingly sketchy, but we can fill in some details by turning to Hegel's *Science of Logic*, a work that almost certainly inspired Marx's dissertation analysis.[38] According to Hegel's analysis, the idea of

37. See page 117 of this edition.

38. Most commentators focus on the relation of the concept of self-

self-consciousness has the form of being-for-self because it relates to its object as to its own self. Hegel describes this as a "reflectedness-into-self." As a general category, he adds, being-for-self "consists in having so transcended limitation, its otherness, that it is, as this negation, the infinite return into itself."[39] According to Hegelian logic, self-consciousness is "being-for-self as consummated and posited; the side of connection with an other, with an external object, is removed." Understood in this way, self-consciousness has the presence of infinity within it: it is no longer a product of determinations external to it, but is limited only by its own determinateness.[40]

Curiously, Marx's own analysis goes a step further. While acknowledging the being-for-self structure of the swerving atom, he takes great pains to also emphasize the material side of the atom. "In the repulsion of the atoms,

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consciousness in Marx's dissertation to Hegel's *Phenomenology*; cf. Patrick Murray, *Marx's Theory of Scientific Knowledge* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1988), pp. 13ff. Though there may be some parallels between Marx's conception of self-consciousness and the account in the *Phenomenology*, especially if the influence of Bruno Bauer is taken into account, it would be a mistake to overlook the role of Hegel's *Logic* on the development of Marx's early philosophical views.

39. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1969), p. 158. In a related passage, Hegel describes being-for-self as "the polemical, negative attitude towards the limiting other, and through this negation of the latter is a reflectedness-into-self, although *along* with this return of consciousness into itself and the ideality of the object, the *reality* of the object is *also* still preserved, in that it is *at the same time* known as an external existence" (Ibid).

40. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel describes the negative self-relation of consciousness as a movement of identity and sundering within consciousness: "Infinity, or this absolute unrest of pure self-movement, in which whatever is determined in one way or another, e.g. as being, is rather the opposite of this determinateness, this no doubt has been from the start the soul of all that has gone before . . ." *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 101.

therefore, their materiality, which was posited in the fall in a straight line, and their form-determination, which was established in the declination, are united synthetically."[41] As form, the atom is characterized by the infinite return to self described in Hegel's account of self-consciousness. Considered as matter, however, the emphasis is elsewhere. Repulsion may trigger a return to self, but the movement to self is initiated by an encounter with a determinate other. The atom can be a genuine being-for-self only if what lies outside it is not a mere abstraction, but is likewise a genuine being-for-self. Marx insists that the reality of the other as other is preserved in the movement of repulsion. Thus, the atom is not only a formal concept, but a material one as well: "*But when I relate myself to myself as to an immediate other, then my relationship is a material one.*"[42] Form and matter find their truth in a unity that is neither a formal abstraction nor a dead immediacy, but a self-related, material being.

We are now in a better position to comment on the relation of man and nature expressed in Marx's doctoral dissertation. We can say with confidence that Marx did not consider nature and self-conscious reason to be distinct from each other, but rather to be dialectically related. The divine—what Hegel calls the Idea—is not beyond nature, but is embodied in it; nor is it beyond human consciousness, for human con-

41. See page 117 of this volume. By "synthetic unity" Marx seems to have in mind the Kantian distinction between analytical and synthetic judgments. Whereas an analytical judgment expresses nothing in the predicate which is not in already in the concept of the subject, a synthetic judgment is expansive, increasing the given cognition. A "synthetic unity" in this sense is a unity larger than the sum of its parts. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena*, trans. Paul Carus (Lasalle, IL: Open Court, 1902), pp. 14–16. Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 786–818.

42. See page 117 of this edition.

sciousness is itself ideal. The logical form of consciousness, therefore, *is* the form of nature. Ultimately, even the highest sphere of nature, the heavens themselves, must have the same structure as self-conscious reason, a point which becomes clear in the final chapter of the dissertation where Marx considers the Epicurean theory of meteors.

This is not to say, however, that human being can be reduced to natural being, or vice versa. Though they share the form of self-conscious reason and, as such, are dialectically linked, man and nature are not identical, for their unity is charged with negation. Nonetheless, there is an undeniable parallel between what Lucretius calls *lex atomi*, the law of the atom, and *lex hominis*, the law of the human; both are defined as self-relating, material being. To extrapolate, we may say that to be fully human means not only to exist, to have immediate, material being, but also to be conscious of one's existence. Thus, to exist as a genuinely free individual involves some minimal recognition of one's material determination. Yet implied in such recognition is both an acceptance of one's natural immediacy, and a rejection of the limits imposed by the burden of such immediacy. *To be self-consciously human is to be both for and against nature.* In this sense, the individual human being is like the atom: it becomes actual only when it frees itself from relative determination and relates itself to itself. Marx puts it as follows: "Thus man ceases to be a product of nature only when the other being to which he relates himself is not a different existence but is itself an individual human being, even if it is not yet spirit [*Geist*]."[43] In other words, in order for humanity to realize the truth of its inner being, it must free itself from determination by external, relative being (as

43. See page 117 of this edition.

in the declination of the atom), and realize itself as its own proper object (as in the repulsion of the atom). At a very basic level then—what Marx will call abstract individuality—human beings realize the concept of their being and become free only when their relative being and the raw instincts associated with "the power of desire and of mere nature" have been crushed. Only when such dependence on mere nature has been negated and transcended do human beings arrive on the doorstep of self-consciousness, for it is only then that they are freed to determine themselves in relation to other human beings. Though such self-consciousness is still abstract—it lacks qualitative and historical determination—it nonetheless contains the seed of full spiritual actualization.

Recognition of the negativity implied in the relation of man to nature is the first step toward a new conception of the activity of philosophy because it redefines the concept of human autonomy. According to the initial position of the youthful Marx, it is impossible to fully understand what it means to be human without grasping the dialectical relation of man to nature. In its most basic sense, this means that to exist as a free individual is to recognize both one's material determination in and through nature, and one's formal determination against nature. To be human, in other words, is both to be natural, possessing immediate, material being, and to break away from such material determination in the act of free, self-conscious determination. This second, explicitly negative moment is of special interest, for it is here that we see the origins of Marx's conception of human praxis as a form of activity directed against the external world. In order to realize itself concretely, human self-consciousness must be active in the creation of a world where free interaction between individuals is possible. Just as the atom attains

to self-sufficiency only when it declines from the straight line and repels others from itself, human consciousness must be active and critically present in the world in order to gain autonomy and, thereby, to experience genuine freedom.

The most complete account of Marx's formative conception of the praxis of philosophy occurs in a footnote to one of the missing sections of his dissertation. What Marx describes here, at least in outline form, is the realization of Hegelian philosophy through its practical transformation as *critique*. The notion of philosophy's realization by means of a critical confrontation with the world follows a form that is similar to the atomic logic described above. Just as the atom acquires a positive identity only by repulsing the other atom from itself, so too must philosophy actualize its ideas by submitting them to the hard test of reality. In other words, it is only through some critical interaction with the world that our ideas about reality may be concretely realized. This is, to put it very roughly, the practical lesson that Marx derived from his dialectical examination of Epicurean atomism. In the dissertation, this lesson is initially expressed in terms of the dilemma of systematic philosophy after Hegel.

According to Marx, the project of philosophy in the wake of Hegel's completed system is to subject the existing world to criticism in order to actualize the Idea that philosophy knows to be implicit in it. As both left and right-wing Hegelians understood so well, the philosophical dilemma they inherited from the Master was caused by the discrepancy between the content of Hegel's philosophical system and the world of *Vormärz* Germany. Theoretically speaking, the system was complete; yet it was especially clear to the left-leaning Young Hegelians (including Marx) that the reality described in Hegel's philosophy did not correspond —at least not its social and political elements—to the reality of

1830's Prussia. For Marx, this meant that a special kind of criticism would be required in order to bring philosophical reality (i.e., Hegel's Idea) and the reality of the existing world into agreement with one another. The task of this "praxis of philosophy," as he called it, involves a kind of back-and-forth comparing of ideas and reality in which philosophy would serve as arbiter. In this sense, theory and praxis are understood as part of a single philosophical-critical activity:

> But the *praxis* of philosophy is itself *theoretical.* It is the *critique* that measures the individual existence by the essence, the particular reality by the Idea.[44]

According to this formulation, praxis is defined as the philosophical criticism of reality. The particular, existing reality must by measured by its essence—the speculative Idea—in order for it to be philosophically justified. In this way, Marx explains, theory becomes "practical energy" and "will." Critique, in turn, is best understood as the expression and actualization of the Idea; it is the abstract idea made worldly and concrete.

In this sense, the early Marxian conception of praxis is neither a rejection of philosophy in general, nor does it dispense with the Hegelian Idea. In fact, philosophy provides the measure by which reality must be judged and criticized. However, we must be careful not to oversimplify Marx's account of the theory-praxis relation. Philosophical criticism may be defined as the application of philosophical ideas to a separately conceived and imperfect reality only at the risk of sacrificing the dialectical nature of praxis. What initially seems like a simple "application" of ideas to reality

44. See page 149 of this edition.

is in reality an activity filled with contradiction; for the realization of philosophy is also its transformation:

> But this *immediate realization* of philosophy is in its deepest essence afflicted with contradictions, and this its essence takes form in the appearance and imprints its seal upon it.[45]

In becoming actual, as praxis, the Idea is itself transformed. The essence of philosophy takes form not independently, in abstraction from worldly matters, but in and through (and against) the world of appearance. Yet this immediate realization of the Idea is, Marx argues, "afflicted with contradictions" because—as appearance—its essence is no longer purely theoretical, but has already become worldly. In effect, this means that in becoming actual, the Idea is itself transformed, and that the activity of praxis is, therefore, a transmutation of theory.[46] The fundamental question for Marx as he began to work out a genuinely practical philosophy in the years prior to the *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844, as reflected in the passage cited above, was how to understand the practical relation of philosophy to the external world against which it struggles and which it criticizes.

Given the presence of the Idea in a modern world spiritually liberated and thus wholly capable of realizing its inherent possibilities, the task of philosophy must be re-defined.

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45. See page 149 of this edition.

46. This point has been made effectively by Nicholas Lobkowicz, who argues that Marx's realization that theory itself must be transformed in the praxis of philosophy (and that one, therefore, cannot simply apply absolute knowledge in the world), distinguishes him from the other Left Hegelians. *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), pp. 239–247.

This much was clear enough. For Marx and for other politically enlightened thinkers of his day, the opportunity for such inspired philosophizing was historically unique because of the radical spirit sweeping across the face of Europe in the form of social, industrial, and political revolution. Despite the entrenchment of conservative powers and regimes everywhere, the times were changing: the class structure in industrial Europe was shifting, waves of democracy and republicanism were gathering force, and massive production forces were being harnessed. In light of these developments, philosophy could no longer be conceived as the expression of an internally self-sufficient system of ideas. Its activity would have to be defined by an inner, theoretical logic, but also in terms of the external vagaries of a world against which it must struggle. The transition from system to freedom ushers in a different kind of philosophy, one whose flame is kindled not by its own self-sufficiency, but in tension against a world that only imperfectly reflects its essence:

> When philosophy turns itself as will against the world of appearance, then the system is lowered to an abstract totality, that is, it has become one aspect of the world which opposes another one. Its relationship to the world is one of reflection. Inspired by the urge to realize itself, it enters into tension against the other. The inner self-contentment and completeness has been broken. What was inner light has become consuming flame turning outwards.[47]

The imperfection of the world is thus philosophy's own imperfection because the activity of philosophy is itself

47. See page 149 of this edition.

worldly. For the youthful Marx, praxis is defined through its struggle against the world of appearance—a world which is not merely set over against philosophy, but which is also the substance through which philosophy is made determinate. Not only is philosophy worldly, but the world is, in this sense, philosophical.

The nature of the critical project implied in this transition to praxis and freedom is not uncomplicated. As the analysis of Epicurean atomism serves to demonstrate, what Marx understands as "essence" or "Idea" is no abstract metaphysical concept to be held up as a kind of Kantian regulative ideal. He had learned well enough from Hegel that the concept of essence is meaningless without appearance, just as form has no meaning without content. From the first mention of idealism in the 1837 letter to his father through the entire examination of Epicurean atomism Marx holds fast to this point. For Marx as for Hegel, therefore, ideas are not abstractions but are imbued with reality.

But for the youthful Marx it was necessary to take things a step or two further. He was in agreement with Hegel when the latter insisted that thought and being must coincide, and he recognized the significance of a conception of philosophy whose ideas were rooted in reality. It was such concrete idealism that had attracted him to Hegelian philosophy in the first place. But the Promethean spirit of Marx's mind would never be content with the traditional philosophical task of comprehending things; such a brand of thought is too conservative, too firmly rooted in the truth of yesterday. The motivating impulse of his earliest thinking was closer to that of Epicurus, whose radical humanism led him to subjugate scientific truth to happiness. For Epicurus the present and not the past has ultimate value, and the aim of life is not the discovery of unknown truths, but the maintenance of a peaceful state of

mind. Marx was not willing to compromise truth in quite this way, but, like Epicurus, he recognized the necessary role of human thought in the determination of knowledge. Accordingly, he viewed truth not as a product of passive comprehension, but as the result of an active and critical engagement with reality. Moreover, it is clear that for Marx the pursuit of philosophy is a practical affair; it is not a theoretical enterprise that is understood to possess value for its own sake, but a practical enterprise that is motivated by the good of humanity.

It was for these reasons that Marx was willing to subject the purity of philosophy to the impurity of the real world. On the one hand, this involved the relatively simple task of subjecting the world to philosophical criticism. Yet, on the other hand, this involved subjecting philosophy to worldly criticism—that is, making philosophy worldly.

> The result is that as the world becomes philosophical, philosophy also becomes worldly, that its realization is also its loss, that what it struggles against on the outside is its own inner deficiency, that in the very struggle it falls precisely into those defects which it fights as defects in the opposite camp, and that it can only overcome these defects by falling into them. That which opposes it and that which it fights is always the same as itself, only with factors inverted.[48]

Praxis is essentially philosophy's own critical struggle with itself; it is the process of philosophy's becoming determinate through its practical engagement with the world. Making philosophy worldly was, in one form or another, the intellectual project of Marx's life.

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48. See pages 149–150 of this edition.

LETTER FROM MARX TO HIS FATHER

IN TRIER[i]

First Published: *Die Neue Zeit* No. 1, 1897
Source: *Karx Marx in seinem Briefen*, Ed. Saul K. Padover
Publisher: Verlag C.H. Beck
Translation: Paul M. Schafer

Berlin, November 10, [1837]

Dear Father!

There are life-moments that, like border markers, stand before an expiring time while at the same time clearly pointing out a new direction.

In such transitional moments we feel ourselves compelled to observe the past and the future with eagle-eyes of thought, in order to attain consciousness of our actual position. Indeed, world history itself loves such looking back and inspection, which often impresses it with the appearance of retrogression and stagnation, while it is really only sitting back in the easy chair, in order to comprehend itself and to intellectually penetrate its own activity, the act of spirit.

The individual, however, becomes lyrical in such

i. **Editor's Note:** This letter was written at the end of Marx's first year in Berlin and provides a fascinating glimpse into the emotional and intellectual vicissitudes of the young student's life. For the reply of Marx's father, which is interesting in its own right, see the letter of December 9, 1837, on page 209 of this volume.

moments, for every metamorphosis is partly a swan song, partly the overture of a great new poem that strives to win a pose in blurred but brilliant colors. At such times we wish to erect a memorial to what has already been lived, so it may win back in the imagination the place it lost in the world of action; and where could we find a holier place than in the heart of our parents, who are the mildest judges and the innermost participants, like the sun of love whose fire warms the innermost center of our strivings! How better could amends and pardons be found for all that is objectionable and blameworthy than to take on the appearance of an essentially necessary condition? How at least could the often hostile game of chance, the straying of the spirit, better distance itself from the reproach of being due to a twisted heart?

If at the end of a year spent here I now cast a glance back at its conditions and so, my good father, answer your dear, dear letter from Ems, allow me to review my circumstances just as I observe life itself, as the expression of a spiritual activity, which develops on all sides, in science, art, and private affairs.

As I left you a new world was born for me, a world of love, and, indeed, in the beginning a love intoxicated with longing and empty of hope. The trip to Berlin, which otherwise would delight me in the highest degree, would excite in me the appreciation of nature, would fire up a love of life, left me cold. Indeed it put me in a noticeably bad humor, for the rocks which I saw were neither steeper nor more intimidating than the feelings of my soul, the wide cities were not more lively than my own blood, the tavern tables no more filled or indigestible than the packets of fantasy I carried with me, and finally, the art not so beautiful as Jenny.

Having arrived in Berlin, I broke off all previous relationships, made only few visits and those without joy, and sought to lose myself in science and art.

According to the spiritual situation at that time, the first subject, or at least the most pleasant and simplest to pick up was necessarily lyrical poetry. But my situation and development up to that point made this purely idealistic. My heaven, my art, became a remote beyond, just like my love. Everything real faded, and all faded things lose their boundaries. All of the poems of the first three volumes that Jenny received from me are characterized by attacks on the present times, by broad and formless feelings thrown together, where nothing is natural, everything constructed from out of the moon, the complete opposition of what is and what should be, rhetorical reflections rather than poetical thoughts, but perhaps also by a certain warmth of feeling and wrestling for vitality. The whole extent of a longing that sees no limit finds expression in many forms and makes "poetic composition" into mere "diffusion."

But poetry may only and should only be an accompaniment. I had to study jurisprudence and felt above all the urge to wrestle with philosophy. These were so tied together that, on the one hand, I read through Heineccius, Thibaut, and the sources purely uncritically, as a student would, and, for example, translated the two first books of the Pandects into German; on the other hand, I sought to delineate a philosophy of right through the whole field of law. I attached a few metaphysical propositions to it as an introduction and continued this unfortunate opus all the way to public law, a work of nearly 300 pages.

More than anything else, what came to the fore here was the same opposition between the actual and the possible that is peculiar to idealism, a serious defect that gave birth to the following clumsy and incorrect division. First came what I was pleased to christen the metaphysics of law, that is, foundational propositions, reflections, and concep-

tual determinations that were separated from all actual law and from every actual form of law, just like in Fichte, only in my case it was more modern and less substantial. Moreover, the unscientific form of mathematical dogmatism—where the subject runs around the matter, here and there rationalizing, while the topic itself is never formulated as a richly unfolding living thing – was from the very beginning a hindrance to grasping the truth. The triangle allows the mathematician to construct and to demonstrate, yet it remains a mere idea in space and doesn't develop any further. One must put it next to other things, and then it takes on other positions, and when this difference is added to what is already there, it acquires different relations and truths. By contrast, in the concrete expression of a living concept world, as in law, the state, nature, and all of philosophy, the object must be studied in its development, arbitrary divisions may not be brought in, and the reason of the thing itself must be disclosed as something imbued with contradictions and must find in itself its unity.

As a second division followed the philosophy of right, that is, according to my view at the time, an examination of the development of thoughts in positive Roman law, as if the positive law in its conceptual development (I do not mean in its purely finite determinations) could ever be something different from the formation of the concept of law, which was supposed to be covered in the first part.

On top of this, I had further divided this part into a doctrine of formal and material law. The former was the pure form of the system in its succession and its connections, the division and scope, while the latter, by contrast, was supposed to describe the content, the embodiment of the form in its content. This was a mistake that I shared with Herr v. Savigny, as I found later in his scholarly works on property,

only with the difference that he calls the formal concept-determination "finding the place which this or that doctrine takes in the (fictitious) Roman system," and material concept-determination as "the doctrine of positivity which the Romans ascribe to a concept established in this way," while I understood by form the necessary architectonic of conceptual formulations, and by material, the necessary quality of these formulations. The error lies in the fact that I believed that one could and must develop the one apart from the other, so that I obtained not an actual form, but only a desk with drawers, into which I afterwards poured sand.

The concept is certainly the mediating link between form and content. In a philosophical development of law, therefore, the one must spring forth from the other; indeed the form may only be the continuation of the content. Thus I arrived at a division whereby the subject could at best be sketched in an easy and shallow classification, but in which the spirit of the law and its truth disappeared. All law is divided into contractual and non-contractual. In order to make this clearer, I take the liberty of setting out the schema up to the division of *jus publicum*, which is also dealt with in the formal part.

I. *jus privatum.* II. *jus publicum.*

I. *jus privatum.*

a) on conditional contractual private law,
b) on unconditional non-contractual private law.

A. on Conditional Contractual Private Law.

a) personal law; b) property law; c) personal property law.

a) Personal law.

I. on the basis of encumbered contracts; II. on the basis of contracts of assurance; III. on the basis of charitable contracts.

I. on the basis of Encumbered Contracts.

2. commercial contracts (societas). 3. contracts of casements (location conductio).

3. Locatio conduction

1. insofar as it relates to operae.

a) location conduction proper (neither Roman renting nor leasing is meant!),

b) mandatum.

2. insofar as it relates to usus rei.

a) on land: ususfructus (also not in the merely Roman sense),

b) on houses: habitation.

II. on the basis of Contracts of Assurance.

1. arbitration or mediation contract. 2. insurance contract.

III. on the basis of Charitable Contracts.

2. Promissory Contract.

1. fidejussio. 2. negotiorum gestio.

3. Gift Contract.

b) Law of Things.

I. on the basis of Encumbered Contracts.

2. permutation stricte sic dicta.

1. permutation proper. 2. mutuum (usurae). 3. emtio venditio.

II. on the basis of Contracts of Assurance. pignus.

III. on the basis of Charitable Contracts. 2. commodatum. 3. depositum.

But how could I continue to fill the pages with things that I myself rejected? Tripartite divisions run through the whole thing, it is written with enervating complication, and the Roman concepts are barbarically misused so as to force them into my system. On the other side, I at least gained in this way an appreciation and an overview of something, at least in a certain way.

At the conclusion of the part on material private law I saw the falsity of the whole, the basic plan of which borders on that of Kant, but which diverges entirely from Kant in its elaboration, and again it became clear to me, that without philosophy it could not be pressed through to the end. So with a good conscience I allowed myself to be thrown into her arms again and wrote a new system of metaphysical principles, though at the conclusion I was once again compelled to observe the wrong-headedness of it, as with all of my earlier efforts.

Meanwhile I made a habit of the practice of excerpting passages from out of all the books that I read. I did so from Lessing's *Laokoon*, Solger's *Erwin*, Winckelmann's art history, Luden's German history, and at the same time scribbled down my own reflections. I also translated Tacitus' *Germania*, Ovid's *Tristria*, and started learning English and Italian on my own, that is, out of grammer books, though up to now I have accomplished nothing from this. I also read Klein's criminal law and his annals, and all of the newest literature, though this last only incidentally.

At the end of the semester I again sought muse dances and satyr music, and already in the last notebook that I sent to you, idealism plays its part through forced humor ("Scorpio and Felix") and through an unsuccessful, fantastic drama ("Oulanem"), until it finally undergoes a complete turnabout and turns into pure formal art, lacking inspired objects in most parts, and without any genuine train of thought.

And yet these last poems are the only ones in which suddenly as if touched by magic—ah! it was like a shattering blow in the beginning—the realm of true poetry flashed before me like a distant fairy palace, and all my creations crumbled into nothing.

Busy with these various occupations, I was awake through many nights during the first semester. Many battles had to be fought through, and I experienced both internal and external excitements. Yet in the end I emerged not so very enriched, and moreover I had neglected nature, art, and the world, and had pushed away my friends. My body apparently made these reflections, and a doctor advised me to visit the country. And so it was that I rode for the first time through the entire length of the city, all the way to the gate, and then to Stralow. I did not realize that there I would ripen from a pale, scrawny figure into a man with a robust and solid body.

A curtain was fallen, my holiest of holies was ripped apart, and new gods had to be set in their place.

From the idealism, which by the way, I had compared and nourished with the Kantian and Fichtean, I arrived at the point of seeking the idea in actuality itself. If the gods had earlier dwelt over the earth, so they were now made into its center.

I had read fragments of the Hegelian philosophy, whose grotesque rocky melody did not please me. I wanted to dive down into that ocean one more time, but with the certain

intention of finding that the nature of the mind is just as necessary, concrete and sure-grounded as the corporeal nature. I no longer wished to practice the fencing arts, but to bring pure pearls out into the sunlight.

I wrote a dialogue of about 24 pages: "Cleanthes, or the Starting Point and Necessary Progress of Philosophy." Here art and science, which had gotten entirely separated from each other, were to some extent unified, and like a vigorous wanderer I strode into the work itself, a philosophical dialectical account of divinity and how it manifests itself conceptually, as religion, as nature, and as history. My last proposition was the beginning of the Hegelian system, and this work, for which I acquainted myself to some extent with natural science, Schelling, and history, and which caused me endless headaches is so [. . . unintelligible here] written (since it was actually supposed to be a new logic) that I now can hardly think myself into it again. This, my dearest child, reared by moonlight, had carried me like a false siren to the arms of the enemy.

From irritation I couldn't think at all for a few days, walked around like mad in the garden by the dirty water of the Spree, which "washes the soul and dilutes the tea." I even joined a hunting party with my landlord, and then rushed off to Berlin, where I wanted to embrace every person standing on the street-corner.

Shortly thereafter I pursued only positive studies: Savigny's study of ownership, Feuerbach's and Grolmann's criminal law, *de verborum significatione* from Cramer, Wening-Ingenheim's Pandect system, and Mühlenbruch's *Doctrina pandectarum*, on which I am still working, and, finally, a few titles from Lauterbach, on civil process and above all ecclesiastical law, the first part of which, Gratian's *Concordia discordantium canonum*, I have almost entirely read through in cor-

pus and excerpted, as also the appendix, and Lancelotti's *Institutiones*. Then I translated Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in parts, read *de augmentis scientiarum* from the famous Bacon of Verulam, occupied myself much with Reimarus, whose book *On the artistic instincts of the Animals* I thought through with much enjoyment, and I also tackled German law, though primarily only insofar as going through the capitularies of the Franconian kings and the letters of the Popes to them.

From grief over Jenny's illness and my futile, failing intellectual labors, and out of debilitating irritation from having to make an idol out of a view I hated, I became sick, as I have already written you, dear father. When I was once again productive, I burned all of the poems and plans for novellas, etc., under the illusion that I could leave off from them entirely, for which I have until now delivered no evidence to the contrary.

During my period of poor health I had gotten to know Hegel from beginning to end, including most of his students. Through several meetings with friends in Stralow I got into a Doctor's Club, which includes several instructors and my most intimate of Berlin friends, Dr. Rutenberg. In argument here many conflicting views were pronounced, and I became even more firmly bound to the contemporary world philosophy, which I thought to escape, but everything full of noise was silenced and a true fit of irony came over me, as could easily happen after so many negations. This was also the time of Jenny's silence, and I couldn't rest until I had acquired modernity and the standpoint of the contemporary scientific view through a few terrible productions like "The Visit", etc.

If I have perhaps presented here this entire last semester neither clearly nor in sufficient detail, and if I have blurred over all subtleties, forgive me, dear father, for my longing to speak of the present.

Herr v. Chamisso sent to me a highly insignificant note, wherein he reports that "he regrets that the almanac can not use my contributions, because it has long since been printed." I swallowed this out of irritation. Bookseller Wigand has sent my plan to Dr. Schmidt, publisher of Wunder's warehouse of good cheese and bad literature. I enclose this letter; Dr. Schmidt has not yet replied. Meanwhile I am by no means giving the plan up, especially since all the aesthetic notables of the Hegelian school have promised their collaboration through the mediation of university lecturer Bauer, who plays a large role in the group, and of my colleague Dr. Rutenberg.

Now regarding the question of a career in cameralistics, my dear father, I have recently made the acquaintance of an assessor Schmidthänner, who advised me to go over to this as a justiciary after the third legal exam, which would be much easier for me to agree to, as I really prefer jurisprudence to any kind of administrative study. This man told me that in three years he himself and many others from the Münster provincial court in Westphalia had become assessors, which is not supposed to be difficult, with hard work of course, because the stages there are not like those in Berlin and elsewhere, where things are strictly determined. If one is later promoted from assessor to doctor, there are also much brighter outlooks, in the same way, of becoming an extraordinary professor, as happened with Herr Gärtner in Bonn, who wrote a mediocre book on provincial legislation and otherwise is only known from belonging to the Hegelian school of jurists. But my dear, good father, wouldn't it be possible to discuss all of this with you in person?! Eduard's condition, the suffering of dear mother, your own poor health—although I hope that it is not bad—everything leads me to wish, indeed makes it nearly into a neces-

sity, to hurry home to you. I would already be there, if I did not definitely doubt your permission and agreement.

Believe me my dear, true father, no selfish intention pushes me (although I would be ecstatic to see Jenny again), but there is a thought that moves me, though I have no right to express it. It would in many respects be a hard step to take, but as my only sweet Jenny writes, these considerations all fall apart when faced with the fulfillment of duties, which are sacred.

I beg you, dear father, however you might decide, not to show this letter, or at least not this page, to my angel of a mother. My sudden arrival could perhaps comfort the great, wonderful woman.

The letter which I wrote to mother was composed long before the arrival of Jenny's lovely correspondence, and so perhaps I have unknowingly written too much about things that are not entirely or even very little suitable.

In the hope that little by little the clouds disperse that have gathered around our family, that it may not be begrudged me to suffer and weep with you and, perhaps, to demonstrate in your nearness the deep affection and immense love that I am so often only able to express so poorly; in the hope that you too my dear, eternally beloved father, mindful of my agitated state of mind, will forgive me where my heart so often appears to have erred, overwhelmed as it is by my combative spirit, and that you will soon be fully restored again, so that I can press you to my own heart and express to you all of my thoughts.

Your ever loving son Karl

Forgive dear father, the illegible script and the poor style; it is nearly 4 in the morning, the candle is completely burnt

out and the eyes dim; a true unrest has taken mastery of me and I will not be able to calm the excited spirits until I am in your dear presence. Please give my greetings to my sweet, dear Jenny. Her letter has already been read twelve times through, and I always discover new delights. It is in every respect, including style, the most beautiful letter that I can imagine from a woman.

MARX'S DOCTORAL DISSERTATION[ii]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEMOCRITEAN AND EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

WITH AN APPENDIX

Written: March 1841
First Published: *Aus dem Literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, Vol. I, 1902
Source: *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Volume 1; pp 25–108
Publisher: Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1975
Translation: Dirk J. and Sally R. Struik

ii. **Editor's Note:** What follows is the complete text of the extant portion of Marx's doctoral dissertation. The original manuscript of the dissertation has been lost, and what remains is an incomplete copy written by an unknown person with corrections and insertions in Marx's own handwriting. The fourth and fifth chapters of Part One are missing, along with all but two fragments from the Appendix.

To his dear fatherly friend,
LUDWIG VON WESTPHALEN[iii],
Geheimer Regierungsrat
at Trier,
the author dedicates these
lines as a token
of filial love

You will forgive me, my *dear fatherly friend*, if I set *your* name, so dear to me, at the head of an insignificant brochure. I am too impatient to await another opportunity of giving *you* a small proof of my love.

May everyone who doubts of the Idea be so fortunate as I, to be able to admire an old man who has the strength of youth, who greets every forward step of the times with the enthusiasm and the prudence of truth and who, with that profoundly convincing sun-bright idealism which alone knows the true word at whose call all the spirits of the world appear, never recoiled before the deep shadows of retrograde ghosts, before the often dark clouds of the times, but rather with godly energy and manly confident gaze saw through all veils the empyreum which burns at the heart of the world. *You, my fatherly friend,* were always a living *argumentum ad oculos* [visible proof] to me, that idealism is no figment of the imagination, but a truth.

I need not pray for your physical well-being. The spirit is the great physician versed in magic, to whom you have entrusted yourself.

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iii. **Editor's Note:** Ludwig von Westphalen was the father of Marx's fiancée, Jenny von Westphalen.

CONTENTS[iv]

iv. **Editor's Note:** This edition includes all of the extant portions of the doctoral dissertation as it is here laid out in Marx's table of contents. There are no known copies of the last two chapters of Part One, and all but a small fragment of the Appendix is also missing.

FOREWARD

The form of this treatise would have been on the one hand more strictly scientific, on the other hand in many of its arguments less pedantic, if its primary purpose had not been that of a doctor's dissertation. I am nevertheless constrained by external reasons to send it to the press in this form. Moreover I believe that I have solved in it a heretofore unsolved problem in the history of Greek philosophy.

The experts know that no preliminary studies that are even of the slightest use exist for the subject of this treatise. What Cicero and Plutarch have babbled has been babbled after them up to the present day. Gassendi, who freed Epicurus from the interdict which the Fathers of the Church and the whole Middle Ages, the period of realised unreason, had placed upon him, presents in his expositions only one interesting element. He seeks to accommodate his Catholic conscience to his pagan knowledge and Epicurus to the Church, which certainly was wasted effort. It is as though one wanted to throw the habit of a Christian nun over the bright and flourishing body of the Greek Lais. It is rather that Gassendi learns philosophy from Epicurus than that he could teach us about Epicurus' philosophy.

This treatise is to be regarded only as the preliminary to a larger work in which I shall present in detail the cycle of Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic philosophy in their relation to the whole of Greek speculation. The shortcomings of this treatise, in form and the like, will be eliminated in that later work.

To be sure, *Hegel* has on the whole correctly defined the general aspects of the above-mentioned systems. But in the admirably great and bold plan of his history of philosophy,

from which alone the history of philosophy can in general be dated, it was impossible, on the one hand, to go into detail, and on the other hand, the giant thinker was hindered by his view of what he called speculative thought *par excellence* from recognising in these systems their great importance for the history of Greek philosophy and for the Greek mind in general. These systems are the key to the true history of Greek philosophy. A more profound indication of their connection with Greek life can be found in the essay of my friend Köppen, *Friedrich der Grosse und seine Widersacher*.

If a critique of Plutarch's polemic against Epicurus' theology has been added as an appendix, this is because this polemic is by no means isolated, but rather representative of an *espèce*, [species, type] in that it most strikingly presents in itself the relation of the theologising intellect to philosophy.

The critique does not touch, among other things, on the general falsity of Plutarch's standpoint when he brings philosophy before the forum of religion. In this respect it will be enough to cite, in place of all argument, a passage from David Hume:

> " . . .'Tis certainly a kind of indignity to philosophy, whose *sovereign authority* ought everywhere to be acknowledged, to oblige her on every occasion to make apologies for her conclusions and to justify herself to every particular art and science which may be offended at her. *This puts one in mind of a king arraign'd for high treason against his subjects.*"

Philosophy, as long as a drop of blood shall pulse in its world-subduing and absolutely free heart, will never grow tired of answering its adversaries with the cry of Epicurus:

Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them, is truly impious.

Philosophy makes no secret of it. The confession of Prometheus:

"In simple words, I hate the pack of gods."

is its own confession, its own aphorism against all heavenly and earthly gods who do not acknowledge human self-consciousness as the highest divinity. It will have none other beside.

But to those poor March hares who rejoice over the apparently worsened civil position of philosophy, it responds again, as Prometheus replied to the servant of the gods, Hermes:

Be sure of this, I would not change my state
Of evil fortune for your servitude.
Better to be the servant of this rock
Than to be faithful boy to Father Zeus.

Prometheus is the most eminent saint and martyr in the philosophical calendar.

Berlin, March 1841

Part One

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEMOCRITEAN AND EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE IN GENERAL

I. The Subject of the Treatise

Greek philosophy seems to have met with something with which a good tragedy is not supposed to meet, namely, a dull ending. The objective history of philosophy in Greece seems to come to an end with Aristotle, Greek philosophy's Alexander of Macedon, and even the manly-strong Stoics did not succeed in what the Spartans did accomplish in their temples, the chaining of Athena to Heracles so that she could not flee.

Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics are regarded as an almost improper addition bearing no relation to its powerful premises. Epicurean philosophy is taken as a syncretic combination of Democritean physics and Cyrenaic morality; Stoicism as a compound of Heraclitean speculation on nature and the Cynical-ethical view of the world, together with some Aristotelean logic; and finally Scepticism as the necessary evil confronting these dogmatisms. These philosophies are thus unconsciously linked to the Alexandrian philosophy by being made into a one-sided and tendentious eclecticism. The Alexandrian philosophy is finally regarded entirely as exaltation and derangement—a confusion in which at most the universality of the intention can be recognised.

To be sure, it is a commonplace that birth, flowering and decline constitute the iron circle in which everything human is enclosed, through which it must pass. Thus it would not have been surprising if Greek philosophy, after having reached its zenith in Aristotle, should then have withered. But the death of the hero resembles the setting of the sun, not the bursting of an inflated frog.

And then: birth, flowering and decline are very general, very vague notions under which, to be sure, everything can be arranged, but through which nothing can be understood. Decay itself is prefigured in the living; its shape should therefore be just as much grasped in its specific characteristic as the shape of life. Finally, when we glance at history, are Epicureanism, Stoicism and Scepticism particular phenomena? Are they not the prototypes of the Roman mind, the shape in which Greece wandered to Rome? Is not their essence so full of character, so intense and eternal that the modern world itself has to admit them to full spiritual citizenship?

I lay stress on this only in order to call to mind the historical importance of these systems. Here, however, we are not at all concerned with their significance for culture in general, but with their connection with the older Greek philosophy.

Should not this relationship urge us at least to an inquiry, to see Greek philosophy ending up with two different groups of eclectic systems, one of them the cycle of Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic philosophy, the other being classified under the collective name of Alexandrian speculation? Furthermore, is it not remarkable that after the Platonic and Aristotelean philosophies, which are universal in range, there appear new systems which do not lean on these rich intellectual forms, but look farther back and have recourse to the simplest schools—to the philosophers of nature in

regard to physics, to the Socratic school in regard to ethics? Moreover, what is the reason why the systems that follow after Aristotle find their foundations as it were ready made in the past, why Democritus is linked to the Cyrenaics and Heraclitus to the Cynics? Is it an accident that with the Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics all moments of self-consciousness are represented completely, but every moment as a particular existence? Is it an accident that these systems in their totality form the complete structure of self-consciousness? And finally, the character with which Greek philosophy mythically begins in the seven wise men, and which is, so to say as its central point, embodied in Socrates as its *demiurge*—I mean the character of the wise man, of the *sophos*—is it an accident that it is asserted in those systems as the reality of true science?

It seems to me that though the earlier systems are more significant and interesting for the content, the post-Aristotelean ones, and primarily the cycle of the Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic schools, are more significant and interesting for the subjective form, the character of Greek philosophy. But it is precisely the subjective form, the spiritual carrier of the philosophical systems, which has until now been almost entirely ignored in favour of their metaphysical characteristics.

I shall save for a more extensive discussion the presentation of the Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic philosophies as a whole and in their total relationship to earlier and later Greek speculation.

Let it suffice here to develop this relationship as it were by an example, and only in one aspect, namely, their relationship to earlier speculation.

As such an example I select the relationship between the Epicurean and the Democritean philosophy of nature. I do not believe that it is the most convenient point of con-

tact. Indeed, on the one hand it is an old and entrenched prejudice to identify Democritean and Epicurean physics, so that Epicurus' modifications are seen as only arbitrary vagaries. On the other hand I am forced to go into what seem to be microscopic examinations as far as details are concerned. But precisely because this prejudice is as old as the history of philosophy, because the differences are so concealed that they can be discovered as it were only with a microscope, it will be all the more important if, despite the interdependence of Democritean and Epicurean physics, an essential difference extending to the smallest details can be demonstrated. What can be demonstrated in the small can even more easily be shown where the relations are considered in larger dimensions, while conversely very general considerations leave doubt whether the result will hold when applied to details.

II. Opinions on the Relationship between Democritean and Epicurean Physics

The way in which my general outlook is related to earlier points of view will become quite obvious if a brief review is made of the opinions held by the ancient authors concerning the relationship between Democritean and Epicurean physics.

Posidonius the Stoic, *Nicolaus* and *Sotion* reproach Epicurus for having presented the Democritean doctrine of atoms and Aristippus' teaching on pleasure as his own.[1] Cotta the Academician asks in Cicero: "What is there in Epicurus' physics which does not belong to Democritus? True, he modifies some details, but most of it he repeats after him."[2] Cicero himself says similarly:

> "In physics, where he is the most pretentious, Epicurus is a perfect stranger. Most of it belongs to Democritus; where he deviates from him, where he endeavours to improve, he spoils and worsens it."[3]

Although many authors reproach Epicurus for aspersions against Democritus, Leonteus, according to Plutarch, affirms on the contrary that Epicurus honoured Democritus because the latter had adhered to the true doctrine before him, because he had discovered the principles of nature earlier.[4] In the essay *De placitis philosophorum* Epicurus is called one who philosophises after the manner of Democritus.[5] Plutarch in his *Colotes* goes further. Successively comparing Epicurus with Democritus, Empedocles, Parmenides, Plato, Socrates, Stilpo, the Cyrenaics and the Academicians, he seeks to prove that "Epicurus appropriated from the whole of Greek philosophy the false and did not understand the true".[6] Likewise the treatise *De eo, quod secundum Epicurum non beats vivi possit* teems with inimical insinuations of a similar kind.

In the Fathers of the Church we find this unfavourable opinion, held by the more ancient authors, maintained. In the note I quote only one passage from Clement of Alexandria,[7] a Father of the Church who deserves to be prominently mentioned with regard to Epicurus, since he reinterprets the warning of the apostle Paul against philosophy in general into a warning against Epicurean philosophy, as one which did not even once spin fantasies concerning providence and the like.[8] But how common was the tendency to accuse Epicurus of plagiarism is shown most strikingly by Sextus Empiricus, who wishes to turn some quite inappropriate passages from Homer and Epicharmus into principal sources of Epicurean philosophy.[9]

It is well known that the more recent writers by and large make Epicurus, insofar as he was a philosopher of nature, a mere plagiarist of Democritus. The following statement of Leibniz may here represent their opinion in general:

> "Of this great man" (Democritus) "we scarcely know anything but what Epicurus borrowed from him, and Epicurus was not capable of always taking the best."[10]

Thus while Cicero says that Epicurus worsened the Democritean doctrine, at the same time crediting him at least with the will to improve it and with having an eye for its defects, while Plutarch ascribes to him inconsistency[11] and a predisposition toward the inferior, hence also casts suspicion on his intentions, Leibniz denies him even the ability to make excerpts from Democritus skillfully.

But all agree that Epicurus borrowed his physics from Democritus.

III. Difficulties Concerning the Identity of the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature

Apart from historical testimony, there is much other evidence for the identity of Democritean and Epicurean physics. The principles — atoms and the void — are indisputably the same. Only in isolated cases does there seem to be arbitrary, hence unessential, difference.

However, a curious and insoluble riddle remains. Two philosophers teach exactly the same science, in exactly the same way, but — how inconsistent! — they stand diametri-

cally opposed in all that concerns truth, certainty, application of this science, and all that refers to the relationship between thought and reality in general. I say that they stand diametrically opposed, and I shall now try to prove it.

A. The opinion of Democritus *concerning the truth and certainty of human knowledge* seems hard to ascertain. Contradictory passages are to be found, or rather it is not the passages, but Democritus' views that contradict each other. For Trendelenburg's assertion in his commentary to Aristotelean psychology, that only later authors, but not Aristotle, knew of such contradictions, is factually incorrect. Indeed, in Aristotle's *Psychology* it is stated: "Democritus posits soul and mind [*Verstand*] as one and the same, since the phenomenon is the true thing."[12] But in his *Metaphysics* he writes: "Democritus asserts that nothing is true or it is concealed from us."[13] Are not these passages of Aristotle contradictory? If the phenomenon is the true thing, how can the true thing be concealed? The concealment begins only when phenomenon and truth separate. But Diogenes Laertius reports that Democritus was counted among the Sceptics. His saying is quoted: "In reality we know nothing, for truth lies at the deep bottom of the well."[14] Similar statements are found in *Sextus Empiricus*.[15]

This sceptical, uncertain and internally self-contradictory view held by Democritus is only further developed in *the way* in which *the relationship between the atom and the world which is apparent to the senses is determined.*

Sensuous appearance, on the one hand, does not belong to the atoms themselves. It is not *objective appearance*, but *subjective semblance* [*Schein*]. "The *true* principles are the atoms and the void, *everything else is opinion, semblance.*"[16] "Cold exists only according to opinion, heat exists only according to opinion, but in reality there are

only the atoms and the void."[17] Unity therefore does not truly result from the many atoms, but rather "through the combination of atoms each thing *appears* to become a unity".[18] The principles can therefore be perceived only through reason, since they are inaccessible to the sensuous eye if only because of their smallness. For this reason they are even called *ideas*.[19] The sensuous appearance is, on the other hand, the only true object, and the *aisthesis* [sensuous perception] is the *phronesis* [that which is rational]; this true thing however is the changing, the unstable, the phenomenon. But to say that the phenomenon is the true thing is contradictory.[20] Thus now the one, now the other side is made the subjective and the objective. The contradiction therefore seems to be held apart, being divided between two worlds. Consequently, Democritus makes sensuous reality into subjective semblance; but the antinomy, banned from the world of objects, now exists in his own self-consciousness, where the concept of the atom and sensuous perception face each other as enemies.

Thus Democritus does not escape the antinomy. This is not yet the place to explain it. It is enough that we cannot deny its existence.

Now let us listen to Epicurus.

The *wise man*, he says, takes a dogmatic, *not* a *sceptical* position.[21] Yes, exactly this makes him superior to all the others, that he knows with conviction.[22] "All senses are heralds of the true."[23] "*Nor is there anything which can refute sensations*, neither like can refute like, because of their equal validity, nor can unlike refute unlike, because they do not pass judgment on the same thing, nor the concept, because the concept depends on the sensuous perceptions,"[24] as it says in the *Canon*. But while Democritus turns the sensuous world into *subjective semblance*, *Epicurus* turns it into

objective appearance. And here he differs quite consciously, since he claims that he shares *the same principles but* that he does not reduce the sensuous qualities to things *of mere opinion.*[25]

Since therefore sensation was in fact Epicurus' standard, since objective appearance corresponds to it: then we can only regard as a correct conclusion that at which Cicero shrugs his shoulder:

> "The sun seems large to Democritus, because he is a man of science well versed in geometry; to Epicurus it seems to be about two feet large, for he pronounces it as large as it *seems.*"[26]

B. This *difference* in the *theoretical judgments* of Democritus and Epicurus concerning the certainty of science and the truth of its objects *manifests* itself in the *disparate scientific energy* and *practice* of these men.

Democritus, for whom the principle does not enter into the appearance, remains without reality and existence, is faced on the other hand with the *world of sensation* as the real world, full of content. True, this world is subjective semblance, but just because of this it is torn away from the principle, left in its own independent reality. At the same time it is the unique real object and *as such* has value and significance. Democritus is therefore driven into *empirical observation*. Dissatisfied with philosophy, he throws himself into the arms of *positive knowledge.* We have already seen that Cicero calls him a *vir eruditus* [Man of Science]. He is versed in physics, ethics, mathematics, in the encyclopedic disciplines, in every art.[27] The catalogue alone of his books given by Diogenes Laertius bears witness to his erudition.[28] But since it is the characteristic trait of erudition to expand

in breadth and to collect and to search on the outside, we see Democritus *wandering through half the world* in order to acquire experiences, knowledge and observations.

> "I have among my contemporaries," he prides himself, "wandered through the largest part of the earth, investigating the remotest things. I have seen most climates and lands, and I have heard most learned men, and in linear composition with demonstration no one surpassed me, not even the so-called Arsipedonapts of the Egyptians."[29]

Demetrius in the *Homonymois* [*Men of the Same Name*] and Antisthenes in the *Diadochais* [*Successions of Philosophers*] report that he travelled to Egypt to the priests in order to learn geometry, and to the Chaldeans in Persia, and that he reached the Red Sea. Some maintain that he also met the gymnosophists in India and set foot in Ethiopia.[30] On the one hand it is the lust for knowledge that leaves him no rest; but it is at the same time dissatisfaction with true, i. e., *philosophical, knowledge* that drives him far abroad. The knowledge which he considers true is without content, the knowledge that gives him content is without truth. It could he a fable, but a true fable, that anecdote of the ancients, since it gives a picture of the contradictory elements in his being. Democritus is supposed to have blinded himself so that the *sensuous light of the eye* would not darken the *sharpness of intellect*.[31] This is the same man who, according to Cicero, wandered through half the world. But he did not find what he was looking for.

An opposite figure appears to us in Epicurus.

Epicurus is *satisfied* and *blissful* in *philosophy*.

> "You must," he says, "serve philosophy so that true freedom will be your lot. He who has subordinated and surrendered himself to it does not need to wait, he is emancipated at once. For to serve philosophy is freedom itself.[32] Consequently he teaches: "Let no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late to secure the health of his soul. And the man who says that the age for philosophy has either not yet come or has gone by is like the man who says that the age for happiness is not yet come to him, or has passed away."[33]

While Democritus, dissatisfied with philosophy, throws himself into the arms of empirical knowledge, *Epicurus has nothing but contempt for the positive sciences*, since in his opinion they contribute nothing to true perfection.[34] He is called an *enemy of science*, a scorner of grammar.[35] He is even accused of ignorance. "But," says an Epicurean in Cicero, "it was not Epicurus who was without erudition, but those are ignorant who believe that what is shameful for a boy not to know ought still to be recited by the old man."[36]

But while Democritus seeks to learn from Egyptian priests, Persian Chaldeans and Indian gymnosophists, Epicurus prides himself on not having had a teacher, on being self-taught.[37] There are some people, he says according to Seneca, who struggle for truth without any assistance. Among these people he has himself traced out his path. And it is they, the self-taught, whom he praises most. The others, according to him, are second-rate minds.[38] While Democritus is driven into all parts of the world, Epicurus leaves his garden in Athens scarcely two or three times and

travels to Ionia, not to engage in studies, but to visit friends.[39] Finally, while Democritus, despairing of acquiring knowledge, blinds himself, Epicurus, feeling the hour of death approaching, takes a warm bath, calls for pure wine and recommends to his friends that they be faithful to philosophy.[40]

C. The differences that we have just set forth should not be attributed to the accidental individuality of the two philosophers; they embody two opposite tendencies. We see as a difference of practical energy that which is expressed in the passages above as a difference of theoretical consciousness.

We consider finally the *form of reflection* which *expresses the relation of thought to being, their mutual relationship.* In the general relationship which the philosopher sees between the world and thought, he merely makes objective for himself the relation of his own particular consciousness to the real world.

Now Democritus uses necessity as a form of reflection of reality.[41] Aristotle says of him that he traces everything back to necessity.[42] Diogenes Laertius reports that the vortex of atoms, the origin of all, is the Democritean necessity.[43] More satisfactory explanations are given by the author of *De placitis philosophorum*:

> "Necessity is, according to Democritus, fate and law, providence and the creator of the world. But the substance of this necessity is the antitype and the movement and impulse of matter."[44]

A similar passage is to be found in the *Physical Selections* of *Stobaeus*[45] and in the sixth book of the *Praeparatio evangelica of Eusebius.*[46] In the *Ethical Selections* of Stobaeus the

following aphorism of Democritus is preserved[47]—it is almost exactly repeated in the 14th book of Eusebius[48]: human beings like to create for themselves the illusion of chance—a manifestation of their own perplexity, since chance [*Zufall*] is incompatible with sound thinking. *Simplicius* similarly attributes to Democritus a passage in which Aristotle speaks of the ancient doctrine that does away with chance.[49]

Contrast this with Epicurus:

> "Necessity, introduced by some as the absolute ruler, *does not exist*, but some things are *accidental*, others depend on our *arbitrary will*. Necessity cannot be persuaded, but chance is unstable. It would be better to follow the myth about the gods than to be a slave to the *heimarmene* [what has been decreed, destiny] of the physicists. For the former leaves hope for mercy if we do honour to the gods, while the latter is inexorable necessity. But it is *chance*, which must be accepted, *not God*, as the multitude believe."[50] "It is a misfortune to live in necessity, but to live in necessity is not a necessity. On all sides many short and easy paths to freedom are open. Let us therefore thank God that no man can be kept in life. It is permitted to subdue necessity itself."[51]

The Epicurean Velleius in Cicero says something similar about Stoic philosophy:

> "What are we to think of a philosophy in which, as to ignorant old women, everything seems to occur through fate? . . . by Epicurus we have been redeemed, set free."[52]

Thus Epicurus even *denies disjunctive judgment* so as not to have to acknowledge any concept of necessity.[53]

True, it is claimed that Democritus also used the concept of chance, but of the two passages on this matter which can be found in Simplicius[54] the one renders the other suspect, because it shows clearly that it was not Democritus who used the category of chance, but Simplicius who ascribed it to him as a consequence. For he says: Democritus assigns, generally speaking, no cause for the creation of the world, he *seems* therefore to make chance the cause. Here, however, we are concerned not with the *determination of the content*, but with the *form* used *consciously* by Democritus. The situation is similar in regard to the report by Eusebius that Democritus made chance the ruler of the universal and divine and claimed that here it is through chance that everything happens, whereas he excluded chance from human life and empirical nature and called its supporters foolish.[55]

In part, we see in these statements only a desire of the Christian bishop *Dionysius* for conclusion-forcing. In part, where the universal and divine begin, the Democritean concept of necessity ceases to differ from chance.

Hence, this much is historically certain: *Democritus* makes use of *necessity*, Epicurus of chance. And each of them rejects the opposite view with polemical irritation.

The principal consequence of this difference appears in the way individual physical phenomena are explained.

Necessity appears in finite nature as *relative necessity*, as *determinism*. Relative necessity can only be deduced from *real possibility*, i.e., it is a network of conditions, reasons, causes, etc., by means of which this necessity reveals itself. Real possibility is the explication of relative necessity. And we find it used by Democritus. We cite some passages from Simplicius.

If somebody is thirsty and drinks and feels better, Democritus will not assign chance as the cause, but thirst. For, even though he seems to use chance in regard to the creation of the world, yet he maintains that chance is not the cause of any particular event, but on the contrary leads back to other causes. Thus, for example, digging is the cause of a treasure being found, or growing the cause of the olive tree.[56]

The enthusiasm and the seriousness with which Democritus introduces this manner of explanation into the observation of nature, the importance he attaches to the striving to ascertain causes, are naively expressed in his avowal:

"I would rather discover a new aetiology than acquire the Persian crown."[57]

Once again Epicurus stands directly opposed to Democritus. Chance, for him, is a reality which has only the value of possibility. *Abstract possibility*, however, is the direct *antipode of real possibility*. The latter is restricted within sharp boundaries, as is the intellect; the former is unbounded, as is the imagination. Real possibility seeks to explain the necessity and reality of its object; abstract possibility is not interested in the object which is explained, but in the subject which does the explaining. The object need only be possible, conceivable. That which is abstractly possible, which can be conceived, constitutes no obstacle to the thinking subject, no limit, no stumbling-block. Whether this possibility is also real is irrelevant, since here the interest does not extend to the object as object.

Epicurus therefore proceeds with a boundless nonchalance in the explanation of separate physical phenomena.

More light will be thrown upon this fact by the letter to Pythocles, later to be considered. Suffice it here to draw attention to Epicurus' attitude to the opinions of earlier

physicists. Where the author of *De Placitis philosophorum* and Stobaeus quote the different views of the philosophers concerning the substance of the stars, the size and shape of the sun and similar matters, it is always said of Epicurus: He rejects none of these opinions, *all could* be right, he adheres to the *possible*.[58] Yes, Epicurus polemicises even against the rationally determining, and for precisely this reason one-sided, method of explanation by real possibility.

Thus *Seneca* says in his *Quaestiones naturales*: Epicurus maintains that all these causes are possible, and then attempts in addition still other explanations. He *blames* those who claim that any particular one of them occurs, because it is rash to judge apodictically about that which can only be deduced from conjectures.[59]

One can see that there is no interest in investigating the real causes of objects. All that matters is the tranquillity of the explaining subject. Since everything possible is admitted as possible, which corresponds to the character of abstract possibility, the *chance of being* is clearly transferred only into the *chance of thought*. The only rule which Epicurus prescribes, namely, that "the explanation should *not contradict* sensation", is self-evident; for to be abstractly possible consists precisely in being free from contradiction, which therefore must be avoided.[60] And Epicurus confesses finally that his method of explaining aims only at the *ataraxy of self-consciousness, not* at *knowledge of nature in and for itself*.[61]

It requires no further clarification to show how in this matter, too, Epicurus differs from Democritus.

We thus see that the two men are opposed to each other at every single step. The one is a sceptic, the other a dogmatist; the one considers the sensuous world as subjective semblance, the other as objective appearance. He who considers the sensuous world as subjective semblance

applies himself to empirical natural science and to positive knowledge, and represents the unrest of observation, experimenting, learning everywhere, ranging over the wide, wide world. The other, who considers the phenomenal world to be real, scorns empiricism; embodied in him are the serenity of thought satisfied in itself, the self-sufficiency that draws its knowledge *ex principio interno.* But the contradiction goes still farther. The *sceptic* and *empiricist*, who holds sensuous nature to be subjective semblance, considers it from the point of view of *necessity* and endeavours to explain and to understand the real existence of things. The *philosopher* and *dogmatist*, on the other hand, who considers appearance to be real, sees everywhere only chance, and his method of explanation tends rather to negate all objective reality of nature. There seems to be a certain absurdity in these contradictions.

It hardly seems still possible to presume that these men, who contradict each other on all points, will adhere to one and the same doctrine. And yet they seem to be chained to each other.

The task of the next section is to comprehend their relationship in general.[v]

v. **Editor's Note:** The manuscript of the section to which Marx here refers ("General Difference in Principle Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature") has not been found.

Part Two

ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEMOCRITEAN AND EPICUREAN PHYSICS IN DETAIL

Chapter One: The Declination of the Atom from the Straight Line

Epicurus assumes a *threefold* motion of the atoms in the void.[62] One motion is the *fall in a straight line*, the second originates in the *deviation* of the atom *from the straight line*, and the third is established through the *repulsion of the many atoms*. Both Democritus and Epicurus accept the first and the third motion. The *declination of the atom* from the straight line differentiates the one from the other.[63]

This motion of declination has often been made the subject of a joke. *Cicero* more than any other is inexhaustible when he touches on this theme. Thus we read in him, among other things:

> "Epicurus maintains that the atoms are thrust downwards in a straight line by their weight; this motion is said to be the natural motion of bodies. But then it occurred to him that if all atoms were thrust downwards, no atom could ever meet another one. Epicurus therefore resorted to a lie. He said that the atom makes a very tiny swerve, which is, of course, entirely impossible. From this arose complexities, combinations and adhesions of

> the atoms with one another, and out of this came the world, all parts of it and its contents. Besides all this being a puerile invention, he does not even achieve what he desires."[64]

We find another version in the first book of Cicero's treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*:

> "Since Epicurus saw that, if the atoms travelled downwards by their own weight, nothing would be within our control, for their motion would be determined and necessary, he invented a means for escaping this necessity, a means which had escaped the notice of Democritus. He says that the atom, although thrust downwards by its weight and gravity, makes a very slight swerve. To assert this is more disgraceful than to be incapable of defending what he wants."[65]

Pierre Bayle expresses a similar opinion:

> "Before him" (i.e., Epicurus) "only the motion of weight and that of reflection were conceded to the atom. . . . Epicurus supposed that even in the midst of the void the atoms declined slightly from the straight line, and from this, he said, arose freedom. . . . It must he noted, in passing, that this was not the only motive that led him to invent this motion of declination. He also used it to explain the meeting of atoms; for he saw clearly that supposing they [all] move with equal speed downwards along straight lines, he would never be able to explain that they could meet, and that thus the

> creation of the world would have been impossible. It was necessary, then, that they should deviate from the straight line."[66]

For the present I leave the validity of these reflections an open question. This much everyone will notice in passing, that the most recent critic of Epicurus, *Schaubach*, has misunderstood Cicero when he says:

> "The atoms are all thrust downwards by gravity, hence parallel, owing to physical causes, but through mutual repulsion they acquire another motion, according to Cicero (*De nature deorum*, I, xxv [69]) an oblique motion due to accidental causes, and indeed from all eternity."[67]

In the first place, Cicero in the quoted passage does not make the repulsion the reason for the oblique direction, but rather the oblique direction the reason for the repulsion. In the second place, he does not speak of accidental causes, but rather criticises the fact that no causes at all are mentioned, as it would be in and for itself contradictory to assume repulsion and at the same time accidental causes as the reason for the oblique direction. At best one could then still speak of accidental causes of the repulsion, but not of accidental causes of the oblique direction.

For the rest, one peculiarity in Cicero's and Bayle's reflections is too obvious not to be stressed immediately. They foist upon Epicurus motives of which the one nullifies the other. Epicurus is supposed to have assumed a declination of the atoms in order to explain the repulsion on one occasion, and on another freedom. But if the atoms do not meet without declination, then declination as an explana-

tion of freedom is superfluous; for the opposite of freedom begins, as we see in Lucretius,[68] only with the deterministic and forced meeting of atoms. But if the atoms meet without declination, then this is superfluous for explaining repulsion. I maintain that this contradiction arises when the causes for the declination of the atom from the straight line are understood so superficially and disconnectedly as they are by Cicero and Bayle. We shall find in Lucretius, the only one in general of all the ancients who has understood Epicurean physics, a more profound exposition.

We now shall consider the declination itself.

Just as the point is negated [*aufgehoben*] in the line, so is every falling body negated in the straight line it describes. Its specific quality does not matter here at all. A falling apple describes a perpendicular line just as a piece of iron does. Every body, insofar as we are concerned with the motion of falling, is therefore nothing but a moving point, and indeed a point without independence, which in a certain mode of being—the straight line which it describes—surrenders its individuality [*Einzelheit*]. Aristotle therefore is correct when he objects against the Pythagoreans: "You say that the motion of the line is the surface, that of the point the line; then the motions of the monads will also be lines."[69] The consequence of this for the monads as well as for the atoms would therefore be—since they are in constant motion[70]—that neither monads nor atoms exist, but rather disappear in the straight line; for the solidity of the atom does not even enter into the picture, insofar as it is only considered as something falling in a straight line. To begin with, if the void is imagined as spatial void, then the atom is the *immediate negation of abstract space*, hence a *spatial point*. The solidity, the intensity, which maintains itself in itself against the incohesion of space, can only be added

by virtue of a principle which negates space in its entire domain, a principle such as time is in real nature. Moreover, if this itself is not admitted, the atom, insofar as its motion is a straight line, is determined only by space and is prescribed a relative being and a purely material existence. But we have seen that one moment in the concept of the atom is that of being pure form, negation of all relativity, of all relation to another mode of being. We have noted at the same time that Epicurus objectifies for himself both moments which, although they contradict one another, are nevertheless inherent in the concept of the atom.

How then can Epicurus give reality to the pure form-determination of the atom, the concept of pure individuality, negating any mode of being determined by another being?

Since he is moving in the domain of immediate being, all determinations are immediate. Opposite determinations are therefore opposed to one another as immediate realities.

But the relative existence which confronts the atom, the *mode of being which it has to negate*, is *the straight line*. The immediate negation of this motion is another motion, which, therefore, spatially conceived, is the *declination from the straight line*.

The atoms are purely self-sufficient bodies or rather bodies conceived in absolute self-sufficiency, like the heavenly bodies. Hence, again like the heavenly bodies, they move not in straight, but in oblique lines. *The motion of falling is the motion of non-self-sufficiency.*

If Epicurus therefore represents the materiality of the atom in terms of its motion along a straight line, he has given reality to its form-determination in the declination from the straight line, and these opposed determinations are represented as directly opposed motions.

Lucretius therefore is correct when he maintains that the declination breaks the *fati foedera*, [bonds of fate][71] and, since he applies this immediately to consciousness,[72] it can be said of the atom that the declination is that something in its breast that can fight back and resist.

But when Cicero reproaches Epicurus that

> "he does not even attain the goal for which he made all this up—for if all atoms declined, none of them would ever combine, or some would deviate, others would be driven straight ahead by their motion. So it would be necessary as it were to give the atoms definite assignments beforehand: which had to move straight ahead and which obliquely",[73]

this objection has the justification that the two moments inherent in the concept of the atom are represented as directly different motions, and therefore must be allotted to different individuals: an inconsistency, but a consistent one, since the domain of the atom is immediacy.

Epicurus feels this inherent contradiction quite well. He therefore endeavours to represent the declination as being as *imperceptible* as possible *to the senses*; it takes place

> "In time, in place unfixt" (Lucretius, *De rerum nature*, II, 294),[74] it occurs in the smallest possible space.[75]

Moreover *Cicero*,[76] and, according to Plutarch, several ancient authors,[77] reproach Epicurus for saying that the declination of the atom occurs *without cause*. Nothing more disgraceful, says Cicero, can happen to a physicist.[78] But, in the first place, a physical cause such as Cicero wants would

throw the declination of the atom back into the domain of determinism, out of which it was precisely to be lifted. *And then, the atom is by no means complete before it has been submitted to the determination of declination.* To inquire after the cause of this determination means therefore to inquire after the cause that makes the atom a principle—a clearly meaningless inquiry to anyone for whom the atom is the cause of everything, hence without cause itself.

Finally, *Bayle*,[79] supported by the authority of *Augustine*,[80] who states that Democritus ascribed to the atom a spiritual principle—an authority, by the way, who in contrast to Aristotle and the other ancients is without any importance—reproaches Epicurus for having thought out the concept of declination instead of this spiritual principle. But, on the contrary, merely a word would have been gained with this "soul of the atom", whereas the declination represents the real soul of the atom, the concept of abstract individuality.

Before we consider the consequence of the declination of the atom from the straight line, we must draw attention to another, most important element, which up to now has been entirely overlooked.

The declination of the atom from the straight line is, namely, not a particular determination which appears accidentally in Epicurean physics. On the contrary, the law which it expresses goes through the whole Epicurean philosophy, in such a way, however, that, as goes without saying, the determination of its appearance depends on the domain in which it is applied.

As a matter of fact, abstract individuality can make its concept, its form-determination, the pure being-for-itself, the independence from immediate being, the negation of all relativity, effective only by *abstracting from the being that*

confronts it; for in order truly to overcome it, abstract individuality had to idealise it, a thing only generality can accomplish.

Thus, while the atom frees itself from its relative existence, the straight line, by abstracting from it, by swerving away from it; so the entire Epicurean philosophy swerves away from the restrictive mode of being wherever the concept of abstract individuality, self-sufficiency and negation of all relation to other things must be represented in its existence.

The purpose of action is to be found therefore in abstracting, swerving away from pain and confusion, in ataraxy.[81] Hence the good is the flight from evil,[82] pleasure the swerving away from suffering.[83] Finally, where abstract individuality appears in its highest freedom and independence, in its totality, there it follows that the being which is swerved away from, is *all being; for this reason, the gods swerve away from the world*, do not bother with it and live outside it.[84]

These gods of Epicurus have often been ridiculed, these gods who, like human beings, dwell in the intermundia [spaces between the worlds] of the real world, have no body but a quasi-body, no blood but quasi-blood,[85] and, content to abide in blissful peace, lend no ear to any supplication, are unconcerned with us and the world, are honoured because of their beauty, their majesty and their superior nature, and not for any gain.

And yet these gods are no fiction of Epicurus. They did exist. *They are the Elastic gods of Greek art. Cicero*, the *Roman*, rightly scoffs at them,[86] but *Plutarch*, the Greek, has forgotten the whole Greek outlook when he claims that although this doctrine of the gods does away with fear and superstition, it produces no joy or favour in the gods, but

instead bestows on us that relation to them that we have to the Hyrcanian fish, from which we expect neither harm nor advantage.[87] Theoretical calm is one of the chief characteristics of the Greek gods. As *Aristotle* says:

> "What is best has no need of action, for it is its own end."[88]

We now consider the *consequence* that follows directly from the declination of the atom. In it is expressed the atom's negation of all motion and relation by which it is determined as a particular mode of being by another being. This is represented in such a way that the atom abstracts from the opposing being and withdraws itself from it. But what is contained herein, namely, *its negation of all relation to something else*, must be *realised, positively established*. This can only be done if *the being to which it relates itself* is *none other than itself*, hence equally *an atom*, and, since it itself is directly determined, *many atoms. The repulsion of the many atoms is therefore the necessary realisation of the* lex atomi, [law of the atom] as Lucretius calls the declination. But since here every determination is established as a particular being, repulsion is added as a third motion to the former ones. Lucretius is therefore correct when he says that, if the atoms were not to decline, neither their repulsion nor their meeting would have taken place, and the world would never have been created.[89] For atoms are their own sole object and can only be related to themselves, hence speaking in spatial terms, they can only meet, because every relative existence of these atoms by which they would be related to other beings is negated. And this relative existence is, as we have seen, their original motion, that of falling in a straight line. Hence they meet only by virtue of their decli-

nation from the straight line. It has nothing to do with merely material fragmentation.[90]

And in truth: the immediately existing individuality is only realised conceptually, inasmuch as it relates to something else which actually is itself—even when the other thing confronts it in the form of immediate existence. Thus man ceases to be a product of nature only when the other being to which he relates himself is not a different existence but is itself an individual human being, even if it is not yet the mind [*Geist*]. But for man as man to become his own real object, he must have crushed within himself his relative being, the power of desire and of mere nature. Repulsion *is the first form of self-consciousness*, it corresponds therefore to that self-consciousness which conceives itself as immediate-being, as abstractly individual.

The concept of the atom is therefore realised in repulsion, inasmuch as it is abstract form, but no less also the opposite, inasmuch as it is abstract matter; for that to which it relates itself consists, to be true, of atoms, but other atoms. *But when I relate myself to myself as to something which is directly another, then my relationship is a material one.* This is the most extreme degree of externality that can be conceived. In the repulsion of the atoms, therefore, their materiality, which was posited in the fall in a straight line, and the form-determination, which was established in the declination, are united synthetically.

Democritus, in contrast to Epicurus, transforms into an enforced motion, into an act of blind necessity, that which to Epicurus is the realisation of the concept of the atom. We have already seen above that he considers the vortex resulting from the repulsion and collision of the atoms to be the substance of necessity. He therefore sees in the repulsion only the material side, the fragmentation, the change, and

not the ideal side, according to which all relation to something else is negated and motion is established as self-determination. This can be clearly seen from the fact that he conceives one and the same body divided through empty space into many parts quite sensuously, like gold broken up into pieces.[91] Thus he scarcely conceived of the One as the concept of the atom.

Aristotle correctly argues against him:

> "Hence Leucippus and Democritus, who assert that the primary bodies always moved in the void and in the infinite, should say what kind of motion this is, and what is the motion natural to them. For if each of the elements is forcibly moved by the other, then it is still necessary that each should have also a natural motion, outside which is the enforced one. And this first motion must not be enforced but natural. Otherwise the procedure goes on to infinity."[92]

The Epicurean declination of the atom thus changed the whole inner structure of the domain of the atoms, since through it the form-determination is validated and the contradiction inherent in the concept of the atom is realised. Epicurus was therefore the first to grasp the essence of the repulsion—even if only in sensuous form, whereas Democritus only knew of its material existence.

Hence we find also more concrete forms of the repulsion applied by Epicurus. In the political domain there is the *covenant*,[93] in the social domain friendship, which is praised as the highest good.

Chapter Two: The Qualities of the Atom

It contradicts the concept of the atom that the atom should have properties, because, as Epicurus says, every property is variable but the atoms do not change.[94] Nevertheless it is a *necessary consequence* to attribute properties to atoms. Indeed, the many atoms of repulsion separated by sensuous space must necessarily be *immediately different from one another* and *from their pure essence*, i.e., they must possess qualities.

In the following analysis I therefore take no account of the assertion made by *Schneider* and *Nürnberger* that "Epicurus attributed no qualities to the atoms, paragraphs 44 and 54 of the letter to Herodotus in Diogenes Laertius have been interpolated". If this were truly so, how is one to invalidate the evidence of Lucretius, Plutarch, and indeed of all other authors who speak of Epicurus? Moreover, Diogenes Laertius mentions the qualities of the atom not in two, but in ten paragraphs: Nos. 42, 43, 44, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 61. The grounds these critics give for their contention — that "they did not know how to reconcile the qualities of the atom with its concept"—are very shallow. *Spinoza* says that ignorance is no argument. [Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Prop. 36, Appendix] If one was to delete the passages in the ancients which he does not understand, how quickly would we have a *tabula rasa*!

Through the qualities the atom acquires an existence which contradicts its concept; it is assumed as an *externalised being different* from *its essence*. It is this contradiction which mainly interests Epicurus. Hence, as soon as he posits a property and thus draws the consequence of the material nature of the atom, he counterposits at the same time determinations which again destroy this property in its

own sphere and validate instead the concept of the atom. *He therefore determines all properties in such a way that they contradict themselves.* Democritus, on the other hand, nowhere considers the properties in relation to the atom itself, nor does he objectify the contradiction between concept and existence which is inherent in them. His whole interest lies rather in representing the qualities in relation to concrete nature, which is to be formed out of them. To him they are merely hypotheses to explain the plurality which makes its appearance. It follows that the concept of the atom has nothing to do with them.

In order to prove our assertion it is first of all necessary to elucidate the sources which here seem to contradict one another.

In the treatise *De placitis philosophorum* we read:

> "*Epicurus* asserts that the atoms have three qualities: size, shape, weight. Democritus only assumed two: size and shape. Epicurus added weight as the third."[95]

The same passage is repeated word for word in the *Praeparatio evangelica* of *Eusebius*.[96]

It is confirmed by the testimony of Simplicius[97] and Philoponus,[98] according to whom Democritus attributed to the atoms only difference in size and shape. Directly contrary stands Aristotle who, in the book *De generations et corruptions*, attributes to the atoms of Democritus difference in weight.[99] In another passage (in the first book of *De caelo*) *Aristotle* leaves undecided the question of whether or not Democritus ascribed weight to the atoms, for he says:

> "Thus none of the bodies will be absolutely light if they all have weight; but if all have lightness, none will be heavy."[100]

In his *Geschichte der alten Philosophie*, Ritter, basing himself on the authority of Aristotle, rejects the assertions of Plutarch, Eusebius and Stobaeus.[101] He does not consider the testimony of Simplicius and Philoponus.

Let us see whether these passages are really so contradictory. In the passage cited, Aristotle does not speak of the qualities of the atom *ex professo* [as someone who knows their profession]. On the other hand, we read in the eighth book of the *Metaphysics*:

> "Democritus assumes three differences between atoms. For the underlying body is one and the same with respect to matter, but it differs in *rhysmos*, meaning shape, in *trope*, meaning position, or in *diathige*, meaning arrangement."[102]

This much can be immediately concluded from this passage. Weight is not mentioned as a property of the Democritean atoms. The fragmented pieces of matter, kept apart by the void, must have special forms, and these are quite externally perceived from the observation of space. This emerges even more clearly from the following passage of Aristotle:

> "Leucippus and his companion Democritus hold that the elements are the full and the void. . . . These are the basis of being as matter. Just as those who assume only one fundamental substance generate all other things by its affections, assuming

> rarity and density as the principles of qualities—in the same way Leucippus and Democritus also teach that the differences between the atoms are the causes of the other things, for the underlying being differs only by *rhysmos*, *diathige* and *trope*. . . . That is, A differs from N in shape, AN from NA in arrangement, Z from N in position."[103]

It is evident from this quotation that Democritus considers the properties of the atom only in relation to the formation of the differences in the world of appearances, and not in relation to the atom itself. It follows further that Democritus does not single out weight as an essential property of the atoms. For him weight is taken for granted, since everything corporeal has weight. In the same way, according to him, even size is not a basic quality. It is an accidental determination which is already given to the atoms together with figure. Only the diversity of the figures is of interest to Democritus, since nothing more is contained in shape, position and arrangement. Size, shape and weight, by being combined as they are by Epicurus, are differences which the atom in itself possesses. Shape, position and arrangement are differences which the atom possesses in relation to something else. Whereas we find in Democritus mere hypothetical determinations to explain the world of appearances, in Epicurus the consequence of the principle itself will be presented to us. We shall therefore discuss in detail his determinations of the properties of the atom.

First of all, the atoms have size.[104] And then again, size is also negated. That is to say, they do not have *every* size;[105] but only some differences in size among them must be admitted.[106] Indeed, only the negation of the large can be ascribed to them, the small,[107]—also not the minimum, for

this would be merely a spatial determination, but the infinitely small, which expresses the contradiction.[108] Rosinius, in his notes on the fragments of Epicurus therefore translates one passage incorrectly and completely ignores the other, when he says:

> "In this way Epicurus tried to make plausible the tenuity of the atoms of incredible smallness, by saying, according to Laertius, X, 44, that they have no size."[109]

Now I shall not concern myself with the fact that, according to *Eusebius*, Epicurus was the first to ascribe infinite smallness to the atoms,[110] whereas Democritus also assumed atoms of the largest size—*Stobaeus* says even as large as the world.[111]

This, on the one hand, contradicts the testimony of *Aristotle*.[112] On the other hand, Eusebius, or rather the Alexandrian bishop *Dionysius*, from whom he takes excerpts, contradicts himself; for in the same book we read that Democritus assumed as the principles of nature indivisible bodies perceptible through reason.[113] This much at least is clear: Democritus was not aware of the contradiction; he did not pay attention to it, whereas it was the chief interest of Epicurus.

The *second* property of the Epicurean atoms is *shape*.[114] But this determination also contradicts the concept of the atom, and its opposite must be assumed. Abstract individuality is abstract identity-to-itself and therefore without shape. The differences in the shape of the atoms cannot, therefore, be determined[115] although they are not absolutely infinite.[116] It is rather by a definite and finite number of shapes that the atoms are differentiated from one another.[117]

From this it is obvious that there are not as many different figures as there are atoms,[118] while Democritus assumes an infinite number of figures.[119] If every atom had a particular shape, then there would have to be atoms of infinite—size;[120] *for* they would have an infinite difference, the difference from all the others, in themselves [*an sich*], like the monads of Leibniz. This leads to the inversion of Leibniz's assertion that no two things are identical, and there are infinitely many atoms of the same shape. This obviously negates again the determination of the shape, because a shape which no longer differs from another is not shape.[121]

Finally, it is highly important that Epicurus makes *weight* the third quality,[122] for in the centre of gravity matter possesses the ideal individuality which forms a principal determination of the atom. Hence, once the atoms are brought into the realm of presentation, they must also have weight.

But weight also directly contradicts the concept of the atom, because it is the individuality of matter as an ideal point which lies outside matter. But the atom is itself this individuality, as it were the centre of gravity presented as an individual existence. Weight therefore exists for Epicurus only as *different weight*, and the atoms are themselves substantial *centres of gravity* like the heavenly bodies. If this is applied to the concrete, then the obvious result is the fact which old *Brucker* finds so amazing[123] and of which Lucretius assures us,[124] namely, that the earth has no centre towards which everything strives, and that there are no antipodes. Furthermore since weight belongs only to that atom which is different from the other, hence externalised and endowed with properties, then it is clear that where the atoms are not thought of as many in their differentiation from one another, but only in relation to the void, the

determination of weight ceases to exist. The atoms, as different as they may be in mass and shape, move therefore with equal speed in empty space.[125] Epicurus thus applies weight only in regard to repulsion and the resulting compositions. This has led to the assertions that only the conglomerations of the atoms are endowed with weight, but not the atoms themselves.[126]

Gassendi already praises Epicurus because, led purely by reason, he anticipated the experimentally demonstrated fact that all bodies, although very different in weight and mass, have the same velocity when they fall from above to below.[127]

The consideration of the properties of the atoms leads us therefore to the same result as the consideration of the declination, namely, that Epicurus objectifies the contradiction in the concept of the atom between essence and existence. He thus gave us the science of atomistics. In Democritus, on the other hand, there is no realisation of the principle itself. He only maintains the material side and offers hypotheses for the benefit of empirical observation.

Chapter Three: Atomoi archai [indivisible principles] and *atoma stoicheia* [indivisible elements]

Schaubach, in his treatise on the astronomical concepts of Epicurus, to which we have already referred, makes the following assertion:

> "Épicurus, as well as *Aristotle*, has made a distinction between principles [*Anfänge*] (*atomoi archai*, Diogenes Laertius, X, 41) and *elements* (*atoma stoicheia*,

> Diogenes Laertius, X, 86). The former are the atoms recognisable only through reason and do not occupy space.[128] These are called atoms not because they are the smallest bodies, but because they are indivisible in space. According to these conceptions one might think that Epicurus did not attribute any spatial properties to the atom.[129] But in the letter to Herodotus (Diogenes Laertius, X, 44, 54) he gives the atoms not only weight but also size and shape. . . . I therefore consider these atoms as belonging to the second species, those that have developed out of the former but can still be regarded again as elementary particles of the bodies."[130]

Let us look more closely at the passage which *Schaubach* cites from Diogenes Laertius. It reads: *For instance such propositions that the All consists of bodies and non-corporeal nature, or that there are indivisible elements and other such statements.*

Epicurus here teaches Pythocles, to whom he is writing, that the teaching about meteors differs from all other doctrines in physics, for example, that everything is either body or void, that there are indivisible basic elements. It is obvious that there is here no reason to assume that it is a question of a second species of atoms.[131] It may perhaps seem that the disjunction between 'The All consisting of bodies and non-corporeal bodies' and 'that there are indivisible elements' establishes a difference between *soma* and *atoma stoicheia*, so that we might say that *soma* stands for atoms of the first kind in contrast to the *atoma stoicheia*. But this is quite out of the question. *Soma* means the corporeal in contrast to the void, which for this reason is called *asomaton*.[132] The term *soma* therefore includes the atoms as

well as compound bodies. For example, in the letter to Herodotus we read: 'The All is body . . . if there were not that which we call void, space and non-corporeal nature. . . . Among bodies some are compound, others the things out of which the compounds are made, and *these* latter are indivisible and unchangeable. . . . Consequently these first principles are necessarily of indivisible corporeal nature.'[133]

Epicurus is thus speaking in the passage cited first of the corporeal in general, in contrast to the void, and then of the corporeal in particular, the atoms.

Schaubach's reference to Aristotle proves just as little. True the difference between *arche* and *stoicheion*, which the Stoics particularly insist upon,[134] can indeed also be found in Aristotle,[135] but he nonetheless assumes the identity of the two expressions.[136] He even teaches explicitly that *stoicheion* denotes primarily the atom.[137] Leucippus and Democritus likewise call the fullness and void *'stoicheion'*.[138]

In Lucretius, in Epicurus' letters as quoted by Diogenes Laertius, in the *Colotes* of Plutarch,[139] in Sextus Empiricus,[140] the properties are ascribed to the atoms themselves, and for this reason they were determined as transcending themselves [*sich selbst aufhebend*].

However, if it is thought an antinomy that bodies perceptible only to reason should be endowed with spatial qualities, then it is an even greater antinomy that the spatial qualities themselves can be perceived only through the intellect.[141]

Finally, *Schaubach*, in further support of his view, cites the following passage from Stobaeus: 'Epicurus [states] that the primary (bodies) should be simple, those bodies compounded from them however should have weight.'

To this passage from Stobaeus could be added the following, in which *atoma stoicheia* are mentioned as a partic-

ular kind of atom: (Plutarch.) *De placit. philosoph.*, I, 246 and 249, and Stob., *Physical Selections*, I, p. 5.[142] For the rest it is by no means claimed in these passages that the original atoms are without size, shape and weight. On the contrary, weight alone is mentioned as a distinctive characteristic of the *atomoi archai* and *atoma stoicheia*. But we observed already in the preceding chapter that weight is applied only in regard to repulsion and the conglomerations arising therefrom.

With the invention of the *atoma stoicheia* we also gain nothing. It is just as difficult to pass from the *atomoi archai* to the *atoma stoicheia* as it is to ascribe properties directly to them. Nevertheless I do not deny such a differentiation entirely. I only deny that there are two different and fixed kinds of atoms. They are rather different determinations of one and the same kind.

Before discussing this difference I would like to call attention to a procedure typical of Epicurus. He likes to assume the different determinations of a concept as different independent existences. Just as his principle is the atom, so is the manner of his cognition itself atomistic. Every moment of the development is at once transformed in his hands into a fixed reality which, so to say, is separated from its relations to other things by empty space; every determination assumes the form of isolated individuality.

This procedure may be made clear by the following example.

The infinite, *to apeiron*, or the *infinitio*, as Cicero translates it, is occasionally used by Epicurus as a particular nature; and precisely in the same passages in which we find the *stoicheia* described as a fixed fundamental substance, we also find the *apeiron* turned into something independent.[143]

However, according to Epicurus' own definitions, the

infinite is neither a particular substance nor something outside of the atoms and the void, but rather an accidental determination of the void. We find in fact three meanings of *apeiron*.

First, *apeiron* expresses for Epicurus a quality common to the atoms and the void. It means in this sense the infinitude of the All, which is infinite by virtue of the infinite multiplicity of the atoms, by virtue of the infinite size of the void.[144]

Secondly, *apeiria* is the multiplicity of the atoms, so that not the atom, but the infinitely many atoms are placed in opposition to the void.[145]

Finally, if we may draw from Democritus a conclusion about Epicurus, *apeiron* also means exactly the opposite, the unlimited void, which is placed in opposition to the atom determined in itself and limited by itself.[146]

In all these meanings—and they are the only ones, even the only possible ones for atomistics—the infinite is a mere determination of the atoms and of the void. Nevertheless, it is singled out as a particular existence, even set up as a specific nature alongside the principles whose determination it expresses.

Therefore, even if Epicurus himself thus fixed the determination by which the atom becomes *stoicheion* as an independent original kind of atom—which, by the way, is not the case judging by the historical superiority of one source over the other, even if Metrodorus the disciple of Epicurus—as it seems more probable to us—was the first to change the differentiated determination into a differentiated existence;[147] we must ascribe to the subjective mode of atomistic consciousness the changing of separate moments into something independently existing. The granting of the form of existence to different determinations has not resulted in understanding of their difference.

For Democritus the atom means only *stoicheion*, a material substrate. The distinction between the atom as *arche* and *stoicheion*, as principle and foundation, belongs to Epicurus. Its importance will be clear from what follows.

The contradiction between existence and essence, between matter and form, which is inherent in the concept of the atom, emerges in the individual atom itself once it is endowed with qualities. Through the quality the atom is alienated from its concept, but at the same time is perfected in its construction. It is from repulsion and the ensuing conglomerations of the qualified atoms that the world of appearance now emerges.

In this transition from the world of essence to the world of appearance, the contradiction in the concept of the atom clearly reaches its harshest realisation. For the atom is conceptually the absolute, essential form of nature. *This absolute* form has now *been degraded to absolute matter, to the formless substrate of the world of appearance.*

The atoms are, it is true, the substance of nature,[148] out of which everything emerges, into which everything dissolves;[149] but the continuous annihilation of the world of appearance comes to no result. New appearances are formed; but the atom itself always remains at the bottom as the foundation.[150] Thus insofar as the atom is considered as pure concept, its existence is empty space, annihilated nature. Insofar as it proceeds to reality, it sinks down to the material basis which, as the bearer of a world of manifold relations, never exists but in forms which are indifferent and external to it. This is a necessary consequence, since the atom, presupposed as abstractly individual and complete, cannot actualise itself as the idealising and pervading power of this manifold.

Abstract individuality is freedom from being, not free-

dom in being. It cannot shine in the light of being. This is an element in which this individuality loses its character and becomes material. For this reason the atom does not enter into the daylight of appearance[151] or it sinks down to the material basis when it does enter it. The atom as such only exists in the void. The death of nature has thus become its immortal substance; and Lucretius correctly exclaims:

When death immortal claims his mortal life (*De verum nature* III, 869).

But the fact that Epicurus grasps the contradiction at this its highest peak and objectifies it, and therefore distinguishes the atom where it becomes the basis of appearance as *stoicheion* from the atom as it exists in the void as *arche* — this constitutes his philosophical difference from Democritus, who only objectifies the one moment. This is the same distinction which in the world of essence, in the realm of the atoms and of the void, separates Epicurus from Democritus. However, since only the atom with qualities is the complete one, since the world of appearance can only emerge from the atom which is complete and alienated from its concept, Epicurus expresses this by stating that only the qualified atom becomes *stoicheion* or only the *atomon stoicheion* is endowed with qualities.

Chapter Four: Time

Since in the atom matter, as pure relationship to itself, is exempted from all relativity and changeability, it follows immediately that time has to be excluded from the concept of the atom, the world of essence. For matter is eternal and independent only insofar as in it abstraction is made of the time moment. On this Democritus and Epicurus agree. But

they differ in regard to the manner in which time, removed from the world of atoms, is now determined, whither it is transferred.

For Democritus time has neither significance nor necessity for the system. He explains time in order to negate it [*aufzuheben*]. It is determined as eternal, in order that—as Aristotle[152] and Simplicius[153] state—the emergence and passing away, hence the temporal, is removed from the atoms. Time itself offers proof that not everything need have an origin, a moment of beginning.

There is something more profound to be recognised in this notion. The imagining intellect that does not grasp the independence of substance inquires into its becoming in time. It fails to grasp that by making substance temporal it also makes time substantial and thus negates its concept, because time made absolute is no longer temporal.

But this solution is unsatisfactory from another point of view. Time excluded from the world of essence is transferred into the self-consciousness of the philosophising subject but does not make any contact with the world itself.

Quite otherwise with Epicurus. *Time*, excluded from the world of essence, becomes for him *the absolute form of appearance*. That is to say, time is determined as accidens of the accidens. The accidens is the change of substance in general. The accidens of the accidens is the change as reflecting in itself, the change as change. This pure form of the world of appearance is time.[154]

Composition is the merely passive form of concrete nature, time its active form. If I consider composition in terms of its being, then the atom exists beyond it, in the void, in the imagination. If I consider the atom in terms of its concept, then composition either does not exist at all or exists only in the subjective imagination. For composition

is a relationship in which the atoms, independent, self-enclosed, as it were uninterested in one another, have likewise no relationship to one another. Time, in contrast, the change of the finite to the extent that change is posited as change, is just as much the real form which separates appearance from essence, and posits it as appearance, while leading it back into essence. Composition expresses merely the materiality of the atoms as well as of nature emerging from them. Time, in contrast, is in the world of appearance what the concept of the atom is in the world of essence, namely, the abstraction, destruction and reduction of all determined being into being-for-itself.

The following consequences can be drawn from these observations. *First*, Epicurus makes the contradiction between matter and form the characteristic of the nature of appearance, which thus becomes the counter-image of the nature of essence, the atom. This is done by time being opposed to space, the active form of appearance to the passive form. *Second*, Epicurus was the first to grasp appearance as appearance, that is, as alienation of the essence, activating itself in its reality as such an alienation. On the other hand, for Democritus, who considers composition as the only form of the nature of appearance, appearance does not by itself show that it is appearance, something different from essence. Thus when appearance is considered in terms of its existence, essence becomes totally blended [*konfundiert*] with it; when considered in terms of its concept, essence is totally separated from existence, so that it descends to the level of subjective semblance. The composition behaves indifferently and materially towards its essential foundations. Time, on the other hand, is the fire of essence, eternally consuming appearance, and stamping it with dependence and non-essence. *Finally*, since according to Epicurus time is

change as change, the reflection of appearance in itself, the nature of appearance is justly posited as objective, sensation is justly made the real criterion of concrete nature, although the atom, its foundation, is only perceived through reason.

Indeed, time being the abstract form of sensation, according to the atomism of Epicurean consciousness the necessity arises for it to be fixed as a nature having a separate existence within nature. The changeability of the sensuous world, its change as change, this reflection of appearance in itself which constitutes the concept of time, has its separate existence in conscious sensuousness. *Human sensuousness is therefore embodied time, the existing reflection of the sensuous world in itself.*

Just as this follows immediately from the definition of the concept of time in Epicurus, so it can also be quite definitely demonstrated in detail. In the letter from Epicurus to Herodotus[155] time is so defined that it emerges when the accidentals of bodies, perceived by the senses, are thought of as accidentals. Sensuous perception reflected in itself is thus here the source of time and time itself. Hence time cannot be defined by analogy nor can anything else be said about it, but it is necessary to keep firmly to the *Enargie* itself; for sensuous perception reflected in itself is time itself, and there is no going beyond it.

On the other hand, in *Lucretius*, *Sextus Empiricus* and *Stobaeus*,[156] the accidens of the accidens, change reflected in itself, is defined as time. The reflection of the accidentals in sensuous perception and their reflection in themselves are hence posited as one and the same.

Because of this interconnection between time and sensuousness, the *eidola* [images], equally found in Democritus, also acquire a more consistent status.

The *eidola* are the forms of natural bodies which, as

surfaces, as it were detach themselves like skins and transfer these bodies into appearance.[157] These forms of the things stream constantly forth from them and penetrate into the senses and in precisely this way allow the objects to appear. Thus in hearing nature hears itself, in smelling it smells itself, in seeing it sees itself.[158] Human sensuousness is therefore the medium in which natural processes are reflected as in a focus and ignited into the light of appearance.

In *Democritus* this is an inconsistency, since appearance is only subjective; in Epicurus it is a necessary consequence, since sensuousness is the reflection of the world of appearance in itself, its embodied time.

Finally, the interconnection between sensuousness and time is revealed in such a way *that the temporal character of things and their appearance to the senses are posited as intrinsically One*. For it is precisely because bodies appear to the senses that they pass away.[159] Indeed, the *eidola*, by constantly separating themselves from the bodies and flowing into the senses, by having their sensuous existence outside themselves as another nature, by not returning into themselves, that is, out of the diremption, dissolve and pass away.

Therefore: just as the atom is nothing but the natural form of abstract, individual self-consciousness, so sensuous nature is only the objectified, empirical, individual self-consciousness, and this is the sensuous. Hence the senses are the only criteria in concrete nature, just as abstract reason is the only criterion in the world of the atoms.

Chapter Five: The Meteors

Ingenious as *Democritus'* astronomical opinions may be for his time, they present no philosophical interest. They nei-

ther go beyond the domain of empirical reflection, nor have they any more definite intrinsic connection with the atomic doctrine.

By contrast, *Epicurus'* theory of the celestial bodies and the processes connected with them, or his theory of meteors (in this one term he includes it all), stands in opposition not only to Democritus, but to the opinion of Greek philosophy as a whole. Worship of the celestial bodies is a cult practised by all Greek philosophers. The system of the celestial bodies is the first naive and nature-determined existence of true reason [*Vernunft*]. The same position is taken by Greek self-consciousness in the domain of the mind [*Geist*]. It is the solar system of the mind. The Greek philosophers therefore worshipped their own mind in the celestial bodies.

Anaxagoras himself, who first gave a physical explanation of heaven and in this way brought it down to earth in a sense different from that of Socrates, answered, when asked for what purpose he was born: *For the observation of the sun, the moon and the heaven.*[160] *Xenophanes*, however, looked up at heaven and said: The One is God.[161] The religious attitude of the *Pythagoreans*, *Plato* and *Aristotle* to the heavenly-bodies is well known.

Indeed, Epicurus opposes the outlook of the whole Greek people.

Aristotle says it often seems that the concept provides evidence for the phenomena and the phenomena for the concept. Thus all men have an idea of the gods and assign the highest region to the divine, barbarians as well as Hellenes, and in general all who believe in the existence of the gods, evidently connecting the immortal with the immortal, for otherwise it is impossible. Thus if the divine exists—as it actually does—then what we say about the substance

of the celestial bodies is also correct. But this corresponds also to sensuous perception, insofar as human conviction is concerned. For throughout the time that has passed, according to the memories handed down from people to people, nothing seems to have changed, either in heaven as a whole, or in any part of it. Even the name seems to have been handed down from the ancients to the present time, and they assumed that which we also say. For not once, not twice, but an infinite number of times have the same views come down to us. For since the primary body is something different, apart from the earth and the fire and the air and the water, they called the highest region "ether", from *thein aei* [to run always], giving it the by-name: eternal time.[162] But the ancients assigned heaven and the highest region to the gods, because it alone is immortal. But the present teaching testifies that it is indestructible, ungenerated and not subject to any mortal ills. In this way our concepts correspond at the same time to intimations about God.[163] But that there is one heaven is evident. It is a tradition handed down from our ancestors and the ancients and surviving in the form of the myths of later generations, that the heavenly bodies are gods and that the divine encompasses all nature. The rest was added in mythical form for the belief of the masses, as useful for the laws and for life. Thus the myths make the gods resemble man and some of the other living creatures, and invent similar things connected with and related to this. If we discard the additions and hold fast only to the first, namely, the belief that the primary substances are gods, then we must consider this as having been divinely revealed, and we must hold that after all sorts of art and philosophy had, in one way or another, been invented and lost again, these opinions came down to us like relics.[164]

Epicurus, on the contrary, says:

To all this we must add that the greatest confusion of the human soul arises from the fact that men hold that the heavenly bodies are blessed and indestructible and have conflicting desires and actions, and conceive suspicion according to the myths.[165] As to the meteors, we must believe that motion and position and eclipse and rising and setting and related phenomena do not originate in them owing to One ruling and ordering or having ordered, One who at the same time is supposed to possess all bliss and indestructibility. For actions do not accord with bliss, but they occur due to causes most closely related to weakness, fear and need. Nor is it to be supposed that some fire-like bodies endowed with bliss arbitrarily submit to these motions. If one does not agree with this, then this contradiction itself produces the greatest confusion in men's souls.[166]

Aristotle reproached the ancients for their belief that heaven required the support of Atlas[167] who: 'In the places of the West stands, supporting with his shoulders the pillar of heaven and earth' (Aeschylus, *Prometh.*, 348 ff.). Epicurus, on the other hand, blames those who believe that man needs heaven. He finds the Atlas by whom heaven is supported in human stupidity and superstition. Stupidity and superstition also are Titans.

The letter of Epicurus to Pythocles deals entirely with the theory of the heavenly bodies, with the exception of the last section, which closes the letter with ethical precepts. And appropriately, ethical precepts are appended to the teaching on the meteors. For Epicurus this theory is a matter of conscience. Our study will therefore be based mainly on this letter to Pythocles. We shall supplement it from the letter to Herodotus, to which Epicurus himself refers in writing to Pythocles.[168]

First, it must not be supposed that any other goal but ataraxy and firm assurance can be attained from knowledge of the meteors, either taken as a whole or in part, just as from the other natural sciences.[169] Our life does not need speculation and empty hypotheses, but that we should live without confusion. Just as it is the business of the study of nature in general to investigate the foundations of what is most important: so happiness lies also in knowledge of the meteors. In and for itself the theory of setting and rising, of position and eclipse, contains no particular grounds for happiness; only terror possesses those who see these things without understanding their nature and their principal causes.[170] So far, only the *precedence* which the theory of the meteors is supposed to have over other sciences has been denied; and this theory has been placed on the same level as others.

But the theory of the meteors is *also specifically different* in comparison both with the method of ethics and with other physical problems, for example, the existence of indivisible elements and the like, where only one explanation corresponds to the phenomena. For this is not the case with the meteors.[171] Their origin has no simple cause, and they have more than one category of essence corresponding to the phenomena. For the study of nature cannot be pursued in accordance with empty axioms and laws.[172] It is constantly repeated that the meteors are not to be explained *haplos* (simply, absolutely), but *pollachos* (in many ways).

This also holds for the rising and setting of the sun and the moon,[173] the waxing and waning of the moon,[174] the semblance of a face on the moon,[175] the changes of duration of day and night,[176] and other celestial phenomena.

How then is it to be explained?

Every explanation is sufficient. Only the myth must be

removed. It will be removed when we observe the phenomena and draw conclusions from them concerning the invisible.[177] We must hold fast to the appearance, the sensation. Hence analogy must be applied. In this way we can explain fear away and free ourselves from it, by showing the causes of meteors and other things that are always happening and causing the utmost alarm to other people.[178]

The great number of explanations, the multitude of possibilities, should not only tranquillise our minds and remove causes for fear, but also at the same time negate in the heavenly bodies their very unity, the absolute law that is always equal to itself. These heavenly bodies may behave sometimes in one way, sometimes in another; this possibility conforming to no law is the characteristic of their reality; everything in them is declared to be impermanent and unstable.[179] *The multitude of the explanations should at the same time remove [aufheben] the unity of the object.*

Thus while *Aristotle*, in agreement with other Greek philosophers, considers the heavenly bodies to be eternal and immortal, because they always behave in the same way; while he even ascribes to them an element of their own, higher and not subjected to the force of gravity; *Epicurus* in contrast claims the direct opposite. He reasons that the theory of the meteors is specifically distinguished from all other physical doctrine in this respect, that in the meteors everything occurs in a multiple and unregulated way, that everything in them is to be explained by a manifold of indefinitely many causes. Yes, in wrath and passionate violence he rejects the opposite opinion, and declares that those who adhere to only one method of explanation to the exclusion of all others, those who accept something Unique, hence Eternal and Divine in the meteors, fall victim to idle explanation-making and to the slavish artifices

of the astrologers; they overstep the bounds of the study of nature and throw themselves into the arms of myth; they try to achieve the impossible, and exert themselves over absurdities; they do not even realise where *ataraxy* itself becomes endangered. Their chatter is to be despised.[180] We must avoid the prejudice that investigation into these subjects cannot be sufficiently thorough and subtle if it aims only at our own *ataraxy* and bliss.[181] On the contrary, it is an absolute law that nothing that can disturb ataraxy, that can cause danger, can belong to an indestructible and eternal nature. Consciousness must understand that this is an absolute law.[182]

Hence Epicurus concludes: *Since eternity of the heavenly bodies would disturb the ataraxy of self-consciousness, it is a necessary, a stringent consequence that they are not eternal.*

But how can we understand this peculiar view of Epicurus?

All authors who have written on Epicurean philosophy have presented this teaching as incompatible with all the rest of physics, with the atomic doctrine. The fight against the Stoics, against superstition, against astrology is taken as sufficient grounds.

And we have seen that Epicurus himself distinguishes the method applied in the theory of the meteors from the method of the rest of physics. But in which definition of his principle can the necessity of this distinction be found? How does the idea occur to him?

And he fights not only against astrology, but also against astronomy itself, against eternal law and rationality in the heavenly system. Finally, opposition to the Stoics explains nothing. Their superstition and their whole point of view had already been refuted when the heavenly bodies were declared to be accidental complexes of atoms and their

processes accidental motions of the atoms. Thereby their eternal nature was destroyed, a consequence which Democritus was content to draw from these premises.[183] In fact, their very being was disposed of [*aufgehoben*].[184] The atomist therefore was in no need of a new method.

But this is not yet the full difficulty. An even more perplexing antinomy appears.

The atom is matter in the form of independence, of individuality, as it were the representative of weight. But the heavenly bodies are the supreme realisation of weight. In them all antinomics between form and matter, between concept and existence, which constituted the development of the atom, are resolved; in them all required determinations are realised. The heavenly bodies are eternal and unchangeable; they have their centre of gravity in, not outside, themselves. Their only action is motion, and, separated by empty space, they swerve from the straight line, and form a system of repulsion and attraction while at the same time preserving their own independence and also, finally, generating time out of themselves as the form of their appearance. *The heavenly bodies are therefore the atoms become real.* In them matter has received in itself individuality. Here Epicurus must therefore have glimpsed the highest existence of his principle, the peak and culminating point of his system. He asserted that he assumed the atom so that nature would be provided with immortal foundations. He alleged that he was concerned with the substantial individuality of matter. But when he comes upon the reality of his nature (and he knows no other nature but the mechanical), when he comes upon independent, indestructible matter in the heavenly bodies whose eternity and unchangeability were proved by the belief of the people, the judgment of philosophy, the evidence of the senses: then his one and

only desire is to pull it down into earthly transience. He turns vehemently against those who worship an independent nature containing in itself the quality of individuality. This is his most glaring contradiction.

Hence Epicurus feels that here his previous categories break down, that the method of his theory becomes different. And the *profoundest knowledge* achieved by his system, its most thorough consistency, is that he is aware of this and expresses it consciously.

Indeed, we have seen how the whole Epicurean philosophy of nature is pervaded with the contradiction between essence and existence, between form and matter. But *this contradiction is resolved* in *the heavenly bodies*, the conflicting moments are reconciled. In the celestial system matter has received form into itself, has taken up the individuality into itself and has thus achieved its independence. *But at this point it ceases to be affirmation of abstract self-consciousness.* In the world of the atoms, as in the world of appearance, form struggled against matter; the one determination transcended the other and precisely *in this contradiction abstract-individual self-consciousness felt its nature objectified.* The abstract form, which, in the shape of matter, fought against abstract matter, was *this self-consciousness itself.* But now, when matter has reconciled itself with the form and has been rendered self-sufficient, individual self-consciousness emerges from its pupation, proclaims itself the true principle and opposes nature, which has become independent.

All this can also be expressed from another point of view in the following way: *Matter*, having received into itself individuality, form, as is the case with the heavenly bodies, has ceased to be abstract individuality; it has become concrete individuality, universality. In the meteors, therefore, abstract-individual self-consciousness is met by

its contradiction, shining in its materialised form, the universal which has become existence and nature. Hence it recognises in the meteors its deadly enemy, and it ascribes to them, as Epicurus does, all the anxiety and confusion of men. Indeed, the anxiety and dissolution of the abstract-individual is precisely the universal. Here therefore Epicurus' true principle, abstract-individual self-consciousness, can no longer be concealed. It steps out from its hiding place and, freed from material mummery, it seeks to destroy the reality of nature which has become independent by an explanation according to abstract possibility: what is possible may also be otherwise, the opposite of what is possible is also possible. Hence the polemic against those who explain the heavenly bodies *haplos* [simply, absolutely] that is, in one particular way, for the One is the Necessary and that which is Independent-in-itself.

Thus as long as nature as atom and appearance expresses individual self-consciousness and its contradiction, the subjectivity of self-consciousness appears only in the form of matter itself. Where, on the other hand, it becomes independent, it reflects itself in itself, confronts matter in its own shape as independent form.

It could have been said from the beginning that where Epicurus' principle becomes reality it will cease to have reality for him. For if individual self-consciousness were posited in reality under the determination of nature, or nature under the determination of individual consciousness, then its determination, that is, its existence, would have ceased, because only the universal in free distinction from itself can know at the same time its own affirmation.

In the theory of meteors therefore appears the soul of the Epicurean philosophy of nature. Nothing is eternal which destroys the ataraxy of individual self-consciousness. The heavenly bodies disturb its ataraxy, its equanimity with

itself, because they are the existing universality, because in them nature has become independent.

Thus the principle of Epicurean philosophy is not the *gastrology* of *Archestratus* as *Chrysippus* believes[185] but the absoluteness and freedom of self-consciousness—even if self-consciousness is only conceived in the form of individuality.

If abstract-individual self-consciousness is posited as an absolute principle, then, indeed, all true and real science is done away with [*aufgehoben*] inasmuch as individuality does not rule within the nature of things themselves. But then, too, everything collapses that is transcendentally related to human consciousness and therefore belongs to the imagining mind. On the other hand, if that self-consciousness which knows itself only in the form of abstract universality is raised to an absolute principle, then the door is opened wide to superstitious and unfree mysticism. Stoic philosophy provides the historic proof of this. Abstract-universal self-consciousness has, indeed, the intrinsic urge to affirm itself in the things themselves in which it can only affirm itself by negating them.

Epicurus is therefore the greatest representative of Greek Enlightenment, and he deserves the praise of Lucretius:[186]

> When human life lay grovelling in all men's sight,
> crushed to the earth under the dead weight of religion whose grim features loured menacingly upon
> mortals from the four quarters of the sky, a man of
> Greece was first to raise mortal eyes in defiance,
> first to stand erect and brave the challenge. Fables
> of the gods did not crush him, nor the lightning
> flash and growling menace of the sky. . . . Therefore
> religion in its turn lies crushed beneath his feet, and
> we by his triumph are lifted level with the skies.

The difference between Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of nature which we established at the end of the general section has been elaborated and confirmed in all domains of nature. In *Epicurus*, therefore, *atomistics* with all its contradictions has been carried through and completed *as the natural science of self-consciousness*. This self-consciousness under the form of abstract individuality is an absolute principle. Epicurus has thus carried atomistics to its final conclusion, which is its dissolution and conscious opposition to the universal. For *Democritus*, on the other hand, the *atom* is only the general *objective expression of the empirical investigation of nature as a whole*. Hence the atom remains for him a pure and abstract category, a hypothesis, the result of experience, not its active [*energisches*] principle. This hypothesis remains therefore without realisation, just as it plays no further part in determining the real investigation of nature.

Fragment from Marx's Notes to Chapter IV (Part One)[vi]

IV. General Difference in Principle between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature

1) Plutarch, in his biography of Marius, provides us with an appalling historical example of the way in which this type of morality destroys all theoretical and practical unselfishness. After describing the terrible downfall of the Cimbri, he relates that the number of corpses was so great that the Massilians were able to manure their orchards with them. Then it rained and that year was the best for wine and fruit. Now, what kind of reflections occur to our noble historian in connection with the tragical ruin of those people? Plutarch considers it a moral act of God, that he allowed a whole, great, noble people to perish and rot away in order to provide the philistines of Massilia with a bumper fruit harvest.

Thus even the transformation of a people into a heap of manure offers a desirable occasion for a happy revelling in morality!

2) Also in relation to Hegel it is mere ignorance on the part of his pupils, when they explain one or the other determi-

vi. **Editor's Note:** This important fragment is from the notes to the missing fourth chapter of the first part of Marx's dissertation. While the fourth chapter is no longer extant, we are lucky to have these fragments, which are of immense philosophical value. The second note, in particular, is valuable for its analysis of what Marx calls the "praxis of philosophy." It is the first mention in Marx's corpus of praxis, an idea that would play a critical role in the development of his thought.

nation of his system by his desire for accommodation and the like, hence, in one word, explain it in terms of *morality*. They forget that only a short time ago they were enthusiastic about all his idiosyncrasies [*Einseitigkeiten*], as can be clearly demonstrated from their writings.

If they were really so affected by the ready-made science they acquired that they gave themselves up to it in naive uncritical trust, then how unscrupulous is their attempt to reproach the Master for a hidden intention behind his insight! The Master, to whom the science was not something received, but something in the process of becoming, to whose uttermost periphery his own intellectual heart's blood was pulsating! On the contrary, they rendered themselves suspect of not having been serious before. And now they oppose their own former condition, and ascribe it to Hegel, forgetting however that his relation to his system was immediate, substantial, while theirs is only a reflected one.

It is quite thinkable for a philosopher to fall into one or another apparent inconsistency through some sort of accommodation; he himself may be conscious of it. But what he is not conscious of, is the possibility that this apparent accommodation has its deepest roots in an inadequacy or in an inadequate formulation of his principle itself. Suppose therefore that a philosopher has really accommodated himself, then his pupils must explain *from his inner essential consciousness* that which *for him himself* had the form of *an exoteric consciousness*. In this way, that which appears as progress of conscience is at the same time progress of knowledge. No suspicion is cast upon the particular conscience of the philosopher, but his essential form of consciousness is construed, raised to a definite shape and meaning and in this way also transcended.

By the way, I consider this unphilosophical trend in

a large section of Hegel's school as a phenomenon which will always accompany the transition from discipline to freedom.

It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind, once liberated in itself, turns into practical energy, and, leaving the shadowy empire of Amenthes as will, turns itself against the reality of the world existing without it. (From a philosophical point of view, however, it is important to specify these aspects better, since from the specific manner of this turn we can reason back towards the immanent determination and the universal historic character of a philosophy. We see here, as it were, its *curriculum vitae* narrowed down to its subjective point.) But the *practice* of philosophy is itself *theoretical.* It is the *critique* that measures the individual existence by the essence, the particular reality by the Idea. But this *immediate realisation* of philosophy is in its deepest essence afflicted with contradictions, and this its essence takes form in the appearance and imprints its seal upon it.

When philosophy turns itself as will against the world of appearance, then the system is lowered to an abstract totality, that is, it has become one aspect of the world which opposes another one. Its relationship to the world is that of reflection. Inspired by the urge to realise itself, it enters into tension against the other. The inner self-contentment and completeness has been broken. What was inner light has become consuming flame turning outwards. The result is that as the world becomes philosophical, philosophy also becomes worldly, that its realisation is also its loss, that what it struggles against on the outside is its own inner deficiency, that in the very struggle it falls precisely into those defects which it fights as defects in the opposite camp, and that it can only overcome these defects by falling into them.

That which opposes it and that which it fights is always the same as itself, only with factors inverted.

This is the one side, when we consider this matter purely *objectively* as immediate realisation of philosophy. However, it has also a *subjective* aspect, which is merely another form of it. This is *the relationship of the philosophical system* which is realised *to its intellectual carriers*, to the individual self-consciousnesses in which its progress appears. This relationship results in what confronts the world in the realisation of philosophy itself, namely, in the fact that these individual self-consciousnesses always carry a *double-edged demand*, one edge turned against the world, the other against philosophy itself. Indeed, what in the thing itself appears as a relationship inverted in itself, appears in these self-consciousnesses as a double one, a demand and an action contradicting each other. Their liberation of the world from un-philosophy is at the same time their own liberation from the philosophy that held them in fetters as a particular system. Since they are themselves engaged merely in the act and immediate energy of development—and hence have not yet theoretically emerged from that system—they perceive only the contradiction with the plastic equality-with-self [*Sich-selbst-Gleichheit*] of the system and do not know that by turning against it they only realise its individual moments.

This duality of philosophical self-consciousness appears finally as a double trend, each side utterly opposed to the other. One side, the *liberal* party, as we may call it in general, maintains as its main determination the concept and the principle of philosophy; the other side, its *non-concept*, the moment of reality. This second side *is positive philosophy*. The act of the first side is critique, hence precisely that turning-towards-the-outside of philosophy; the act of

the second is the attempt to philosophise, hence the turning-in-towards-itself of philosophy. This second side knows that the inadequacy is immanent in philosophy, while the first understands it as inadequacy of the world which has to be made philosophical. Each of these parties does exactly what the other one wants to do and what it itself does not want to do. The first, however, is, despite its inner contradiction, conscious of both its principle in general and its goal. In the second party the inversion [*Verkehrtheit*], we may well say the madness [*Verrücktheit*], appears as such. As to the content: only the liberal party achieves real progress, because it is the party of the concept, while positive philosophy is only able to produce demands and tendencies whose form contradicts their meaning.

That which in the first place appears as an inverted [*verkehrtes*] relationship and inimical trend of philosophy with respect to the world, becomes in the second place a diremption of individual self-consciousness in itself and appears finally as an external separation and duality of philosophy, as two opposed philosophical trends.

It is obvious that apart from this there also emerge a number of subordinate, querulous formations without individuality. Some of them place themselves behind a philosophical giant of the past—but the ass is soon detected under the lion's skin; the whimpering voice of a manikin of today or yesterday blubbers in comical contrast to the majestic voice resounding through the ages—say of Aristotle, whose unwelcome organ it has appointed itself. It is as if a mute would help himself to a voice by means of a speaking-trumpet of enormous size. Or as if some Lilliputian armed with double spectacles stands on a tiny spot of the posterior of the giant and announces full of amazement to the world the astonishingly novel vista his *punctum visus*

[point of view] offers and makes himself ridiculous explaining that not in a flowing heart, but in the solid substantial ground on which he stands, has been found the point of Archimedes, *pou sto*, on which the world hinges. Thus we obtain hair-, nail-, toe-, excrement-philosophers and others, who have to represent an even worse function in the mystical world man [*Weltmensch*] of Swedenborg. However, all these slugs belong essentially to the two above-mentioned sides as to their element. As to these sides themselves: in another place I shall completely explain their relation, in part to each other, in part to Hegel's philosophy, as well as the particular historical moments in which this development reveals itself.

Fragment from the Appendix[vii]

[CRITIQUE OF PLUTARCH'S POLEMIC AGAINST THE THEOLOGY OF EPICURUS]

[II. Individual Immortality]

[1. On Religious Feudalism. The Hell of the Populace]

The study is again divided into the relation of the *Evil-doers and rascals*, then of the *masses and uncivilised* and finally of the *Decent and intelligent ones* (1. c. 1104) to the doctrine of the continued existence of the soul. Already this division into fixed qualitative distinctions shows how little Plutarch understands Epicurus, who, as a philosopher, investigates the essential relationship of the human soul in general.

Then he brings fear up again as the means to reform the evil-doers and thus justifies the terrors of the under-

vii. **Editor's Note:** The following informative note appears in the MECW, pp. 736–737. "Two fragments from the Appendix have been preserved: the beginning of the first paragraph of Section Two and the author's notes to Section One. The general title of the Appendix, which is missing in the first fragment, is reproduced here according to the contents. The text of this fragment corresponds almost word for word to the text of the third notebook on Epicurean philosophy and was written in an unknown hand on paper of the same kind as the text of the notebook. On this ground some scholars assume that this fragment does not belong to the Doctoral dissertation, but is part of a non-extant work on ancient philosophy. The content of the fragment, however, and the quotations from Plutarch in it are closely connected with the author's notes to the Appendix. As the available data do not yet permit a final decision as to where this fragment belongs, in this edition it is included in the Doctoral dissertation."

world for the sensuous consciousness. We have already considered this objection of his. Since in fear, and specifically in an inner fear that cannot be extinguished, man is determined as an animal, we do not care at all how an animal is kept in restraint.

Now we proceed to the view of the *polloi* (multitude), although it turns out at the end that few people are not included in this term; although, to tell the truth, all people *I had almost said all men*, vow allegiance to this banner.

In the masses, who have no fear of what comes after death, the myth-inspired hope of eternal life and the desire of being, the oldest and most powerful of all passions, produces joy and a feeling of happiness and overcomes that childish terror. Hence, whoever has lost children, a wife, and friends would rather have them continue to be somewhere and continue to exist, even if in hardship, than be utterly taken away and destroyed and reduced to nothing. On the other hand, they willingly hear such expressions as "the dying person goes somewhere else and changes his dwelling", and whatever else intimates that death is a change of the soul's dwelling, and not destruction . . . and such expressions as "he is lost" and "he has perished" and "he is no more" disturb them. . . . They hold in store for them utter death who say: "We men are born only once; one cannot be born a second time. . . . . For the present is of little account to them, or rather of none at all, in comparison with eternity, and they let it pass without enjoying it and neglect virtue and action, spiritless and despising themselves as creatures of a day, impermanent, and beings worth nothing to speak of. For the doctrine that "being-without-sensation and being-dissolved and what has no sensation is nothing to us" does not remove the terror of death, but rather confirms it. For this is the very thing nature dreads . . . the dissolution of the soul into what has neither

thought nor sensation; Epicurus, by making this a scattering into emptiness and atoms, does still more destroy our hope of immortality, a hope for which (I would almost say) all men and all women are ready to be torn asunder by Cerberus and to carry constantly [water] into the barrel [of the Danaides], so that they may [only] stay in being and not be extinguished. p. [1104–] 1105, 1.c.

There is really no qualitative difference between this and the previous category. What in the first case appeared in the shape of animal fear, appears here in the shape of human fear, the form of sentiment. The content remains the same.

We are told that the desire of being is the oldest love; to be sure, the most abstract and hence oldest love is the love of self, the love of one's particular being. But that was expressing this fact too bluntly, and so it is retracted and an ennobling halo is cast around it by the semblance of sentiment.

Thus he who loses wife and children would rather that they were somewhere, even under bad conditions, than that they had totally ceased to exist. If the issue were only love, then the wife and the child of the individual would be preserved in the greatest purity in his heart, a state of being far superior to that of empirical existence. But the facts are otherwise. Wife and child as such are only in empirical existence insofar as the individual to whom they belong exists empirically himself. That the individual therefore prefers to know that they are somewhere in sensuous space, even under bad conditions, rather than nowhere, only means that he wants to preserve the consciousness of his own empirical existence. The mantle of love was only a shadow. The naked empirical Ego, the love of self, the oldest love, is the core and has not rejuvenated itself into a more concrete, more ideal shape.

Plutarch believes that the word "change" has a more

pleasing sound than "total cessation". But the change is not supposed to be a qualitative one, the individual Ego in its individual being is supposed to persist, the word therefore is only the sensuous image of what the word stands for and has to stand for its opposite. The thing is not supposed to be changed, only placed in a dark spot. The qualitative leap—and every qualitative distinction is a leap, without such leaping no ideality—is then obscured by the interposition of a fantastic distance.

Plutarch also thinks that this consciousness. . . .

[Here the manuscript breaks off. Ed.]

Marx's Appendix Notes[viii]

CRITIQUE OF PLUTARCH'S POLEMIC AGAINST THE THEOLOGY OF EPICURUS

I. The Relationship of Man to God

1. Fear and the Being Beyond

1. *Plutarch, That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* (published by Xylander), 1 I, 1100. . . . one point, that of pleasure they derive from these views, has, I should say, been dealt with (i.e., from Epicurus): . . . their theory . . . does remove a certain superstitious fear; but it allows no joy and delight to conic to us from the gods.

2. [Holbach,] *System of Nature* (London, 1770), I, p. 9. The idea of such powerful agencies has always been associated with that of terror; their name always reminded man of his own calamities or those of his fathers; we tremble today because our ancestors have trembled for thousands of years. The idea of Divinity always awakens in us distressing ideas . . . our present fears and lugubrious thoughts . . . rise every time before our mind when we hear his name. Comp. p. 79. When man bases morality on the not too moral character of a God who changes his behaviour, then he can never know what he owes to God nor what he owes to himself or to others. Nothing therefore could be more dangerous than to persuade man that a being superior to nature

viii. **Editor's Note:** This is the second fragment from the missing Appendix; here we have Marx's notes for the first section of the Appendix.

exists, a being before whom reason must be silent and to whom man must sacrifice all to receive happiness.

3. Plutarch, 1.c., 1101. For since they fear him [God] as a ruler mild to the good and hating the wicked, by this one fear, which keeps them from doing wrong, they are freed from the many that attend on crime, and since they keep their viciousness within themselves, where it gradually as it were dies down, they are less tormented than those who make free with it and venture on overt acts, only to be filled at once with terror and regret.

2. Cult and the Individual

4. Plutarch, 1.c., 1101. No, wherever it [i.e., the soul] believes and conceives most firmly that the god is present, there more than anywhere else it puts away all feelings of pain, of fear and of worry, and gives itself up so far to pleasure that it indulges in a playful and merry inebriation, in amatory matters. . . .

5. Ibid., 1.c.

6. Ibid., 1.c., 1102. For it is not the abundance of wine or the roast meats that cheer the heart at festivals, but good hope and the belief in the benign presence of the god and his gracious acceptance of what is done.

3. Providence and the Degraded God

7. Plutarch, 1.c., 1102. . . . how great their pleasures are, since their beliefs about God are purified from error: that he is our guide to all blessings, the father of everything honourable, and that he may no more do than suffer anything base. For he is good, and in none that is good arises envy about aught or fear or anger or hatred; for it is as much the function of heat to chill instead of warm as it is of good to harm. By its nature anger is farthest removed from

favour, wrath from goodwill and from love of man and kindliness, hostility and the spreading of terror; for the one set belong to virtue and power, the other to weakness and vice. Consequently it is not true that Heaven is prey to feelings of anger and favour; rather, because it is God's nature to bestow favour and lend aid, it is not his nature to be angry and do harm. . . .

8. Ibid. Do you think that deniers of providence require any other punishment, and are not adequately punished when they extirpate from themselves so great a pleasure and delight?

9. "But he is not a weak intellect who does not know an objective God, but he who wants to know one." Schelling, "Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism" [in German] in *Philosophische Schriften*, Vol. I, Landshut, 1809, p. 127, Letter II.

Herr Schelling should at any rate be advised to give again some thought to his first writings. For example, we read in his essay "on the Ego as principle of philosophy":

For example, let us assume God, insofar as he is determined as object, "as the real foundation of our cognition, then he belongs himself, insofar as he is object, in the sphere of our cognition and therefore cannot be for us the ultimate point on which this entire sphere is suspended"(l.c., p. 5).

Finally, we remind Herr Schelling of the last words of the letter from which we have just quoted:

"The time has come to proclaim to the better part of humanity the freedom of minds, and not to tolerate any longer that they deplore the loss of their fetters". P. 129, 1.c.

When the time already had come in 1795, how about the year 1841?

We might bring up for this occasion a theme that has

well-nigh become notorious, namely, the *proofs of the existence of God*. Hegel has turned all these theological demonstrations upside-down, that is, he has rejected them in order to justify them. What kind of clients are those whom the defending lawyer can only save from conviction by killing them himself? For instance, Hegel interpreted the conclusion from the world to God as meaning: "Since the accidental does not exist, God or Absolute exists." However, the theological demonstration is the opposite: "Since the accidental has true being, God exists." God is the guarantee for the world of the accidental. It is obvious that with this the opposite also has been stated.

The proofs of the existence of God are either mere hollow tautologies. Take for instance the ontological proof. This only means:

> "that which I conceive for myself in a real way (*realiter*), is a real concept for me",

something that works on me. In this sense all *gods*, the pagan as well as the Christian ones, have possessed a real existence. Did not the ancient Moloch reign? Was not the Delphic Apollo a real power in the life of the Greeks? Kant's critique means nothing in this respect. If somebody imagines that he has a hundred talers, if this concept is not for him an arbitrary, subjective one, if he believes in it, then these hundred imagined talers have for him the same value as a hundred real ones. For instance, he will incur debts on the strength of his imagination, his imagination will work, in the *same way as* all humanity has incurred *debts on its gods*. The contrary is true. Kant's example might have enforced the ontological proof. Real talers have the same existence that the imagined gods have. Has a real taler any

existence except in the imagination, if only in the general or rather common imagination of man? Bring paper money into a country where this use of paper is unknown, and everyone will laugh at your subjective imagination. Come with your gods into a country where other gods are worshipped, and you will be shown to suffer from fantasies and abstractions. And justly so. He who would have brought a Wendic god to the ancient Greeks would have found the proof of this god's non-existence. Indeed, for the Greeks he did not exist. *That which a particular country is for particular alien gods, the country of reason is for God in general, a region in which he ceases to exist.*

As to the second alternative, that such proofs are *proofs of the existence of essential human self-consciousness, logical explanations of it*, take for example the ontological proof. Which being is immediate when made the subject of thought? Self-consciousness.

Taken in this sense all proofs of the existence of God are proofs of his non-existence. They are refutations of all concepts of a God. The true proofs should have the opposite character: "Since nature has been badly constructed, God exists", "Because the world is without reason, therefore God exists", "Because there is no thought, there is God". But what does that say, except that, *for whom the world appears without reason, hence who is without reason himself, for him God exists? Or lack of reason is the existence of God.*

". . . when you presuppose the idea of an *objective God*, how can you talk of *laws* that reason produces out *of itself*, since autonomy can only belong to an absolutely free being." Schelling, l.c., p. 198 [Letter X].

"It is a crime against humanity to hide principles that can be generally communicated." Ibid., p. 199.

MARX'S DISSERTATION NOTES

1. Diogenes Laertius, X, 4. They are followed by Posidonius the Stoic and his school, and Nicolaus and Sotion . . . [allege that] he (Epicurus) put forward as his own the doctrines of Democritus about atoms and of Aristippus about pleasure.

2. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, xxvi [73]. What is there in Epicurus' natural philosophy that does not come from Democritus? Since even if he introduced *sonar* alterations . . . yet most of his system is the same. . . .

3. Id., *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, 1, vi [21]. Thus where Epicurus alters the doctrines of Democritus, he alters them for the worse; while for those ideas which he adopts, the credit belongs entirely to Democritus. . . .

Ibid. [17, 18] . . . the subject of Natural Philosophy, which is Epicurus' particular boast. Here, in the first place, he is entirely second-hand. His doctrines are those of Democritus, with a very few modifications. And as for the latter, where he attempts to improve upon his original, in my opinion he only succeeds in making things worse. . . . Epicurus for his part, where he follows Democritus, does not generally blunder.

4. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* (published by Xylander), 1108. Leonteus . . . writes . . . that Democritus was honoured by Epicurus for having reached the correct approach to knowledge before him . . . because Democritus had first hit upon the first principles of natural philosophy. Comp. ibid., 1111.

5. (Id.,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, V, 235, published by Tauchnitz. Epicurus, the son of Neocles, from Athens, who philosophised according to Democritus. . . .

6. Id., *Reply to Colotes*, 1111, 1112, 1114, 1115, 1117, 1119, 1120 seqq.

7. Clement of Alexandria, *The Miscellanies*, Vi, p. 629, Cologne edition [2]. Epicurus also has pilfered his leading dogmas from Democritus.

8. Ibid., p. 295 [I, 11]. "Beware lest any man despoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world and not after Christ" [Col. ii, 8] branding not all philosophy, but the Epicurean, which Paul mentions in the Acts of the Apostles [Acts xvii, 18], which abolishes providence . . . and whatever other philosophy honours the elements, but places not over them the efficient cause, nor apprehends the Creator.

9. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* (Geneva edition) [I, 273]. Epicurus has been detected as guilty of having filched the best of his dogmas from the poets. For he has been shown to have taken his definition of the intensity of pleasures,—that it is "the removal of everything painful"—from this one verse:

"When they had now put aside all longing for drinking and eating." [Homer, *Iliad*, I, 469]

And as to death, that "it is nothing to us", Epicharmus had already pointed this out to him when he said,

"To die or to be dead concerns me not."

So, too, he stole the notion that dead bodies have no feeling from Homer, where he writes,

"'This dumb day that he beats with abuse in his violent fury." [Ibid., XXIV, 54]

10. *Letter of Leibniz to Mr. Des Maizeaux*, containing [*some*] clarifications. . . . [*Opera omnia*,] ed. L. Dutens, Vol. 2, p[p]. 66[–67].

11. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*, 1111. Democritus is therefore to be censured not for admitting the consequences that flow from his principles, but for setting up principles that lead to these consequences. . . . If "does not say" means "does not admit it is so", he is following his familiar practice; thus he (Epicurus) does away with providence but says he has left us with piety; he chooses friends for the pleasure he gets, but says that he assumes the greatest pains on their behalf; and he says that while he posits an infinite universe he does not eliminate "up" and "down".

12. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 1, p. 8 (published by Trendelenburg) [2, 404 (Homer, *Iliad* I, 469), 27–29]. Democritus roundly identifies soul and mind, for he identifies what appears with what is true.

13. Id., *Metaphysics*, IV, 5 [1009, (Homer *Iliad* XXIV, 54) 11–18]. And this is why Democritus, at any rate, says that either there is no truth or to us at least it is not evident. And in general it is because they [i.e., these thinkers] suppose knowledge to be sensation, and this to be a physical alteration, that they say that what appears to our senses must be true; for it is for these reasons that both Empedocles and Democritus and, one may almost say, all the others have fallen victims to opinions of this sort. For Empedocles says that when men change their condition they change their knowledge.

By the way, the contradiction is expressed in this passage of the *Metaphysics* itself.

14. Diogenes Laertius, IX, 72. Furthermore, they find Xenophanes, Zeno of Elea, and Democritus to be sceptics. . . . Democritus [says:] "Of a truth we know nothing, for truth is in a well."

15. Comp. Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy* [in German], Part I, pp. 579 seqq. [2nd improved edition, 1836, pp. 619 seqq.]

16. Diogenes Laertius. IX, 44. His (Democritus') opinions are these: The first principles of the universe are atoms and empty space; everything else is merely thought to exist.

17. Ibid., IX, 72. Democritus rejects qualities, saying: "Opinion says hot or cold, but the reality is atoms and empty space."

18. Simplicius, *Scholia to Aristotle* (collected by Brandis), p. 488. . . . yet he (Democritus) does not really allow one being to be formed out of them, for it is quite foolish, he says, that two or more become one. P. 514. [. . .] and therefore they (Democritus and Leucippus) said that neither the one becomes many nor do the many become the truly inseparable one but through the combination of atoms each thing appears to become a unity.

19. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*, 1111. The atoms, which he (Democritus) calls "*ideas*".

20. Comp. Aristotle, 1. c.

21. Diogenes Laertius, X, 121. He [the wise man] will be a dogmatist but not a mere sceptic.

22. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*, 1117. For it is one of Epicurus' tenets that none but the sage is unalterably convinced of anything.

23. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, xxv [70]. He (Epicurus) therefore said that all the senses give a true report.

Comp. id., *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, vii.

(Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, IV, p. 287 [8]. Epicurus holds that every impression and every phantasy is true.

24. Diogenes Laertius, X, 31. Now in *The Canon* Epicurus affirms that our sensations and preconceptions and our feelings are the standards of truth. . . . 32. Nor is there anything which can refute sensations or convict them of error: one sensation cannot convict another and kindred sensation, for they are equally valid; nor can one sensation refute another which is not kindred but heterogeneous, for the objects which the two senses judge are not the same; nor again can reason refute them, for reason is wholly dependent on sensation.

25. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*, 1. c. [1110–1111]. He [Colotes] says that Democritus' words "colour is by convention, sweet by convention, a compound by convention", and so the rest, "what is real are the void and the atoms", are an attack on the senses. . . . I cannot deny the truth of this, but I can affirm that this view is as inseparable from Epicurus' theories as shape and weight are by their own assertion inseparable from the atom. For what does Democritus say? That entities infinite in number, indivisible and indestructible, destitute moreover of quality, and incapable of modification, move scattered about in the void; that when they draw near one another or collide or become entangled the resulting aggregate appears in the one case to be water, in others fire, a plant, or a man, but that everything really is the indivisible "forms", as he calls them [or: atoms, "ideas", as he calls them], and nothing else. For there is no generation from the non-existent, and again nothing can be generated from the existent, as the atoms are too solid to be affected and changed. From this it follows that there is no colour, since it would have to come from things colourless, and

no natural entity or mind, since they would have to come from things without qualities. . . . Democritus is therefore to he censured, not for admitting the consequences that flow from his principles, but for setting up principles that lead to these consequences. . . . *Epicurus claims to lay down the same first principles, but nevertheless does not say that "colour is by convention", and so with the qualities [sweet, bitter] and the rest.*

26. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, 1, vi. Democritus, being an educated man and well versed in geometry, thinks the sun is of vast size; Epicurus considers it perhaps two feet in diameter, for he pronounces it *to be* exactly as large as it appears. Comp. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, II, p. 265.

27. Diogenes Laertius, IX, 37. [And truly Democritus] had trained himself both in physics and in ethics, nay more, in mathematics and the routine subjects of education, and was quite an expert in the arts.

28. Comp. Diogenes Laertius, [IX,] 46[--49].

29. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, X, p. 472. And somewhere he (Democritus) says proudly about himself: "I have wandered through a larger part of the earth than any of my contemporaries, investigating the remotest things, and I have seen most climates and lands, and I have heard the most learned men, and in linear composition with demonstration no one surpassed me, not even the so-called Arsipedonapts of the Egyptians, whose guest I was when already turning eighty." For he went as far as Babylon and Persia and Egypt, where he also studied with the Egyptian priests.

30. Diogenes Laertius, IX, 35. According to Demetrius in his book on *Men of the Same Name* and Antisthenes in his *Successions of Philosophers* he (Democritus) travelled into Egypt to learn geometry from the priests, and he also went into Persia to visit the Chaidaeans as well as to the Red Sea. Some say that he associated with the gymnosophists in India and went to Aethiopia.

31. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, V, 39. When Democritus lost his sight. . . . And this man believed that the sight of the eyes was an obstacle to the piercing vision of the soul, and whilst others often failed to see what lay at their feet, he ranged freely into the infinite without finding any boundary that brought him to a halt.

Id, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, V, xxix [87]. It is related of Democritus that he deprived himself of eyesight; and it is certain that [he did so] in order that his mind *should be distracted as little as possible* from reflection.

32. Luc. Ann. Seneca, *Works*, II, p. 24, Amsterdam, 1672, Epistle VIII. I am still conning Epicurus . . . "If you would enjoy real freedom, you must be the slave of Philosophy." The man who submits and surrenders himself to her is not kept waiting; he is emancipated on the spot. For the very service of Philosophy is freedom.

33. Diogenes Laertius, X, 122. Let no one be slow to seek wisdom

when he is young nor weary in the search thereof when he is grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. Comp. Clement of Alexandria, IV, 501.

34. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, I, 1. The case against the mathematici [or: Professors of Arts and Sciences] has been set forth in a general way, it would seem, both by Epicurus and by the School of Pyrrho, although the standpoints they adopt are different. Epicurus took the ground that the subjects taught are of no help in perfecting wisdom. . . .

35. Ibid., p. 11 [I, 49]. And amongst them we must place Epicurus, although he seems to be bitterly hostile to the Professors of Arts and Sciences.

Ibid., p. 54 [I, 272]. . . . those accusers of grammar, Pyrrho, and Epicurus. . . .

Comp. Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, 1094.

36. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, xxi [72]. No! Epicurus was not uneducated: the real ignoramuses are those who ask us to go on studying till old age the subjects that we ought to be ashamed not to have learnt in boyhood.

37. Diogenes Laertius, X, 13. Apollodorus in his *Chronology* tells us that our philosopher (i.e., Epicurus) was a pupil of Nausiphanes and Praxiphanes; but in his letter to Eurydicus, Epicurus himself denies it and says that he was self-taught.

Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, xxvi [72]. For he (Epicurus) boasted that he had never had a teacher. This I for my part could well believe, even if he did not proclaim it. . . .

38. Seneca, *Epistle LII*, p. 177. Epicurus remarks that certain men have worked their way to the truth without any one's assistance, carving out their own passage. And he gives special praise to these, for their impulse has come from within, and they have forged to the front by themselves. Again, he says, there are others who need outside help, who will not proceed unless someone leads the way, but who will follow faithfully. Of these, he says, Metrodorus was one; this type of man is also excellent, but belongs to the second grade.

39. Diogenes Laertius, X, 10. He spent all his life in Greece, notwithstanding the calamities which had befallen her in that age; when he did

once or twice take a trip to Ionia, it was to visit his friends there. Friends indeed came to him from all parts and lived with him in his garden. This is stated by Apollodorus, who also says that he purchased the garden for eighty minae.

40. Ibid., X, 15, 16. Hermippus relates that he entered a bronze bath of lukewarm water and asked for unmixed wine, which he swallowed, and then, having bidden his friends remember his doctrines, breathed his last.

41. Cicero, *On Fate*, x [22, 23]. Epicurus [thinks] that the necessity of fate can be avoided. . . . Democritus preferred to accept the view that all events are caused by necessity.

Id., *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, xxv [69]. He [Epicurus] therefore invented a device to escape from determinism (the point had apparently escaped the notice of Democritus). . . .

Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, I, pp. 23 seqq. Democritus of Abdera [assumed] . . . that all, the past as well as the present and the future, has been determined always, since time immemorial, by necessity.

42. Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, V, 8 [7 Sgb , 2–3]. Democritus . . . reduces to necessity all the operations of Nature.

43. Diogenes Laertius, IX, 45. All things happen by virtue of necessity, the vortex being the cause of the creation of all things, and this he (Democritus) calls *necessity*.

44. (Plutarch) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, p. 252 [I, 25]. Parmenides and Democritus [say] that there is nothing in the world but what is necessary, and that this same necessity is otherwise called fate, right, providence and the creator of the world.

45. Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, I, 8. Parmenides and Democritus [say] that everything occurs by necessity, this being fate, justice, providence [and the architect of the world]. Leudppus [says] that everything [occurs] by necessity, this being fate. For he says . . . nothing originates without cause, but everything because of a cause and of *necessity*.

46. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, VI, p. 257. . . . fate, that . . . for the others (i.e., Democritus) depends on these small bodies, which are carried downward and then ascend again, that conglomerate and again dissipate, that run away from each other and then come together again by *necessity*.

47. Stobaeus, *Ethical Selections*, II [4]. Men like to create for themselves the illusion of chance-an excuse for their own perplexity; since chance is incompatible with sound thinking.

48. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XIV, p. 782. . . . and he (i.e., Democritus) has made chance the master and ruler of the universal and divine, and has claimed that everything happens through chance. At the same time he keeps it away from human life and has decried as stupid those who proclaim it. Indeed, at the beginning of his teachings he says: "Men

like to create for themselves the illusion of chance—an excuse for their own folly; since it is natural that sound thinking is incompatible with chance; and they have said that this worst enemy of thinking rules; or rather, they accept chance instead of thinking by totally removing and abolishing sound thinking. For they do not appreciate thinking as blissful, but chance as the most reasonable."

49. Simplicius, l. c., p. 351. The expression "like the ardent doctrine that removes chance" seems to refer to Democritus. . . .

50. Diogenes Laertius, X, 133, 134. . . . Destiny, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he laughs to scorn, affirming rather that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance or fortune is inconstant; whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach. It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath the yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honour the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. But he holds to chance, not to a god, as the world in general [*hoi polloi*] does . . .

51. Seneca, *Epistle XII*, p. 42. "It is wrong to live under necessity; but no man is constrained to live under necessity. . . . On all sides lie many short and simple paths to freedom; and let us thank God that no man can he kept in life. We may spurn the very constraints that hold us." Epicurus . . . uttered these words. . . .

52. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, 1, xx [55–56]. But what value can be assigned to a philosophy (i. e., the Stoic) which thinks that everything happens by fate? It is a belief for old women, and ignorant old women at that. . . . But Epicurus has set us free [from superstitious terrors] and delivered us out of captivity. . . .

53. Ibid., I, xxv [70]. He (i.e., Epicurus) does the same in his battle with the logicians. Their accepted doctrine is that in every disjunctive proposition of the form "*so-and-so either* is or not, one of the two alternatives must be true. Epicurus took alarm; if such a proposition as "*Epicurus either will or will not be alive tomorrow*" were granted, one or the other alternative would be necessary. Accordingly he denied the necessity of a disjunctive proposition altogether.

54. Simplicius, 1. c., p. 351. But also Democritus states, where he brings it up, that the different kinds must separate themselves from the totality, but not how and because of what reason, and seems to let them originate automatically and by chance.

Ibid., p. 351. . . . and since this man (i. e., Democritus) has apparently applied chance in the creation of the world. . . .

55. Comp. Eusebius, 1. c., XIV, [p]p. [781–782]. ". . . and this [said] one (i. e., Democritus), who had sought vainly and without reason for a cause, since he started from an empty principle and a faulty hypothesis, and has taken as the greatest wisdom the understanding of unreasonable [and foolish] happenings, without seeing the root and general necessity of things. . . .

56. Simplicius, 1. c., p. 351. . . . indeed, when somebody is thirsty, he drinks cold water and feels fine again; but Democritus will probably not accept chance as the cause, but the thirst.

Ibid, p. 351. . . . for, even though he (Democritus) seems to use chance in regard to the creation of the world, yet he maintains that in individual cases chance is not the cause of anything, but refers us back to other causes. For instance: the cause of treasure trove is the digging or the planting of the olive tree. . . .

Comp. ibid, p. 351. . . . but in individual cases, he (Democritus) says, [chance] is not the cause.

57. Eusebius, 1. c., XIV, 781. Indeed, Democritus himself is supposed to have said that he would rather discover a new causal explanation than acquire the Persian crown.

58. (Plutarch) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, II, p. 261 [13]. Epicurus rejects none of these opinions, [Marx added here: "(i.e., opinions of the philosophers on the substance of the stars)".] [for he keeps to] what is possible.

Ibid., II, p. 265 [21]. Epicurus says again that all the foregoing is possible.

Ibid. [II, 22] Epicurus believes that all the foregoing is possible.

Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, I, p. 54. Epicurus rejects none of these opinions, for he keeps to what is possible.

59. Seneca, *Questions of Nature*, [VI,] XX, [5,] p. 802. Epicurus asserts that all the foregoing may be causes, but he tries to introduce some additional ones. He criticises other authors for affirming too positively that some particular one of the causes is responsible, as it is difficult to pronounce anything as certain in matters in which conjecture must be resorted to.

60. Comp. Part II, Chapter 5.

Diogenes Laertius, X, 88. However, we must observe each fact as presented, and further separate from it all the facts presented along with it, the occurrence of which from various causes is not contradicted by facts within our experience. . .. All these alternatives are possible; they are contradicted by none of the facts. . . .

61. Diogenes Laertius, X, 80. We must not suppose that our treatment of these matters fails of accuracy, so far as it is needful to ensure our tranquillity [ataraxy] and happiness.

62. Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, 1, p. 33. Epicurus says . . . that the atoms move sometimes vertically downwards, at other times by deviating from a straight line, but the motion upward is due to collision and recoil.

Comp. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, vi. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, p. 249 [I, 12]. Stobaeus, 1.c., p. 40.

63. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, 1, xxvi [73]. What is there in Epicurus' natural philosophy that does not come from Democritus? Since even if he introduced some alterations, for instance the *swerve of the atoms* of which I spoke just now . . .

64. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, vi [18–19]. He (Epicurus) believes that these same indivisible solid bodies are borne by their own weight perpendicularly downward, which he holds is the natural motion of all bodies; but thereupon this *clever fellow*, encountering the difficulty that if they all travelled downwards in a straight line, and, as I said, perpendicularly, no one atom would ever be able to overtake any other atom, accordingly introduced an idea of his own invention: he said that the atom makes a very tiny swerve,—the smallest divergence possible; and so are produced entanglements and combinations and cohesions of atoms with atoms, which result in the creation of the world and all its parts, and of all that is in them.

65. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, xxv [69–70]. Epicurus saw that if the atoms travelled downwards by their own weight, we should have no freedom of the will, since the motion of the atoms would he determined by necessity. He therefore invented a device to escape from determinism (the point had apparently escaped the notice of Democritus): he said that the atom while travelling vertically downward by the force of gravity makes a very slight swerve to one side. This defence discredits him more than if he had had to abandon his original position. Comp. Cicero, *On Fate*, x [22–23].

66. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Historical and Critical Dictionary), art. Epicurus.

67. Schaubach, *On Epicurus' Astronomical Concepts* [in German], *in Archiv für Philologie und Pedagogik*, V, 4, [1839,] p. 549.

68. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 11, 251 ff. Again, if all movement is always interconnected, the new rising from the old in a determinate order . . . what is the source of the free will?

69. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, I, 4 [409, 1–5]. How are we to imagine a unit [monad] being moved? By what agency? What sort of movement can be attributed to what is without parts or internal differences? If the unit is both originative of movement and itself capable of being moved, it must contain differences. Further, since they *say* a moving line *generates* a surface and a moving point a line, the movements *of the psychic* units must be *lines*.

70. Diogenes Laertius, X, 43. The atoms are in continual motion.

Simplicius, l.c., p. 424. . . . the followers of Epicurus . . . [taught] eternal motion.

71. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 11, 251, 253–255. . . . if the atoms never swerve so as to originate some new movement that will snap the bonds of fate, the everlasting sequence of cause and effect. . . .

72. Ibid., II, 279–280. . . . there is within the human breast something that can fight against this force and resist it.

73. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, vi [19–20]. . . . yet he does not attain the object for the sake of which this fiction was devised. For, if all the atoms swerve, none will ever come to cohere together; or if some swerve while others travel in a straight line, by their own natural tendency, in the first place this will be tantamount to assigning to the atoms their different spheres of action, some to travel straight and some sideways. . . .

74. Lucretius, l.c., 293.

75. Cicero, *On Fate*, x [22]. . . . when the atom swerves sideways a minimal space, termed [by Epicurus] elachiston [the smallest].

76. Ibid. Also he is compelled to profess in reality, if not quite explicitly, that this swerve takes place without cause. . . .

77. Plutarch, *On the Creation of the Soul*, VI (VI, p. 8, stereotyped edition). For they do not agree with Epicurus that the atom swerves somewhat, since he introduces a motion without cause out of the non-being.

78. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, vi [19]. The swerving is itself an arbitrary fiction (for Epicurus says *the atoms swerve* without a cause, *yet this* is a capital offence in a natural philosopher, *to speak of something taking place uncaused*). Then also he gratuitously deprives the atoms of what he himself declared to be the natural motion of all heavy bodies, namely, movement in a straight line downwards. . . .

79. Bayle, l.c.

80. Augustine, Letter 56.

81. Diogenes Laertius, X, 128. For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear.

82. Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, 1091. Epicurus too makes a similar statement to the effect that the Good is a thing that arises out of your very escape from evil. . . .

83. Clement of Alexandria, *The Miscellanies*, II, p. 415 [21]. . . . Epicurus also says that the removal of pain is pleasure. . . .

84. Seneca, *On Benefits*, IV [,4, 1], p. 699. Yes, and therefore God does not give benefits, but, free from all care and unconcerned about us, he turns his back on the world . . . and benefits no more concern him than injuries. . . .

85. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, 1, xxiv [68]. . . . you gave us the formula just now—God has not body but a semblance of body, not blood but a kind of blood.

86. Ibid.. xi [112, 115–116]. Well then, what meat and drink, what harmonies of music and flowers of various colours, what delights of touch and smell will you assign to the gods, so as to keep them steeped in pleasure? . . . Why, what reason have you for maintaining that men owe worship to the gods, if the gods not only pay no regard to men, but care for nothing and do nothing at all? "But deity possesses an excellence and pre-eminence which must of its own nature attract the worship of the wise." Now how can there be any excellence in a being so engrossed in the delights of his own pleasure that he always has been, is, and will continue to be entirely idle and inactive?

87. Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, [1100–] 1101. . . . their theory . . . does remove a certain superstitious fear; but it allows no joy and delight to come to us from the gods. Instead, it puts us in the same state of mind with regard to the gods, of neither being alarmed nor rejoicing, that we have regarding the Hyrcanian fish. We expect nothing from them either good or evil.

88. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I, 12 [292 4 –6]. . . . while the perfectly conditioned has no need of action, since it is itself the end. . . .

89. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 11, 221, 223–224. If it were not for this swerve, everything would fall downwards like rain-drops through the abyss of space. No collision would take place and no impact of atom on atom would be created. Thus nature would never have created anything.

90. Ibid., II, 284–292. So also in the atoms . . . besides weight and impact there must be a third cause of movement, the source of this inborn power of ours. . . .

But the fact that the mind itself has no internal necessity to determine its every act and compel it to suffer in helpless passivity—this is due to the slight swerve of the atoms. . . .

91. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I, 7 [275 30–276, 1] If the whole is not continuous, but exists, as Democritus and Leucippus think, in the form of parts separated by void, there must necessarily be one movement of all the multitude. . . . but their nature is one, like many pieces of gold separated from one another.

92. Ibid., III, 2 [300, 9–17]. Hence Leucippus and Democritus, who say that the primary bodies are in perpetual movement in the void or infinite, may be asked to explain the manner of their motion and the kind of movement which is natural to them. For if the various elements are constrained by one another to move as they do, each must still have a natural

movement which the constrained contravenes, and the prime mover must cause motion not by constraint but naturally. If there is no ultimate natural cause of movement and each preceding term in the series is always moved by constraint, we shall have an infinite process.

93. Diogones Laertius, X, 150. Those animals which are incapable of making covenants with one another, to the end that they may neither inflict nor suffer harm, are *without either justice or injustice*. And those tribes which either could not or would not form mutual covenants to the same end are in like case. There never was an absolute justice, but only an agreement made in reciprocal intercourse, in whatever localities, now and again, from time to time, providing against the infliction or suffering of harm.

94. Diogenes Laertius, X, 54. For every quality changes, but the atoms do not change.

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II, 861–863. They must be kept far apart from the atoms, if we wish to provide the universe with imperishable foundations on which it may rest secure . . .

95. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers* [I, 3]. Epicurus . . . affirms that . . . bodies are subject to these three accidents, shape, size and weight. Democritus [acknowledged] but two: size and shape. Epicurus added the third, to wit, weight, for he pronounced that it is necessary that bodies receive their motion from that impulsion which springs from weight Comp. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, p. 421 [X, 240].

96. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XIV, p. 749 [14].

97. Simplicius, 1.c., p. 362. . . . giving (i.e., Democritus) them (i.e., the atoms) the difference with regard to size and shape. . . .

98. Philoponus, ibid. He (Democritus) assigns a unique common nature of the body to all shapes; its parts are the atoms, which differ from each other in size and shape; for they have not only different shape but some of them are bigger, the others smaller.

99. Aristotle, *On Becoming and Decaying*, 1, 8 [326, 10]. . . .and yet he [Democritus] says "the more any indivisible exceeds, the heavier it is".

100. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 1, 7 [276, 1–2, 4–7]. But each piece must, as we assert, have the same motion. . . . So that if it be weight that all possess, no body is, strictly speaking, light; and if lightness he universal, none is heavy. Moreover, whatever possesses weight or lightness will have its place either at one of the extremes or in the middle region.

101. Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy* [in German], I, p. 568, Note 2 [2d improved edition, 1836, p. 602, Note 2].

102. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VIII, 2 [1042, 11–14]. Democritus seems to think there are three kinds of difference between things [atoms]; the underlying body, the matter, is one and the same, but they differ either in rhythm, i.e. shape, or in turning, i.e. position, or in inter-contact, i.e. order.

103. Ibid., I, 4 [985b, 4–19]. Leucippus and his associate Democritus say that the full and the empty are the elements, calling the one being and the other non-being-the full and solid being being, the empty non-being (whence they say being no more is than non-being, because the solid no more is than the empty); and they make these the material causes of things. And as those who make the underlying substance one generate all other things by its modifications, supposing the rare and the dense to be the sources of modifications, in the same way these philosophers say the differences in the elements are the causes of all other qualities. These differences, they say, are three-shape and order and position. For they say the real is differentiated only by "rhythm" and "inter-contact" and "turning"; and of these rhythm is shape, inter-contact is order, and turning is position; for A differs from N in shape, AN from NA in order, and Z from, N in position.

104. Diogenes Laertius X 44. . . . atoms have no quality at all except shape, size and weight. . . . further, that they are not of any and every size; at any rate no atom has ever been seen by our senses.

105. Ibid., X, 56. But to attribute any and every size to the atoms does not help to explain the differences of quality in things; moreover, in that case atoms would exist large enough to be perceived by us, which is never observed to occur; nor can we conceive how such an occurrence should be possible, i. e., that an atom should become visible.

106. Ibid., X, 55. Again, you should not suppose that the atoms have any and every size . . . but some differences of size must be admitted.

107. Ibid., X, 59. On the analogy of things within our experience we have declared that the atom has size; and this, small as it is, we have merely reproduced on a larger scale.

108. comp. ibid., X, 58. Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, I, p. 27.

109. Epicurus, Fragments (*On Nature*, II and XI), collected by Rosinius, ed. By Orefli, p. 26.

110. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XIV, p. 773 (Paris ed.). But they differed in that one of them (i.e., Epicurus) assumed that all atoms were infinitely small and could therefore not be perceived, while Democritus assumed that some large atoms existed too.

111. Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, I, 17. Democritus even says . . . that an atom is possible as large as the world. Comp. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the philosophers*, i, p. 235 11, 31.

112. Aristotle, *On Becoming and Decaying*, 1, 8 1324 , 301. . . . invisible . . . owing to their minuteness . . .

113. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XIV, p. 749. Democritus . . . [assumed] as the principles of the things indivisible . . . bodies perceptible through reason. . . . Comp. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, I, p. 235 [3].

114. Diogenes Laertius, X, 54. Moreover, we must hold that the atoms in fact possess none of the qualities belonging to the world which come under our observation, except shape, weight, and size, and the properties necessarily conjoined with shape. Comp. S. 44.

115. Ibid., X, 42. Furthermore, the atoms . . . vary indefinitely in their shapes.

116. Ibid., X, 42. . . . but the variety of shapes, though indefinitely larger, is not absolutely infinite.

117. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II, 513–514. . . . you must acknowledge a corresponding limit to the different forms of matter.

Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XIV, p. 749. Epicurus . . . [says] . . . that the shapes of the atoms themselves are limited, and not infinite. . . . Comp. (Plutarch) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, 1.c.

118. Diogenes Laertius, X, 42. The like atoms of each shape are absolutely infinite.

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 11, 525–528. Since the varieties of form are limited, the number of uniform atoms must be unlimited. Otherwise the totality of matter would be finite, which I have proved in my verses is not so.

119. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, III, 4 [303, 3–5, 10–15]. There is, further, another view—that of Leucippus and Democritus of Abdera—the implications of which are also unacceptable. . . . and further, they say that since the atomic bodies differ in shape, and there is an infinity of shapes, there is an infinity of simple bodies. But they have never explained in detail the shapes of the various elements, except so far as to allot the sphere to fire. Air, water and the rest . . . ,

Philoponus, 1.c. They have . . . not only entirely different shapes. . . .

120. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II, 474–484, 491–492, 495–497. . . . the number of different forms of atoms is finite. If it were not so, some of the atoms would have to be of infinite magnitude. Within the narrow limits of any single particle, there can be only a limited range of forms . . .

. . . if you wish to vary its form still further . . . the arrangement will demand still other parts. . . . Variation in shape goes with increase in size. You cannot believe, therefore, that the atoms are distinguished by an infinity of forms. . . .

121. Comp. Note 118.

122. Diogenes Laertius, X, 44 and 54.

123. Brucker, *Institutions of the History of Philosophy* [Latin, 1747], p. 224.

124. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, I, 1051–1052. 0, Memmius, here you must give up fully the belief that all things strive — as they say — to the middle of the world.

125. Diogenes Laertius, X, 43. The atoms move with equal speed, since the void makes way for the lightest and heaviest alike through all eternity. . . . 61. When they are travelling through the void and meet with no resistance, the atoms must move with equal speed. Neither will heavy atoms travel more quickly than small and light ones, so long as nothing meets them, nor will small atoms travel more quickly than large ones, provided they always find a passage suitable to their size; and provided that they meet with no obstruction.

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II, 235–239. But empty space can offer no resistance to any object in any quarter at any time, so as not to yield free passage as its own nature demands. Therefore, through undisturbed vacuum all bodies must travel at equal speed though impelled by unequal weights.

126. Comp. Ch. 3.

127. Feuerbach, *History of the Newer Philosophy*. [1833, quotations from] Gassendi, 1. c., XXXIII, No. 7. Although Epicurus had perhaps never thought about this experiment, he [still] reached, led by reason, the same opinion about atoms that experiment has recently taught us. This opinion is that all bodies. . . . although very different in weight and bulk, have the same velocity when they fall from above to below. Thus he was of opinion that all atoms, however much they may differ in size and weight, move with an equal velocity.

128. Ametocha kenou [Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, I, p. 306] does not at all mean "*do not fill space*", but "*have no part of the void*", it is the same as what at another place *Diogenes Laertius* says: "though they are without distinction of parts". In the same way we must explain this expression in (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, I, p. 236, and Simplicius, p. 405.

129. This also is a wrong consequence. That which cannot be divided in space is not therefore outside of space or without spatial relation.

130. Schaubach, 1.c., [p]p. [549–550].

131. Diogenes Laertius, X, 44.

132. Ibid., X, 67. But it is impossible to conceive anything that is incorporeal as self-existent, except empty space.

133. Ibid, X, 39, 40 and 41.

134. Ibid., VII, [Ch.] 1 [134]. There is a difference, according to them (i. e., the Stoics), between principles and elements; the former being without generation or destruction, whereas the elements are destroyed when all things are resolved into fire.

135. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, 1 and 3.

136. Comp. 1. C.

137. Ibid., V, 3[1014 31–34; 1014, 5–6]. Similarly those who speak of

the elements of bodies mean the things into which bodies are ultimately divided, while they are no longer divided into other things differing in kind; . . . for which reason what is small and simple and indivisible is called an element.

138. Ibid., I, 4.

139. Diogenes Laertius, X, 54.

Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*, 1110. . . . that this view is as inseparable from Epicurus' theories as shape and weight are by their (i.e., the Epicureans) own assertion inseparable from the atom.

140. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, p. 420.

141. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XIV, p. 773. . . . Epicurus . . . [assumed that] they [i.e., the atoms] cannot be perceived. . . . P. 749. . . . but they [i.e., the atoms] have their own shape perceivable by reason.

142. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, I, p. 246 [7]. The same (Epicurus) asserts that there are four other natural beings which are immortal—of this sort are atoms, the vacuum, the infinite and the similar parts; and these last are [called] homoeomerias and likewise elements. 12. Epicurus [thinks that] bodies are not to be limited, but the first bodies are simple bodies, and all those composed of them possess weight. . . .

Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, 1, p. 52. Metrodorus, the teacher of Epicurus, [says] . . . that the causes, however, are the atoms and elements. P. 5. Epicurus [assumes] . . . four substances essentially indestructible: the atoms, the void, the infinite and the similar parts, and these are called homoeomerias and elements.

143. Comp. .1C.,

144. Cicero, *On the Highest Goods and Evils*, I, vi. . . .that which he follows . . . the atoms, the void . . . infinity itself, that they [i.e., the Epicureans] call *apeiria*.

Diogenes Laertius, X, 41. Again, the sum of things is infinite. . . . Moreover, the sum of things is unlimited both by reason of the multitude of the atoms and the extent of the void.

145. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*, 1114. Now look at the sort of first principles [you people adopt] to account for generation: infinity and the void—the void incapable of action, incapable of being acted upon, bodiless; the infinite disordered, irrational, incapable of formulation, disrupting and confounding itself because of a multiplicity that defies control or limitation.

146. Simplicius, 1.c., p. 488.

147. (Plutarch,) *On the Sentiments of the Philosophers*, p. 239 [I, 5]. But Metrodorus says . . . that the number of worlds is infinite, and this can be seen from the fact that the number of causes is infinite. . . . But the causes are the atoms or the elements. Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, I, p. 52.

Metrodorus, the teacher of Epicurus, [says] . . . that the causes, however, are the atoms and elements.

148. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 1, 820–821. For the same elements compose sky, sea and lands, rivers and sun, crops, trees and animals. . . .

Diogenes Laertius, X, 39. Moreover, the sum total of things was always such as it is now, and such it will ever remain. For there is nothing into which it can change. For outside the sum of things there is nothing which could enter into it and bring about the change. . . . The whole of being consists of bodies. . . . 41. These elements are indivisible and unchangeable, and necessarily so, if things are not all to be destroyed and pass into nonexistence, but are to be strong enough to endure when the composite bodies are broken up, because they possess a solid nature and are incapable of being anywhere or anyhow dissolved.

149. Diogenes Laertius, X, 73. . . . and all things are again dissolved, some faster, some slower, some through the action of one set of causes, others through the action of others. 74. It is clear, then, that he [Epicurus] also makes the worlds perishable, as their parts are subject to change.

Lucretius, V, 109–110. May reason rather than the event itself convince you that the whole world can collapse with one ear-splitting crack!

Ibid., V, 373–375. It follows, then, that the doorway of death is not barred to sky and sun and earth and the sea's unfathomed floods. It lies tremendously open and confronts them with a yawning chasm.

150. Simplicius, 1.c., p. 425.

151. Lucretius, II, 796. . . . and the atoms do not emerge into the light. . . .

152. Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, 1 [251, 15–17]. . . . in fact, it is just this that enables Democritus to show that all things cannot have had a becoming; for time, he says, is uncreated.

153. Simplicius, 1 c., p. 426. Democritus was so strongly convinced that time is eternal, that, in order to show that not all things have an origin, he considered it evident that time has no origin.

154. Lucretius, I, 459, 462–463. Similarly, time by itself does not exist. . . . It must not be claimed that anyone can sense time by itself apart from the movement of things or their restful immobility.

Ibid., 1, 479–482. So you may see that events cannot be said to be by themselves like matter or in the same sense as space. Rather, you should describe them as accidents of matter, or of the place in which things happen.

Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, p. 420. Here Epicurus calls time accident of accidents (*symptoma symptomaton*).

Stobaeus, *Physical Selections*, 1, 8. Epicurus [calls time] an accident, i.e., something that accompanies motions.

155. Diogenes Laertius,. X, 72. There is another thing which we must consider carefully. We must not investigate time as we do the other accidents which we investigate in a subject, namely, by referring them to the preconceptions envisaged in our minds; but we must take into account the plain fact itself, in virtue of which we speak of time as long or short, linking to it in intimate connection this attribute of duration. We need not adopt any fresh terms as preferable, but should employ the usual expression about it. Nor need we predicate anything else of time, as if this something else contained the same essence as is contained in the proper meaning of the word "time" (for this also is done by some). We must chiefly reflect upon that to which we attach this peculiar character of time, and by which we measure it. 73. No further proof is required: we have only to reflect that we attach the attribute of time to days and nights and their parts, and likewise to feelings of pleasure and pain and to neutral states, to states of movement and states of rest, conceiving a peculiar accident of these to be this very characteristic which we express by the word "time". He [i.e., Epicurus] says this both in the second book *On Nature* and in the *Larger Epitome*.

156. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 1.c.

Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, p. 420 [X, 238, 240, 241, 244]. . . . accident of accidents. . . . For this reason Epicurus compels us to think that an existing body consists of non-existing bodies, since he says that we have to think of the body as a composition of size and shape, resistance and weight. . . . Hence there must be accidents for time to exist, but for accidents to be present themselves there must be an underlying circumstance. However, if no underlying circumstance exists, then there can be no time. . . . When this therefore is time, and Epicurus says that accidents are the nature [of time], then time, according to Epicurus, must be its own accident. Comp. Stobaeus, 1.c.

157. Diogenes Laertius, X, 46. Again, there are outlines or films, which are of the same shape as solid bodies, but of a thinness far exceeding that of any object that we see. . . . To these films we give the name of "images" or "idols" 48. . . . the production of the images is as quick as thought . . . though no diminution of the bodies is observed, because other particles take their place. And those given off retain the position and arrangement which their atoms had when they formed part of the solid bodies. . . .

Lucretius, IV, 30–32 . . . "images" of things, a sort of outer skin perpetually peeled off the surface of objects and flying about this way and that through the air.

Ibid., IV, 51–52. . . . because each particular floating image wears the aspect and form of the object from whose body it has emanated.

158. Diogenes Laertius, X, 49. We must also consider that it is by the

entrance of something coming from external objects that we see their shapes and think of them. For external things would not stamp on us their own nature . . . so well as by *the entrance into our eyes* or minds, to whichever their size is suitable, of certain films coming from the things themselves, these films or outlines being of the same colour and shape as the external things themselves. . . . 50. and this again explains why they present the appearance of a single continuous object and retain the mutual interconnection which they had with the object. . . . 52. Again, hearing takes place when a current passes from the object, whether person or thing, which emits voice or sound or noise, or produces the sensation of hearing in any way whatever. This current is broken up into homogeneous particles, which at the same time preserve a certain mutual connection. . . . 53. . . . Again, we must believe that smelling, like hearing, would produce no sensation, were there not particles conveyed from the object which are of the proper sort for exciting the organ of smelling.

159. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, II, 1145–1146. It is natural, therefore, that everything should perish when it is thinned out . . .

160. Diogenes Laertius, 11, 3, 10.

161. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 5 [986b , 25]. The One is God.

162. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 1, 3 [270b, 4–24]. Our theory seems to confirm experience and to be confirmed by it. For all men have some conception of the nature of gods, and all who believe in the existence of gods at all, whether barbarian or Greek, agree in allotting the highest place to the deity, surely because they suppose that immortal is linked with immortal and regard any other supposition as inconceivable. If then there is, as there certainly is, anything divine, what we have just said about the primary bodily substance was well said. The mere evidence of the senses is enough to convince us of this at least with human certainty. For in the whole range of time past, so far as our inherited records reach, no change appears to have taken place either in the whole scheme of the outermost heaven or in any of its proper parts. The common name, too, which has been handed down from our distant ancestors even to our own day, seems to show that they conceived of it in the fashion which we have been expressing. The same ideas, one must believe, recur to men's minds not once or twice but again and again. And so, implying that the primary body is something else beyond earth, fire, air and water, they gave to the highest place a name of its own, *aither*, derived from the fact that it "runs always" for an eternity of time.

163. Ibid., II, 1 [284a, 11–15, 284, 2–5]. The ancients gave the Gods the heaven or upper place, as being alone immortal; and our present argument testifies that it is indestructible and ungenerated. Further, it is unaffected by any mortal discomfort . . . it is not only more appropriate so to conceive of its eternity, but also on this hypothesis alone are we able to

advance a theory consistent with popular divinations of the divine nature.

164. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XI (XII), 8 [1074 31, 38–1074, 3]. Evidently there is but one heaven. . . . Our forefathers in the most remote ages have handed down to their posterity a tradition, in the form of a myth, that these bodies are gods and that the divine encloses the whole of nature. The rest of the tradition has been added later in a mythical form with a view to the persuasion of the multitude and to its legal and utilitarian expediency; they say these gods are in the form of men or like some of the other animals, and they say other things consequent on and similar to those which we have mentioned. But if one were to separate the first point from these additions and take it alone that they thought the first substances to he gods, one must regard this as an inspired utterance; and reflect that, while probably each art and each science has often been developed as far as possible and has again perished, these opinions, with others, have been preserved until the present like relics of the ancient treasure.

165. Diogenes Laertius, X, 81. There is yet one more point to seize, namely, that the greatest anxiety of the human mind arises through the belief that the heavenly bodies are blessed and indestructible, and that at the same time they have volitions and actions . . . inconsistent with this belief . . . apprehending some evil because of the myths. . . .

166. Ibid., X, 76. Nay more, we are bound to believe that in the sky revolution, solstices, eclipses, risings and settings, and the like, take place without the ministration or command, either now or in the future, of any being who at the same time enjoys perfect bliss along with immortality. 77. For troubles and anxieties . . . do not accord with bliss, but always imply weakness and fear and dependence upon one's neighbours. Nor, again, must we hold that things which are no more than globular masses of fire, being at the same time endowed with bliss, assume these motions at will. . . . Otherwise such inconsistency will of itself suffice to produce the worst disturbance in our minds.

167. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, II, 1 [284a 18–20]. Hence we must not believe the old tale which says that the world needs some Atlas to keep it safe.

168. Diogenes Laertius, X, 85. So you (i.e., Pythocles) will do well to take and learn them and get them up quickly along with the short epitome in my letter to Herodotus.

169. Ibid., X, 85. In the first place, remember that, like everything else, knowledge of celestial phenomena, whether taken along with other things or in isolation, as well as of the other sciences, has no other end in view than peace of mind and firm conviction.

Ibid., X, 82. But mental tranquillity means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths.

170. Ibid., X, 87. For our life has no need now of ideologies and false opinions; our one need is untroubled existence.

Ibid., X, 78. Further, we must hold that to arrive at accurate knowledge of the cause of things of most moment is the business of natural science, and that happiness depends on this (viz. on the knowledge of celestial phenomena).

Ibid., X, 79. There is nothing in the knowledge of risings and settings and solstices and eclipses and all kindred subjects that contributes to our happiness; but those who are well informed about such matters and yet are ignorant what the heavenly bodies really are, and what are the most important causes of phenomena, feel quite as much fear as those who have no such special information—nay, perhaps even greater fear.

171. Ibid., X, 86. We do not seek to wrest by force what is impossible, nor to understand all matters equally well, nor make our treatment always as clear as when we discuss human life or explain the principles of ethics in general . . . for instance, that the whole of being consists of bodies and intangible nature, or that the ultimate elements of things are indivisible, or any other proposition which admits only one explanation of the phenomena to be possible. But this is not the case with celestial phenomena.

172. Ibid., X, 86. These at any rate admit of manifold causes for their occurrence and manifold accounts, none of them contradictory of sensation, of their nature. For in the study of nature [physiology] we must not conform to empty assumptions and arbitrary laws, but follow the promptings of the facts.

173. Ibid., X, 92.

174. Ibid., X, 94.

175. Ibid., X, 95 and 96.

176. Ibid., X, 98.

177. Ibid., X, 104. And [says Epicurus] there are several other ways in which thunderbolts may possibly he produced. Exclusion of myth is the sole condition necessary; and it will he excluded, if one properly attends to the facts and hence draws inferences to interpret what is obscure.

178. Ibid., X, 80. When, therefore, we investigate the causes of celestial phenomena, as of all that is unknown, we must take into account the variety of ways in which analogous occurrences happen within our experience.

Ibid., X, 82. But mental tranquillity means being released from all these troubles. . . . Hence we must attend to present feelings and sense perceptions, whether those of mankind in general or those peculiar to the individual, and also attend to all the clear evidence available, as given by each of the standards of truth. For by studying them we shall rightly trace to its cause and banish the source of disturbance and dread, accounting for celestial phenomena and for all other things which from time to time befall us and cause the utmost alarm to the rest of mankind.

Ibid., X, 87. Some phenomena within our experience afford evidence by which we may interpret what goes on in the heavens. We see how the former really take place, but not how the celestial phenomena take place, for their occurrence may possibly be due to a variety of causes. [88.] However, we must observe each fact as presented, and further separate from it all the facts presented along with it, the occurrence of which from various causes is not contradicted by facts within our experience.

179. Ibid., X, 78. Further, we must recognise on such points as this plurality of causes or contingency. . . .

Ibid., X, 86. These [celestial phenomena] at any rate admit of manifold causes for their occurrence. . . .

Ibid., X, 87. All things go on uninterruptedly, if all be explained by the method of plurality of causes . . . so soon as we duly understand what may he plausibly alleged respecting them. . . .

180. Ibid., X, 98. Whereas those who adopt only one explanation are in conflict with the facts and are utterly mistaken as to the way in which man can attain knowledge.

Ibid., X, 113. To assign a single cause for these effects when the facts suggest several causes is madness and a strange inconsistency; yet it is done by adherents of rash astrology, who assign meaningless causes for the stars whenever they persist in saddling the divinity with burdensome tasks.

Ibid., X, 97. And further, let the regularity of their orbits be explained in the same way as certain ordinary incidents within our own experience; the divine nature must not on any account be adduced to explain this, but must be kept free from the task and in perfect bliss. Unless this be done, the whole study of celestial phenomena will be in vain, as indeed it has proved to be with some who did not lay hold of a possible method, but fell into the folly of supposing that these events happen in one single way only and of rejecting all the others which are possible, suffering themselves to be carried into the realm of the unintelligible, and being unable to take a comprehensive view of the facts which must be taken as clues to the rest.

Ibid., X, 93. . . .unmoved by the servile artifices of the astrologers.

Ibid., X, 87. . . .we clearly fall away from the study of nature altogether and tumble into myth.

Ibid., X, 80. Therefore we must . . . investigate the causes of celestial phenomena, as of all that is unknown, [. . .] while as for those who do not recognise the difference between what is or comes about from a single cause and that which may be the effect of any one of several causes, overlooking the fact that the objects are only seen at a distance, and are moreover ignorant of the conditions that render, or do not render, peace of mind impossible-all such persons we must treat with contempt.

181. Ibid., X, 80. We must not suppose that our treatment of these

matters fails of accuracy, so far as it is needful to ensure our tranquillity and happiness.

182. Ibid., X, 78. . . . but we must hold that nothing suggestive of conflict or disquiet is compatible with an immortal and blessed nature. And the mind can grasp the absolute truth of this.

183. Comp. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 1, 10.

184. Ibid., 1, 10 [279b, 25–26]. Suppose that the world was formed out of elements which were formerly otherwise conditioned than as they are now. Then . . . if their condition was always so and could not have been otherwise, the world could never have come into being.

185. Athenaeus, *Banquet of the Learned*, III, 104. . . . One . . . must with good reason approve the noble Chrysippus for his shrewd comprehension of Epicurus' "Nature", and his remark that the very centre of the Epicurean philosophy is the *Gastrology* of Archestratus. . . .

186. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 1, 63–70, 79–80.

KARL MARX

NOTEBOOKS ON EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY[ix]

(SELECTIONS)

Written: 1839
First Published: *Marx/Engels Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. I, 1/1, 1927
Source: *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Volume I
Publisher: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975
Translation: Richard Dixon

FROM THE *FIRST NOTEBOOK*[x]

On the Immanent Dialectics of Epicurean Atomism

The principle of Epicurean atomistics is not expressed until the ideal and necessary is made to have being only in an imaginary form external to itself, the form of the atom. Such is the extent of Epicurus' consistency.

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ix. **Editor's Note:** *The Epicurean Notebooks* were written by Marx in 1839 as he prepared material for his dissertation. Much of the notebooks is comprised of Greek and Latin quotations excerpted from the various texts of ancient philosophy that Marx had read. For example, a couple of the notebooks are copiously filled with Latin citations from Lucretius' Epicurean poem *On the Nature of Things*. The notebooks also contain a number of fascinating digressions, in which Marx works out his thoughts on a variety of topics relating to Greek and Modern philosophy. Several of the most important of these digressions are included in this volume in the pages that follow.

x. **Editor's Note:** In this section of his "Notebooks," Marx was studying Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* as he found it in P. Gassendi's *Notes on Book Ten of Diogenes Laertius*, Lyons, 1649, Vol. 1. Marx's page references are to this edition.

> "When they are travelling through the void and meet with no resistance, the atoms must move with equal speed." p. 46.

Just as we have seen that necessity, connection, differentiation, within itself, is transferred to or rather expressed in the atom, that ideality is present here only in this form external to itself, so it is with *motion* too, the question of which necessarily arises once the motion of the atoms is compared with the motion of the [composite] bodies, that is, of the concrete. In comparison with this motion, the motion of the atoms is in principle absolute, that is, all empirical conditions in it are disregarded, it is ideal. In general, in expounding Epicurean philosophy and its immanent dialectics, one has to bear in mind that, while the principle is an imagined one, assuming the form of being in relation to the concrete world, the dialectics, the inner essence of these ontological determinations, as a form, in itself void, of the absolute, can show itself only in such a way that they, being immediate, enter into a necessary confrontation with the concrete world and reveal, in their specific relation to it, that they are only the imagined form of its ideality, external to itself, and not as presupposed, but rather only as ideality of the concrete. Thus its determinations are in themselves untrue and self-negating. The only conception of the world that is expressed is, that its basis is that which has no presuppositions, which is nothing. Epicurean philosophy is important because of the naiveness with which conclusions are expressed without the prejudice of our day.

> "And *not even when it is a question of composite bodies* can one be said to be *faster* than the other, etc." p. 46. "[. . .] it can only be said that *they often*

rebound until the continuity of their movement becomes perceptible to the senses. For what we conjecture of the invisible, namely, that periods of time contemplated through speculation may also contain continuity of movement, is not true for things of this kind, since only all that which is *really perceived or is comprehended from an impression by thinking is true.*" p. 47.

We have seen that the atoms, taken abstractly among themselves, are nothing but entities, imagined in general, and that only in confrontation with the concrete do they develop their ideality, which is imagined and therefore entangled in contradictions. They also show, by becoming one side of the relation, that is, when it comes to dealing with objects which carry in themselves the principle and its concrete world (the living, the animate, the organic), that the realm of imagination is thought of now as free, now as the manifestation of something ideal. This freedom of the imagination is therefore but an assumed, immediate, imagined one, which in its true form is the atomistic. Either of the determinations can therefore be taken for the other, each considered in itself is the same as the other, but in respect of each other too the same determinations must be ascribed to them, from whichever viewpoint they are considered; the solution is therefore the return to the simplest, first determination, where the realm of the imagination is assumed as free. As this return takes place in regard to a totality, to what is imagined, which really has the ideal in itself, and is the ideal itself in its being, so here the atom is posited as it really is, in the totality of its contradictions; at the same time, the basis of these contradictions emerges, the desire to apprehend the thing imagined as the free ideal

thing as well, while only imagining it. The principle of absolute arbitrariness appears here, therefore, with all its consequences. In its lowest form, this is already essentially the case with the atom. As there are many atoms, each one contains in itself a difference in respect of the many, and hence it is in itself many. But that is already contained in the definition of the atom, so that the plurality in it is necessarily and immanently a oneness; it is so because it is. But it still remains to be explained, with regard to the world, why it develops freely from a single principle into a plurality. Therefore what is to be proved is assumed, the atom itself is what is to be explained. Then the difference of the ideality could be introduced only by comparison; in themselves both sides come under the same definition, and ideality itself is again posited by the external combination of these many atoms, by their being the principles of these compositions. The principle of this composition is therefore that which initially was composite in itself without any cause, that is, what is explained is itself the explanation, and it is thrust into the nebulous space of imaginative abstraction. As already said, this emerges in its totality only when the organic is considered.

It must be noted that the fact that the soul, etc., perishes, that it owes its existence only to an *accidental mixture, expresses in general the accidental nature of all these notions*, e.g. , soul, etc., which, not being necessary in ordinary consciousness, are *accounted for* by Epicurus as *accidental conditions*, which are seen as something given, the necessity of which, the necessity of the existence of which, is not only not proved, but is even admitted to be not provable, only possible. What persists, on the other hand, is the free being of the imagination, which is firstly the free which itself exists in general, and secondly, as the thought of the free-

dom of what is imagined, a lie and a fiction, and hence in itself an inconsistency, an illusion, an imposture. It expresses rather the demand for a concrete definition of the soul, etc., as immanent thought. What is lasting and great in Epicurus is that he gives no preference to conditions over notions, and tries just as little to save them. For Epicurus the task of philosophy is to prove that the world and thought are thinkable and possible. His proof and the principle by which it proceeds and to which it is referred is again possibility existing for itself, whose natural expression is the atom and whose intellectual expression is chance and arbitrariness. Closer investigation is needed of how all determinations may be exchanged between soul and body and how either of them is the same as the other in the bad sense that neither one nor the other is at all conceptually defined. See end of page 48 and beginning of page 49: Epicurus stands higher than the Sceptics in that not only are conditions and presentations reduced to nothing, but their perception, the thinking of them and the reasoning about their existence, proceeding from something solid, is likewise only a possibility.

> "*It is impossible to conceive anything that is incorporeal as self-existent, except empty space.* (The incorporeal is not thought by the imagination, it pictures it as the void and as empty.) And empty space can neither act nor be acted upon, but by virtue of its existence makes motion possible for the bodies." p. 49. "Hence those who say the soul is incorporeal talk nonsense." [p]p. [49–]50.

It is necessary to study the passage on page 50 and the beginning of page 51, where Epicurus speaks of the deter-

minations of concrete bodies and seems to refute the atomistic principle by saying:

> ". . . that the whole body in general receives its specific being out of all that; not as though it were a composite of it, as, for instance, when out of conglomerations of atoms themselves a larger formation is made up . . . but only that, as stated, it receives its specific being out of all that. And all these things demand specific consideration and judgment, in which the whole must constantly be considered and not in any way be separated, but, apprehended as a whole, receives the designation of body." pp. 50 and 51.

> "Again, the bodies often *encounter non-specific* accidentals, some of which, of course, are invisible and incorporeal. Thus, by using this word in the manner in which it is most frequently used, we make it clear that the accidentals neither possess the nature of the whole to which, as the composite whole, we give the name of body, nor that [of the] specific qualities without which a body is unthinkable." p. 51.

> "[. . .] we must regard them as that which they appear to be, namely, as accidental attributes of the body which, however, neither are in themselves concomitants of the body nor possess the function of an independent being; we see them such as sensation itself makes their individuality appear." p. 52.

It is a matter of certainty for Epicurus that repulsion is posited with the law of the atom, the declination from the straight line. That this is not to be taken in the superficial

sense, as though the atoms in their movement could meet only in this way, is expressed at any rate by Lucretius. Soon after saying in the above-quoted passage:

Without this *clinamen atomi* [declination of the atom] there would be neither "*offensus natus, nec plaga creata*" ["meeting nor collision possible"] [II, 223], he says:

> "Again, if all movement is always interconnected, the new arising from the old in a determinate order—if the atoms never swerve so as to originate some new movement that will snap the bonds of fate, the everlasting sequence of cause and effect—what is the source of the free [will] . . ." ([*On the Nature of Things*,] Book II, 251 ff.)

Here another motion by which the atoms can meet is posited, distinct from that caused by the *clinamen*. Further it is defined as absolutely deterministic, hence negation of self, so that every determination finds its being in its immediate being-otherwise, in the being-negated, which in respect of the atom is the straight line. Only from the clinamen does the individual motion emerge, the relation which has its determination as the determination of its self and no other.

Lucretius may or may not have derived this idea from Epicurus. That is immaterial. The conclusion from the consideration of repulsion, that the atom as the immediate form of the concept is objectified only in immediate absence of concept, this same is true also of the philosophical consciousness of which this principle is the essence.

This serves me at the same time as justification for giving a quite different account of the matter from that of Epicurus.

FROM THE *SECOND NOTEBOOK*

On the Difference between Ancient and Modern Philosophy

Gassendi tries rather to teach us from Epicurus than to teach us about him. Where he violates Epicurus' iron logic, it is in order not to quarrel with his own religious premises. This struggle is significant in Gassendi, as is in general the fact that modern philosophy arises where the old finds its downfall: on the one hand from Descartes' universal doubt, whereas the Sceptics sounded the knell of Greek philosophy; on the other hand from the rational consideration of nature, whereas ancient philosophy is overcome in Epicurus even more thoroughly than in the Sceptics. Antiquity was rooted in nature, in materiality. Its degradation and profanation means in the main the defeat of materiality, of solid life; the modern world is rooted in the spirit and it can be free, can release the other, nature, out of itself. But equally, by contrast, what with the ancients was profanation of nature is with the moderns salvation from the shackles of servile faith, and the modern rational outlook on nature must first raise itself to the point from which the ancient Ionian philosophy, in principle at least, begins-the point of seeing the divine, the Idea, embodied in nature.

Who will not recall here the enthusiastic passage in Aristotle, the acme of ancient philosophy, in his treatise [*On the Nature of Animals*] which sounds quite a different note from the dispassionate monotony of Epicurus.

Characteristic of the method of the Epicurean outlook is the way it deals with the *creation of the world*, a topic in the treatment of which the standpoint of a philosophy will always be ascertainable, since it reveals how, according to this philosophy, the spirit creates the world, the attitude of a philosophy to the world, the creative power, the spirit of a philosophy.

FROM THE *FOURTH NOTEBOOK*[xi]

On the Declination of the Atom

The *declinatio atomorum a via recta* is one of the most profound conclusions, and it is based on the very essence of the Epicurean philosophy. Cicero might well laugh at it, he knew as little about philosophy as about the president of the United States of North America.

The straight line, the simple direction, is the negation of immediate being-for-self, of the point; it is the negated point; the straight line is the being-otherwise of the point. The atom, the material point, which excludes from itself the being-otherwise and is absolute immediate being-for-self, excludes therefore the simple direction, the straight line, and swerves away from it. It shows that its nature is not spatiality, but being-for-self. The law which it follows is different from that of spatiality.

The straight line is not only the being-negated of the point, but also its existence. The atom is indifferent—to the breadth of existence, it does not split up into differences which have being, but just as little is it mere being, the immediate, which is, as it were, indifferent to its being, but it exists rather precisely in being different from existence; it encloses itself in itself against that existence; in terms of the sensuous it swerves away from the straight line.

As the atom swerves away from its premise, divests itself of its qualitative nature and therein shows that this divestment, this premiseless, contentless being-enclosed-in-self exists for itself, that thus its proper quality appears, so also the whole of the Epicurean philosophy swerves away

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xi. **Editor's Note:** The fourth Epicurean notebook is devoted to a study of Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*. Marx utilized the edition published by Eichstät, 1801, Vol. 1. Page numbers all refer to this edition.

from the premises; so pleasure, for example, is the swerving away from pain, consequently from the condition in which the atom appears as differentiated, as existing, burdened with non-being and premises. But the fact that pain exists, etc., that these premises from which it swerves away exist for the individual — this is its finiteness, and therein it is accidental. True, we already find that in themselves these premises exist for the atom, for it would not swerve away from the straight line if the straight line did not exist for it. But this results from the position of the Epicurean philosophy, which seeks the premiseless in the world of the substantial premise, or, to express it in terms of logic, inasmuch as for it [the Epicurean philosophy] the being-for-self is the exclusive, the immediate principle. It has existence directly confronting it, has not logically overcome it.

Determinism is swerved away from by accident, [i.e.] necessity, and arbitrariness raised to the status of law; God swerves away from the world, it does not exist for him, and therein is he God.

It can therefore be said that the *declinatio atomi a recta via* is the law, the pulse, the specific quality of the atom; and this is why the teaching of Democritus was a quite different philosophy, not the philosophy of the age as the Epicurean philosophy was.

> "If it were not for this swerve, everything would fall downwards . . . through the abyss of space. No collision would take place and no impact of atom on atom would be created. Thus nature would never have created anything." II. 221 ff.

Inasmuch as the world is created, as the atom refers itself to itself, that is, to another atom, so its [the atom's]

motion is not one which presupposes a being-otherwise, the motion of the straight line, but one which swerves away from the latter, refers itself to itself. In sensuous imagination, the atom can refer itself only to the atom, each of the atoms swerving away from the straight line.

> "For this reason also the atoms must swerve a little, but only a very little, so that we will not imagine slantwise movements, which the fact refutes." II. 243 ff.
>
> "Again, if all movement is always interconnected, the new arising from the old in a determinate order—if the atoms never swerve so as to originate some new movement that will snap the bonds of fate, the everlasting sequence of cause and effect—what is the source of the free will possessed by living things throughout the earth? What, I repeat, is the source of that will-power snatched from the fates, whereby we follow the path along which we are severally led by pleasure . . . ?" II. 251 ff.
>
> ". . . on these occasions the will of the individual originates the movements that trickle through his limbs", etc. II. 281 f.

The *declinatio a recta via* is the *arbitrium* [free will], the specific substance, the true quality of the atom.

> "So also in the atoms you must recognise the same possibility: besides weight and impact there must be a third cause of movement, the source of this inborn power of ours, since we see that nothing can come out of nothing. For the weight of an

> atom prevents its movements from being completely determined by the impact of other atoms. But the fact that the mind itself has no internal necessity to determine its every act and compel it to suffer in helpless passivity—this is due to the slight swerve of the atom, not determined by place or time." II. 284 ff.

This *declinatio*, this *clinamen* [declination, deviation], is neither *regione loci certa* nor *tempore certo* [defined by place, determined by time], it is not a sensuous quality, it is the soul of the atom.

In the void the differentiation of weight disappears, that is, it is no external condition of motion, but being-for-self, immanent, absolute movement itself.

> "But empty space can offer no resistance to any object in any quarter at any time, so as not to yield free passage as its own nature demands. Therefore, through undisturbed vacuum all bodies must travel at equal speed, although impelled by unequal weight." II. 235 ff.

Lucretius asserts this in contrast to motion restricted through conditions perceptible to the senses:

> "The reason why objects falling through water or thin air vary in speed according to their weight is simply that the matter composing water or air cannot obstruct all objects equally, but is forced to give way more speedily to heavier ones." II. 230 ff.

"Do you not see then, that although many men are driven by an external force and often constrained involuntarily to advance or to rush headlong, yet there is within the human breast something that can fight against this force and resist it", etc. II. 277 ff.

See the lines quoted above.

This *potestas*, this *declinare* is the defiance, the head-strongness of the atom, the *quiddam in pectore* [something in the breast] of the atom; it does not characterise its relationship to the world as the relationship of the fragmented and mechanical world to the single individual.

As Zeus grew up to the tumultuous war dances of the Curetes, so here the world takes shape to the ringing war games of the atoms.

Lucretius is the genuine Roman epic poet, for he sings the substance of the Roman spirit; in place of Homer's cheerful, strong, integral characters we have here solid, impenetrable armed heroes possessed of no other qualities, we have the war *omnium contra omnes* [of all against all] the rigid shape of the being-for-self, a nature without god and a god aloof from the world.

FROM THE *SIXTH NOTEBOOK*

On the Carnival of Philosophy

As in the history of philosophy there are nodal points which raise philosophy in itself to concretion, apprehend abstract principles in a totality, and thus break off the rectilinear process, so also there are moments when philosophy turns its eyes to the external world, and no longer apprehends it, but, as a practical person, weaves, as it were, intrigues with

the world, emerges from the transparent kingdom of Amenthes and throws itself on the breast of the worldly Siren. That is the carnival of philosophy, whether it disguises itself as a dog like the Cynic, in priestly vestments like the Alexandrian, or in fragrant spring array like the Epicurean. It is essential that philosophy should then wear character masks. As Deucalion, according to the legend, cast stones behind him in creating human beings, so philosophy casts its regard behind it (the bones of its mother are luminous eyes) when its heart is set on creating a world; but as Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven, begins to build houses and to settle upon the earth, so philosophy, expanded to be the whole world, turns against the world of appearance. The same now with the philosophy of Hegel.

While philosophy has sealed itself off to form a consummate, total world, the determination of this totality is conditioned by the general development of philosophy, just as that development is the condition of the form in which philosophy turns into a practical relationship towards reality; thus the totality of the world in general is divided within itself, and this division is carried to the extreme, for spiritual existence has been freed, has been enriched to universality, the heart-beat has become in itself the differentiation in the concrete form which is the whole organism. The division of the world is total only when its aspects are totalities. The world confronting a philosophy total in itself is therefore a world torn apart. This philosophy's activity therefore also appears torn apart and contradictory; its objective universality is turned back into the subjective forms of individual consciousness in which it has life. But one must not let oneself be misled by this storm which follows a great philosophy, a world philosophy. Ordinary harps play under any fingers, Aeolian harps only when struck by the storm.

He who does not acknowledge this historical necessity must be consistent and deny that men can live at all after a total philosophy, or he must hold that the dialectic of measure as such is the highest category of the self-knowing spirit and assert, with some of the Hegelians who understand our master wrongly, that mediocrity is the normal manifestation of the absolute spirit; but a mediocrity which passes itself off as the regular manifestation of the Absolute has itself fallen into the measureless, namely, into measureless pretension. Without this necessity it is impossible to grasp how after Aristotle a Zeno, an Epicurus, even a Sextus Empiricus could appear, and how after Hegel attempts, most of them abysmally indigent, could be made by more recent philosophers.

At such times half-hearted minds have opposite views to those of whole-minded generals. They believe that they can compensate losses by cutting the armed forces, by splitting them up, by a peace treaty with the real needs, whereas Themistocles, when Athens was threatened with destruction, tried to persuade the Athenians to abandon the city entirely and found a new Athens at sea, in another element.

Neither must we forget that the time following such catastrophes is an iron time, happy when characterised by titanic struggles, lamentable when it resembles centuries limping in the wake of great periods in art. These centuries set about moulding in wax, plaster and copper what sprang from Carrara marble like Pallas Athena out of the head of Zeus, the father of the gods. But titanic are the times which follow in the wake of a philosophy total in itself and of its subjective developmental forms, for gigantic is the discord that forms their unity. Thus Rome followed the Stoic, Sceptic and Epicurean philosophy. They are unhappy and iron epochs, for their gods have died and the new goddess still

reveals the dark aspect of fate, of pure light or of pure darkness. She still lacks the colours of day.

The kernel of the misfortune, however, is that the spirit of the time, the spiritual monad, sated in itself, ideally formed in all aspects in itself, is not allowed to recognise any reality which has come to being without it. The fortunate thing in such misfortune is therefore the subjective form, the modality of the relation of philosophy, as subjective consciousness, towards reality.

Thus, for example, the Epicurean, [and the] Stoic philosophy was the boon of its time; thus, when the universal sun has gone down, the moth seeks the lamplight of the private individual.

The other aspect, which is the more important for the historian of philosophy, is that this turn-about of philosophy, its transubstantiation into flesh and blood, varies according to the determination which a philosophy total and concrete in itself bears as its birthmark. At the same time it is an objection to those who now conclude in their abstract one-sidedness that, because Hegel considered Socrates' condemnation just, i.e., necessary, because Giordano Bruno had to atone for his fiery spirit in the smoky flame at the stake, therefore the philosophy of Hegel, for example, has pronounced sentence upon itself. But from the philosophical point of view it is important to bring out this aspect, because, reasoning back from the determinate character of this turnabout, we can form a conclusion concerning the immanent determination and the world-historical character of the process of development of a philosophy. What formerly appeared as growth is now determination, what was negativity existing in itself has now become negation. Here we see, as it were, the curriculum vitae of a philosophy in its most concentrated expres-

sion, epitomised in its subjective point, just as from the death of a hero one can infer his life's history.

Since I hold that the attitude of the Epicurean philosophy is such a form of Greek philosophy, may this also be my justification if, instead of presenting moments out of the preceding Greek philosophies as conditions of the life of the Epicurean philosophy, I reason back from the latter to draw conclusions about the former and thus let it itself formulate its own particular position.

RECOMMENDATORY REFERENCE ON THE DISSERTATION OF KARL MARX[xii]

Source: *Marx Engels Collected Works* Vol I, pg 705–6
Publisher: Lawrence & Wishart (1975)
First Published: Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe,* Abt. 1, Hb. 2, 1929
Translated: Clemens Dutt

Senior Venerande,
Assessores Gravissimi,

I present to you hereby a very worthy candidate in Herr *Carl Heinrich Marx* from Trier. He has sent in 1) A *written request.* (sub. lit. a.) 2) Two university certificates on his academic studies in Bonn and Berlin. (lit. b. and c.) The disciplinary offences therein noted can be disregarded by us. 3) A written request in Latin, curriculum vitae, and specimen: *On the Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, together with a certificate on authorship written in Latin. (lit. d.) 4) 12 Friedr. d'or, the excess of which will be returned to the candidate. The specimen tes-

xii. **Editor's Note:** Marx's doctoral dissertation was recorded in the Jena University Register on April 13, 1841, the same day that this commendation of it was turned in by the faculty at Jena. Franz Mehring claims that Marx decided to take his candidacy for the doctor of philosophy outside of Berlin out of political considerations. In Thüringen, at the University of Jena, he could avoid the watchful eyes of the newly appointed and decidedly anti-liberal Prussian Minister of Culture Johann Eichhorn, whose ambition and conservatism had already led to the reversal of the prominent Young Hegelian Bruno Bauer's appointment to the Theological Faculty at Bonn.

tifies to intelligence and perspicacity as much as to erudition, for which reason I regard the candidate as preeminently worthy. Since, according to his German letter, he desires to receive only the degree of Doctor, it is clear that it is merely an error due to lack of acquaintance with the statutes of the faculty that in the Latin letter he speaks of the degree of Magister. He probably thought that the two belong together. I am convinced that only a clarification of this point is needed in order to satisfy him.

Requesting your wise decision,
Most respectfully,

Dr. Carl Friedrich *Bachmann*
pro tem Dean

Jena, April 13, 1841

Ordinis philosophorum Decane maxime spectabilis
As Your Spectabilitit

Luden
F. Hand
E. Reinhold
Döbereiner
J. F. Fries
Goettling
Schulze

LETTER FROM MARX TO CARL FRIEDRICH BACHMANN[xii]

IN JENA

Source: *Marx Engels Collected Works* Vol I, pg 379
Publisher: Lawrence & Wishart (1975).
First Published: *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, 1926
Translated: Clemens Dutt

Berlin, Schützenstrasse 68
April 6, 1841

Dear Sir,

I send you herewith a dissertation for a doctor's degree on the difference between the natural philosophy of Democritus and the natural philosophy of Epicurus, and enclose the *litterae petitoriae, curriculum vitae*, my leaving certificates from the universities of Bonn and Berlin, and, finally, the legal fees of twelve friedrichsdors. At the same time, in the event of my work being found satisfactory by the faculty, I humbly beg you to hasten as much as possible the conferring of the doctor's degree since, on the one hand, I can only remain a few weeks longer in Berlin and, on the other hand, external circumstances make it highly

xii. **Editor's Note:** This letter and the one that follows were submitted by Marx as part of his formal application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

desirable for me to obtain the doctor's degree before my departure.

I should like the leaving certificates to be returned, as they are originals.

I remain, Sir, with great respect,

Your most devoted servant,

Karl Heinrich Marx

LETTER FROM MARX TO OSCAR LUDWIG BERNHARD WOLF

IN JENA

Source: *Marx Engels Collected Works* Vol I, pg 380
Publisher: Lawrence & Wishart (1975)
First Published: *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, 1926
Translated: Clemens Dutt

Berlin, Schützenstrasse 68
April 7, [1841]

Dear Herr Professor,

In expressing my most sincere thanks for your great kindness in fulfilling my request, I take the liberty of informing you that I have just sent my dissertation, together with the accompanying material, to the faculty of philosophy, and I beg you, in accordance with your kind offer, to be so good as to hasten the dispatch of the diploma. I thought that I had already made too great a claim on your kindness to dare to trouble you still further by sending my dissertation direct to you.

Assuring you of my most sincere gratitude and highest respect,

I remain

Yours most devotedly,

Karl Heinrich Marx

LETTER FROM HEINRICH MARX TO SON KARL[xiv]

IN BERLIN

First Published: *Marx/Engels Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol I, 1/2, 1929
Source: *Karx Marx in seinem Briefen*, Ed. Saul K. Padover
Publisher: Verlag C.H. Beck
Translation: Paul M. Schafer

Trier, December 28, 1836

Dear Karl!

[. . .] But I repeat: you have taken over great duties and, dear Karl, with the danger of irritating your sensitivity, I wish to express my opinion in my own somewhat prosaic way. With all exaggerations and exaltations of love in a poetical disposition you cannot restore the peace of a being to whom you have given yourself over entirely. On the contrary, you risk the danger of destroying it. Only through the most exemplary behavior, through firm, masculine efforts, which will also win the goodwill and kindness of men, can you ensure that the relationships are smoothed out and that she is elevated in her eyes and in the eyes of the world and is comforted.

xiv. **Editor's Note:** This letter from his father offers some insight into the state of young Karl's mind during the turbulent period of his first few months in Berlin. Marx had only recently been engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, and, as his father here indicates, it was not an engagement free of difficulty.

I have spoken with Jenny, and I wanted to be able to comfort her entirely. I did the most that I could, but everything did not allow itself to be reasoned away. She still doesn't know how her parents will receive the relationship. The judgment of the relatives and of the world is also no small matter. I fear your not always justified sensitivity and leave it therefore for you to judge the situation for yourself.[. . .]

She is making you a priceless sacrifice. She demonstrates a self-denial that can only be appreciated with a cold reason. Woe to you, if you are ever in your entire life able to forget this! But at the present only you yourself can really intervene. From you must flow out the certainty that in spite of your youth you are a man who deserves the respect of the world, and wins it over in thundering steps; [. . .]

M[arx]

LETTER FROM HEINRICH MARX TO SON KARL[xv]

IN BERLIN

First Published: *Marx/Engels Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol I, 1/2, 1929
Source: *Karx Marx in seinem Briefen*, Ed. Saul K. Padover
Publisher: Verlag C.H. Beck
Translation: Paul M. Schafer

Trier, December 9, 1837

Dear Karl,

If one knows one's weaknesses, one must take up reprimands against them. If I had wanted to write coherently as usual, my love for you would have misled me to adopt a sentimental tone, and so much the more would all earlier things be lost, since you—so it appears anyway—never take a letter in your hand for a second time, and indeed quite logically, for why read a second time, if the return correspondence is never an answer?

I will therefore vent my complaints in the form of aphorisms, and they really are complaints that I wish to bring forward. In order for me to clarify these in the right way and to make you swallow them down like pills, I present them as questions that I am inclined to resolve in a completely a posteriori way.

xv. **Editor's Note:** This letter is the response of Marx's father, Heinrich, to the long and passionate letter that the younger Marx had written a month earlier, in late November of 1837.

1. What is the task of a young man on whom nature has incontestably bestowed such extraordinary talent—in particular

a) if, as he claims, and moreover as I gladly believe, he reveres his father and idealizes his mother;

b) if, without taking his age or his situation into account, he has bound one of the noblest of girls to his fate; and

c) thereby has put a very honorable family into the position of having to give approval to a relationship that apparently and according to the ordinary way of the world is full of dangers and dim prospects for their beloved child?

2. Had your parents any right to demand that your behavior, your way of life, would bring them joy or, at the very least, moments of joy, and as far as possible to scare away sorrowful moments?

3. Up to now what have been the fruits of your magnificent natural gifts in relation to your parents?

4. What have been their fruits with respect to yourself?

Actually, I could and perhaps should have ended here and left over to you the answer and complete explanation. But I fear that in doing so every poetical vein of yours will be opened. So I will reply prosaically, from real life as it actually is, despite the danger of appearing too prosaic to my dear son.

The mood in which I find myself is in fact something less than poetic. With a cough that is a year old and that makes my job stressful for me, and with a recently developed case of gout to match it, I find myself more upset than unfortunate, and upset at my character weaknesses, and so

you can only expect the descriptions of an old, ill-tempered man, who is upset over eternal disappointments and especially over the fact that he must hold up his own idol to a mirror full of distorted images.

Replies, Respective Complaints

1. Gifts deserve and call for gratitude; and because magnificent natural gifts certainly are the most excellent of all, they call for gratitude to an even higher degree. But Nature allows gratitude to be expressed to her only when one makes the proper use of these gifts, and, if I may use a customary expression, "makes a profit with one's pounds."

I know well enough how one should and must reply in a kind of noble style; namely that such gifts should be used for one's own refinement, and that is certainly not something I dispute. Yes, one should use them for one's refinement. But how? One is a human being, a spiritual being and member of society, a citizen. Therefore, physical, moral, intellectual, and political refinement. But only if unison and harmony are used in striving for these great goals, can a beautiful, attractive whole come into appearance, one that is pleasing to God, humanity, one's parents and one's girl, and one that deserves to be called a truly plastic picture with more truth and naturalness than the reunion with an old schoolmate.

But as I have said, only in the striving to expand such refinement in dignified, equal proportion to all parts, is the will manifested in such a way to prove itself worthy of these tasks; only through the symmetry of this distribution can a beautiful shape, true harmony be found.

Indeed, restricted to individual parts, the most upstanding efforts not only do not deliver a good result, on the contrary, they produce caricatures—when restricted in

the physical part, dudes; in the moral part, exalted fanatics; in the political part, intriguers; and in the spiritual part, learned bears.

a) Yes, a young man must set such things for himself as goals if he really wants to give joy to his parents, whose services to him are left for his heart to appreciate; especially when he knows that his parents set their finest hopes in him.

b) Yes, he must keep in mind that he has taken over a duty greater than his years, but all the more sacred: to sacrifice himself for the good of a girl who has brought her excellent merits and her social position to a great sacrifice when she gave up her bright position and prospects for a rocky and duller future, and tied herself to the fate of a younger man. The simple and practical solution is to create a future that is worthy of her—in the real world, and not in some smoky room with a stinking oil lamp at the side of an intellectual gone wild.

c) Yes, he has a great debt to pay, for a noble family has the right to claim a significant compensation for relinquishing the beautiful hopes that are so well-grounded in the excellent personality of their child. For, truthfully, thousands of parents would have withheld their consent. And in gloomy moments your own father almost wishes that they had—for the welfare of this angel of a girl lies very close to my own heart Indeed, I love her like a daughter, but for precisely that reason I am very anxious for her happiness.

All these obligations form a tightly woven connection, which alone must suffice to banish all of the evil spirits, to dispel all of the errors, to correct all deficiencies, to develop

new and better instincts. It should suffice to form a conscientious man from out of a wild kid, a sterling thinker from out of a negating genius, a sociable man from out of a confused ringleader of wild boys—a man who retains enough pride so that he doesn't slither around like an eel. Such a man has enough practical reason and tact to recognize that only by going around with high-minded human beings is it possible to learn the art of showing oneself to the world from the best and most advantageous side, and to be able to acquire for himself respect, love, and prestige as quickly as possible, and to make practical use of the talents which mother nature has bestowed so lavishly on him.

That, in short, was the *task*. How is it solved?

That should be God's lament!!! Disorderliness, vague flitting about in all different corners of knowledge, vague brooding under the gloomy oil lamp; running wild in the scholar's gown and unkempt hair, instead of running wild over a glass of beer; unsociable withdrawal with a neglect of all decency and even of all regard for the father.—The art of going around in the world restricted to dirty rooms, where in the classic disorder of which perhaps the love letters of Jenny and the well-intentioned and perhaps with tears written admonitions of the father are turned to pipe lighters, which at any rate would be better than if they were through even more irresponsible disorder to come into the hands of someone else.—And here in this workshop of senseless and aimless erudition the fruits are supposed to ripen, which will enliven you and your beloved, and the harvest will be gathered, which will thereby fulfill your sacred duties?

3. I am no doubt deeply affected despite my intentions, and it nearly overwhelms me to feel that I do you harm. My weakness is already coming over me again. But in order to

help me—literally—I take real pills that are prescribed me, swallow them all down, for I will be hard for once and completely vent all of my complaints. I do not want to be soft, for I feel that I have been too lenient, poured too little of myself out in complaints and thereby to some extent am equally as guilty as you. I want and must say that you have caused your parents much grief and little or no joy.

Hardly were the wild adventures in Bonn finished, hardly was your slate of guilt wiped clean—and it truly was composed of so many things—than to our dismay the sorrows of love set in; and with the good nature of parents from out of a novel we became their heralds and the bearers of their cross. But deeply aware that the happiness of your life is concentrated here, we tolerated what was unalterable and perhaps ourselves played ill-suited rolls. While still so young you became estranged from your family, though seeing the positive influence on you with the eyes of parents, we hoped to see the good effects develop quickly. Indeed, reflection and necessity equally express themselves in favor of this. But which fruits had we harvested?

Never have we had the pleasure of a reasonable correspondence, which is ordinarily a consolation for absence. For correspondence supposes consistent and continuous discussion, carried out reciprocally and harmoniously by both sides. We never received an answer to our writing; never did your letters have any connection either to your previous ones or to ours.

If today we were to receive your announcement of a newly made acquaintance, afterwards this would disappear forever, just like a stillborn child.

With what our only too beloved son was actually occupied, what he was thinking, doing, at times hardly a rhapsodic phrase was interjected about it, when the index and

its content locked itself as if by magic.

Several times we went months without a letter, and the last time was when you knew that Eduard was ill, that mother was suffering and I ailing, and, moreover, when cholera was raging through Berlin. And as if this alone did not demand an apology, your next letter mentioned not a single word about it, but contained merely a few poorly written lines and a diary extract entitled *The Visit*, which to be honest I would rather toss out the door than accept. This fine mess of a work simply shows how you squander your talents and stay up nights in order to give birth to monsters. You follow in the footsteps of those new fiends, who twist their words until they themselves cannot hear them; who christen a torrent of words as the product of genius, because they produce no thoughts of their own or else only confused ones.

Yes, your correspondence did contain something: complaints that Jenny was not writing, regardless of the fact that you were convinced of being favored from all sides; certainly there was no reason for despair and anxiety. But that was not enough, and your dear ego longed for the pleasure of reading what is known (which in the present case is quite poor), and that was nearly everything that our dear son could say to his parents, whom he knew to be suffering, whom he had depressed through a senseless silence.

As if we were men of gold, my dear son disposed of nearly 700 talers in a single year, contrary to every agreement and to all usage, while the richest spend no more than 500. And why? I let it be said of him, in fairness, that he is no loser, no squanderer. But how can a man who invents a new system every 8 or 14 days, and who must tear apart the old painstakingly constructed works, how can he, I ask, dispense with small matters? How can he submit himself to

the triviality of order? Everyone has a hand in his pocket, and everyone deceives him, so long as they don't interfere with his circle – and a new money order is quickly written again. Small-minded men like G.R. and Evers may worry themselves about that, but they are ordinary guys. Certainly in their simplicity they try to digest the lectures – even if only according to the words – and here and there to obtain patrons and friends, for at the examinations sit men, professors, pedants, and sometimes revenge-seeking villains who like to put to shame anyone who is entirely independent. Yet the greatness of men certainly consists in the fact that they create and destroy!!

Sure enough these poor young people sleep very peacefully, except when they every now and then devote half a night or an entire night to pleasure, while my good and talented Karl spends entire miserable nights awake, his spirit and body weakened by serious study, and denies himself all enjoyments in order to devote himself to abstract, pure studies. But what he builds today, he destroys tomorrow, and at the end he has destroyed what is his own and has not dedicated himself to what is other. In the end the body becomes sickly and the spirit confused, while the common little people creep forward undisturbed and at times reach the goal more easily or at least more peacefully than those who despise the joys of youth and destroy their health in order to catch the shadow of erudition, which they probably would have achieved more easily in an hour of social intercourse with competent men – and with social enjoyment thrown into the bargain!!!

I conclude now, for I feel from my more quickly beating pulse that I am very near to falling into a tone of softness, and today I want to be unmerciful.

I must add as well the complaints of your siblings.

From your letters, one can hardly even see that you have brothers and sisters; and the good Sophie, who has suffered so much for you and for Jenny, and is so terribly devoted to you, you do not think of her when you don't need her.

I have paid your money order for 160 talers. I cannot or can hardly charge it to the old academic year, for that has truly had its full due. And for the coming year I don't want to expect much of the same.—

To come home at the present moment would be nonsense! Indeed I know that you get very little from the lectures—though you probably pay for it—but I want at the very least for you to observe the decorum. I am certainly no slave of opinion, but I also do not like gossip at my expense. Come for the Easter vacation—or even 14 days earlier, for I am not so pedantic—and despite my present epistle you can be assured that I will receive you with open arms and a fatherly heart to beat against your own, which actually is ailing only because of excessive anxiety.

Your father Marx

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

Paul M. Schafer is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Xavier University of Louisiana. He maintains an active interest in the History of Philosophy, in particular in the area of Post-Kantian European thought. He received his Ph.D. from DePaul University.

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ISBN 0-9771972-2-0

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