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The 'Young Marx' Myth in Interpretations of the *Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

Marcello Musto

Focusing on the dissemination and reception history of the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, this article will critically examine the famous controversy surrounding the relationship between Marx's 'early' and 'mature' writings. A review of all the major books published worldwide (especially in Germany, France, the Soviet Union and English-speaking countries) on Marx's early writings is followed by a plea for a new and rigorous reading of Marx's Paris manuscripts, which have been wrongly considered by almost all interpreters as a finished work. Careful textual analysis of the* Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 *alongside the so-called Paris notebooks makes it possible to refute conceptions of the former as a fully fledged text either prefiguring Marx's thought as a whole (as Landshut or the French existentialists argued) or advancing a well-defined theory opposed to that of Marx's 'scientific' maturity (as Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy or Althusser claimed).*

Keywords: Karl Marx; Althusser; French existentialism; Marxism-Leninism; MEGA2

1. The Two Editions of 1932

The [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*][1] are among Marx's most famous writings, and among those most widely published around the world. However, although they have played a major role in the overall interpretation of his thought, they remained unknown for a long time and finally appeared in print nearly a century after their composition.

The publication of these manuscripts was by no means the end of the story. In fact, it triggered a lengthy dispute about the character of the text, some regarding it as an immature work in comparison with Marx's subsequent critique of political economy, and others as the invaluable philosophical foundation for his thought, which lost its

[1] In this essay, the editorially assigned titles of Marx's incomplete manuscripts are inserted between square brackets.

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intensity over the years as he worked on the writing of *Capital*. Hence the field of research concerning the relationship between the 'youthful' theories of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and the 'mature' ones of *Capital* hinged on the following questions. Can the writings of the 'Young Marx' be considered an integral part of 'Marxism'? Is there an organic unity of inspiration and realization throughout Marx's work? Or should two different Marxes be identified in it?

The conflict of interpretation also had a political side. Marx scholars in the Soviet Union after the early 1930s, as well as most researchers close to Communist parties within or linked to the 'socialist bloc', offered a reductionist analysis of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], whereas those in a tradition of critical Marxism set a higher value on the texts and found in them the most powerful arguments (especially in relation to the concept of alienation) for breaking the monopoly that the Soviet Union had established over Marx's work. In each case, the instrumentality of the reading provides a clear example of how theoretical and political conflicts have repeatedly distorted Marx's work to serve purposes extraneous to it.

The first sections of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] to be published were those which David Ryazanov, the famous Marx scholar then in charge of the Marx–Engels Institute in Moscow, brought out in Russian in 1927, as part of the third volume of the *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa* [Marx and Engels Archive]. These appeared under the title 'Preparatory Work for *The Holy Family*',[2] comprising a large part of what would later be known as 'the third manuscript'.[3] In an introductory article, Ryazanov underlined the rapid theoretical advances that Marx made in the period when he was working on this manuscript; in his view, the great value of publishing it was that, far from being a mere bibliographical curiosity, it marked an important stage in Marx's trajectory and afforded new insight into his intellectual development.[4] This hypothesis—that the third manuscript consisted of preparatory materials for *The Holy Family*—proved to be erroneous, however. Its content, as well as Marx's own indications, locate it rather as a quite different earlier text centred mainly on a critical analysis of political economy.

In 1929 a French translation of Ryazanov's text was published in two parts in *La Revue Marxiste*: the February issue featured a section entitled ['Notes on Communism and Private Property'], and the June issue one called ['Notes on Needs, Production and the Division of Labour'].[5] The texts were presented as fragments of

[2] Karl Marx, 'Podgotovitel'nye raboty dlya *Svyatogo Semeistva*', edited by David Ryazanov, *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa*, 3 (1927), pp. 247–286.

[3] The surviving parts of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] consist of three manuscripts, the first totalling 27 pp., the second 4 pp. and the third 41 pp. To these should be added a prospectus of the last chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which Marx inserted into the third manuscript. Marx, 'Podgotovitel'nye raboty dlya *Svyatogo Semeistva*', op. cit.

[4] See David Ryazanov, 'Ot reinskoi Gazety do Svyatogo Semeistva (Vstupitel'naya stat'ya)', *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa*, 3 (1927), pp. 103–142.

[5] Karl Marx, 'Notes sur le communisme et la propriété privée', *La Revue Marxiste*, 1 (February 1929), pp. 6–28 and Karl Marx, 'Notes sur les besoins, la production et la division du travail', *La Revue Marxiste*, 5 (June 1929), pp. 513–538.

a work by Marx from 1844 and arranged under various subheadings to make them easier to read.

In the same year, the first Soviet compilation of the works of Marx and Engels (*K. Marks-F. Engels Sochineniya*, 1928–1947) contained a second Russian edition of the text in Volume Three, in the same fragmentary form and with the same misleading title as in 1927.[6] Then in 1931 the journal *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus* published for the first time in German the fragment entitled ['Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy In General'].[7]

The first complete edition of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] was published in 1932, in German. In fact, two versions came out in the same year, and this added to the confusion about the text. The Social Democrat scholars Siegfried Landshut and Jacob Peter Mayer included the manuscripts in a two-volume collection entitled *Historical Materialism. Early Writings*,[8] Mayer having prepared the way for this in 1931 with an article that gave advance notice of a highly important 'hitherto unknown text by Marx'.[9] The version that appeared in the collection was not complete, however, and contained a number of significant inaccuracies: the 'first' manuscript was missing altogether; the 'second' and 'third' were in a jumbled order; and a supposedly fourth manuscript was in fact no more than the compendium of the final chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, without any kind of commentary by Marx himself. Nor did the switched sequence of publication, III–II–IV, make the manuscripts any easier to understand.

Equally serious were the errors made in transcribing the original and the mistaken choice of title ['Political Economy and Philosophy. On the Connection of Political Economy with the State, Law, Ethics and Civic Life'], which totally contradicted what Marx stated in the draft Preface included in the text: 'It will be found that the interconnection between political economy and the state, law, ethics, civil life, etc., is touched upon in the present work only to the extent to which political economy itself expressly touches upon these subjects'.[10] Finally, one of the rare points on the text made in the editors' preface suggested that it had probably been written in the period between February and August 1844.

The initial plan had been to publish the text in a separate edition entitled [*On the Connection of Political Economy with the State, Law, Ethics and Civic Life, with a Critique of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*], with Mayer responsible for the editorial

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[6] Karl Marx, 'Podgotovitel'nye raboty dlya *Svyatogo Semeistva*', edited by David Ryazanov, in *K. Marks–F. Engels Sochineniya*, vol. 3 (Moscow–Leningrad, 1929), pp. 613–670.

[7] Karl Marx, 'Kritik der Hegelschen Dialektik und der Philosophie überhaupt', *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*, 5:3 (1931), pp. 256–275.

[8] 'Nationalökonomie und Philosophie. Über den Zusammenhang der Nationalökonomie mit Staat, Recht, Moral, und bürgerlichem Leben (1844)', in Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus. Die Frühschriften*, edited by Siegfried Landshut and Jacob Peter Mayer (Leipzig: Kröner, 1932), pp. 283–375.

[9] Jacob Peter Mayer, 'Über eine unveröffentlichte Schrift von Karl Marx', *Rote Revue*, 5 (1930–1931), pp. 154–157.

[10] Karl Marx, 'Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844', in *Marx Engels Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2005), vol. 3, p. 273.

part and Friedrich Solomon for the interpretive section. However, after a second revision of the originals, it was inserted into the previously mentioned collection by Landshut and Mayer.[11] This edition, despite its major editorial and interpretive errors, was widely distributed in Germany and formed the basis for Jules Molitor's French translation in 1937.

The second version of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] to appear in 1932 was the one edited by the Institute Marx Engels (IME) in Moscow and published in the third volume of Part One of the works of Marx and Engels (*Marx–Engels Gesamtausgabe*, or MEGA). This was the first full scholarly edition, and the first to bear the later famous name [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*].[12] Now the three manuscripts were published in the correct order, having also been transcribed with considerably greater accuracy than in the Landshut–Mayer edition. An introduction, also very limited in scope, reconstructed the genesis of the text, and each manuscript was preceded by a brief philological description. The volume bore the subtitle [*For a Critique of Political Economy. With a Concluding Chapter on Hegel's Philosophy*] and placed the manuscripts under the following headings: first manuscript—['Wages'], ['Profit of Capital'], ['Ground Rent'], ['Estranged Labour']; second manuscript—['The Private Property Relationship']; third manuscript—['Private Property and Labour'], ['Private Property and Communism'], ['Need, Production and Division of Labour'], ['Money'], ['Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and His Philosophy in General']. The so-called fourth manuscript, containing the extracts from Hegel, was published as an appendix ['Marx's Extracts from the Last Chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*'].

The MEGA editors, however, having to assign a name to the manuscripts, reorganized the whole and placed Marx's Preface at the beginning (instead of in its original place in the third manuscript), so that they too ended up implying that Marx's intention had always been to write a critique of political economy and that he had conceived his manuscripts as falling into chapters within such a work.[13]

Of particular significance in this edition was the inclusion of Marx's notebooks from his period in Paris. Placed in the second part of the volume, under the heading *From the Notebooks of Excerpts. Paris, Early 1844 to Early 1845*, these also contained previously unpublished extracts from works by Friedrich Engels, Jean-Baptiste Say, Frédéric Skarbek, Adam Smith, David Ricardo, James Mill, John R. MacCulloch, Antoine L. C. Destutt de Tracy and Pierre de Boisguillebert. The editors further provided an account of Marx's nine Paris notebooks and an alphabetical index of all

[11] See Siegfried Landshut and Jacob Peter Mayer, 'Vorwort der Herausgeber', in Marx, *Der historische Materialismus. Die Frühschriften*, edited by Siegfried Landshut and Jacob Peter Mayer (Leipzig: Kröner, 1932), pp. vi–vii.

[12] Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*, MEGA I/3 (Berlin: Marx–Engels-Verlag, 1932), pp. 29–172.

[13] See Jürgen Rojahn, 'Der Fall der sog. "Ökonomisch–philosophischen Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844"', *International Review of Social History*, 28:1 (April 1983), p. 20; and Jürgen Rojahn, 'The Emergence of a Theory: the Importance of Marx's Notebooks Exemplified by Those from 1844', *Rethinking Marxism*, 14:4 (2002), p. 33.

the works from which he copied extracts.[14] At the same time, the Soviet editors passed on to interpreters of Marx's work the misconception that he wrote the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] only after he had read and compiled extracts from a large part of the corpus of works on political economy.[15] In reality, the composition process had involved an alternation of writing and extracting;[16] the excerpts had punctuated the whole of the Parisian period, from the articles for the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher* [German-French Yearbooks] up to *The Holy Family*.

2. Later Translations and Reprints

Thanks to its superior philological quality, the MEGA version became the choice of preference on which nearly all translations into other languages based themselves. This was the case with the first Japanese translation (1946), the two Italian translations, by Norberto Bobbio (1949) and Galvano Della Volpe (1950), the first English and Chinese translations (both in 1956) and the French translation of 1962 (which replaced the unreliable one of 1937 referred to above).

The greater value of the MEGA version was also recognized by the Protestant theologian Erich Thier in his introduction to the variant German edition he brought out in 1950.[17] However, this turned out to be a hybrid of the MEGA and Landshut–Mayer editions, serving to create further misunderstandings. The text itself was taken from the MEGA edition, but—like the two Social Democrat scholars before him—Thier decided to omit the 'first manuscript'. Similarly, he took over many of the MEGA explanatory notes but also reproduced some serious inaccuracies committed by Landshut and Mayer and followed them in their misguided choice of title. All these errors, it should be stressed, were made not when the MEGA edition was a recent acquisition but nearly two decades after its appearance in print.

A revised version of the Landshut–Mayer edition came out in 1953, this time under Landshut's name alone and with the title *Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts (1844)*.[18] This repeated the mistakes of 1932, however, and the only improvement, based on the MEGA edition, was a correction of some transcription errors. Two years later, a collection of *Short Economic Writings*[19] included the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] without the final chapter ['Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and Philosophy in General']. It also made some corrections of the MEGA version of 1932.

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[14] See Marx, MEGA, vol. I/3, op. cit., pp. 411–416.

[15] See David McLellan, *Marx before Marxism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2nd rev. edn, 1972), p. 210; or Jacques Rancière, 'The Concept of "Critique" and the "Critique of Political Economy" (from the 1844 Manuscript to Capital)', *Economy and Society*, 5:3 (1976), pp. 352–376.

[16] Nikolai Lapin, *Der junge Marx* (Berlin: Dietz, 1974), pp. 303–305.

[17] Karl Marx, *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie,* edited by Erich Thier (Cologne: Kiepenheuer, 1950).

[18] Karl Marx, *Die Frühschriften*, edited by Siegfried Landshut (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1953). This edition, which was reprinted a good seven times, finally acquired a short historical–philological apparatus in 2003: Oliver Heins and Richard Sperl, 'Editorische und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Anmerkungen', in ibid. (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2003), pp. 631–652.

[19] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Kleine ökonomische Schriften* (Berlin: Dietz, 1955), pp. 42–166.

While the limits of these new German editions marked a step back with regard to the MEGA version, the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] were subjected to veritable persecution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In 1954, the Institute of Marxism–Leninism in Moscow—the new name for the IME—decided not to include Marx's unfinished manuscripts in the new Russian edition of the *K. Marks–F. Engels Sochineniya* then in preparation, thereby omitting many of the works essential for an accurate account of the genesis of his thought. However, this editorial policy was not followed through consistently. The second *Sochineniya* that eventually appeared between 1955 and 1966 contained many more writings than the first one of 1928–1947, but it excluded the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and the [*Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*], better known as the [*Grundrisse*], more as an act of censorship than for cogent editorial reasons. On the other hand, it found room for other manuscripts by Marx, including his [*Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's* Philosophy of Right] in Volume One, and filled the whole of Volume Three with [*The German Ideology*].

The [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] appeared in 1956[20] in a separate book with the title *Extracts from the Youthful Works*;[21] the print run was only 60,000 (not very high in comparison with other of Marx's writings at that time). Its first inclusion in the *Sochineniya* came nearly 20 years later, in 1974, as part of the supplementary volume XLII.[22] The work on the edition of 1974 involved rechecking photocopies of the original manuscripts from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, which still today holds two-thirds of the Marx–Engels literary bequest.[23] This proved to be a wise decision, since it allowed a number of not unimportant corrections to be made to the MEGA version of 1932. For example, the last line in the 'first manuscript', previously transcribed as *Kollision wechselseitiger Gegensätze* ['clash of mutual opposites'] was amended to the correct *feindlicher wechselseitiger Gegensatz* ['hostile mutual opposition'], and in several passages *Genuß* (enjoyment) was rightly substituted for *Geist* (spirit). Some of Marx's own mistakes in the manuscripts were also corrected, for example, his misquotation of Adam Smith's 'the three productive classes' (earlier copied down correctly in his notebooks) as 'the three primitive classes'.[24] Furthermore, all the quotations extracted by Marx—many of them very long, especially in the 'first' manuscript—were published in a smaller font size, so as to make it easier to identify their original author and to avoid any misattribution to himself.[25]

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[20] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Iz rannikh proizvedennii* (Moscow: Marx–Engels-Verlag, 1956), pp. 519–642.

[21] See Vladimir Brouchlinski, 'Note sur l'histoire de la rédaction et de la publication des Manuscrits économico-philosophiques de Karl Marx', in varii, *Sur le jeune Marx*, special issue of the journal *Recherches Internationales à la lumiere du marxisme*, V–VI:19 (1960), p. 78.

[22] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Sochineniya*, vol. XLII (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974), pp. 41–174.

[23] Maria Hunink, *De Papieren van de Revolutie* (Amsterdam: International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, 1986).

[24] See Marx, MEGA I/3, op. cit., p. 472 (line 2) and MEGA I/3, op. cit., p. 68 (line 19).

[25] Brouchlinski, op. cit., p. 79.

As in the case of the Soviet edition, the collection of writings by Marx and Engels published in the German Democratic Republic between 1956 and 1968 (the *Marx–Engels-Werke* or MEW) did not include the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] in its numbered sequence of 39 volumes. Chronologically they should have featured in Volume II, published in 1962, but instead they eventually appeared in a supplementary volume (*Ergänzungsband*) at the end of the project in 1968.[26] After remaining in this guise until 1981, the manuscripts then went through four successive editions in the years to 1985, as part of Volume XL of the MEW entitled 'Writings and Letters from November 1837 to August 1844'. The edition in question was the MEGA version of 1932, with some transcription corrections and the critical apparatus from the 1955 volume of 'Brief Economic Writings'.

After the original MEGA, the first edition of Marx's works published in the 'socialist bloc' to include the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] in its numbered sequence of volumes was the *Marx–Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²). Publication of this began in 1975, and the Paris manuscripts were printed in Volume I/2 in 1982, exactly 50 years after their first publication. In this new form, they appeared in a historical–critical edition in two separate versions. The first (*Erste Wiedergabe*) reproduced the papers as originally left by Marx and therefore divided parts of the text of the 'first manuscript' into columns; the second (*Zweite Wiedergabe*) used the division into chapters and the pagination generally adopted by all previous editions.[27] Further improvements were made in the transcription of the originals, this time mainly referring to the ['Preface'].[28] As an example of the classification difficulties posed by Marx's various manuscripts (but also of certain limitations of the MEGA² edition), the prospectus of the final chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* appears both in Volume I/2 and in the later volume (IV/2) containing the notebooks of extracts from this period.[29] In 1981, indeed, MEGA² again offered the notebooks with the Paris extracts, and the extracts from works by Carl W.C. Schüz, Friedrich List, Heinrich F. Osiander, Guillaume Prevost, Senofonte and Eugène Buret, not previously published in the first MEGA, were printed for the first time in this volume. The publication of the [*Paris Notebooks*] finally came to an end in 1998 with Volume IV/3, which included Marx's compilations from Jean Law, James Lauderdale and a Roman history manual of uncertain authorship. With MEGA², the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and all the notebooks of extracts from 1844 were finally in print in their entirety.

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[26] Karl Marx, 'Ökonomisch–philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844', in *Marx–Engels-Werke. Ergänzungsband. Erster Teil* (Berlin: Dietz, 1968), pp. 465–588.

[27] See Karl Marx, MEGA² I/2 (Berlin: Dietz, 1982), pp. 187–322 and 323–438.

[28] According to the editors' introductory note to vol. I/2, these consisted of 'essential corrections to previously published editions': see ibid., p. 35. For all details concerning transcription amendments, see the list of variants of the ['Preface'] in ibid., pp. 842–852.

[29] See MEGA² I/2, op. cit., pp. 439–444; and Karl Marx, MEGA² IV/2 (Berlin: Dietz, 1981), pp. 493–500.

3. One or Two Marxes? The Dispute on the Continuity of Marx's Thought

The two editions of 1932 gave rise to many controversies of a hermeneutic or political character, in which Marx's text was often squashed between two interpretive extremes. One understood it as a mere expression of youthful theorizing negatively imbued with philosophical concepts and terminology, while the other considered it to be the highest expression of Marx's humanism and the essential core of the whole of his critical theory. With the passage of time, successive supporters of the two positions engaged in lively debate, offering different answers concerning the 'continuity' of his thought. Were there in fact two distinct thinkers: an early Marx and a mature Marx? Or was there only one Marx, whose convictions remained substantially the same over the decades?

The opposition between these two views became ever sharper. The first, uniting Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy with those in Western Europe and elsewhere who shared its theoretical and political tenets, downplayed or dismissed altogether the importance of Marx's early writings; they presented them as completely superficial in comparison with his later works and, in so doing, advanced a decidedly anti-humanist conception of his thought.[30] The second view, advocated by a more heterogeneous group of authors, had as its common denominator a rejection of the dogmatism of official Communism and the correlation that its exponents sought to establish between Marx's thought and the politics of the Soviet Union.

A couple of quotations from two major protagonists in the 1960s will do more than any possible commentary to elucidate the terms of the debate. For Louis Althusser:

> First of all, any discussion of Marx's Early Works is a political discussion. Need we be reminded that Marx's Early Works … were exhumed by Social-Democrats and exploited by them to the detriment of Marxism–Leninism? … This is the location of the discussion: the Young Marx. Really at stake in it: Marxism. The terms of the discussion: whether the Young Marx was already and wholly Marx.[31]

Iring Fetscher, on the other hand, argued:

> The early writings of Marx centre so strongly on the liberation of man from every form of exploitation, domination and alienation, that a Soviet reader must have understood these comments as a criticism of his own situation under Stalinist domination. For this reason then, the early writings of Marx were never published in large, cheap editions in Russian. They were considered to be relatively

[30] Cf. David McLellan, *Marx*, 2nd edn (London: Fontana, 1986), p. 80.

[31] Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 51 and 53. A few years later, in defending his concept of an 'epistemological break' in Marx's work, Althusser insisted that the discussion on the 'Young Marx' was 'in the last resort, political. … This is not a debate about philology! To hang on to or to reject these *words*, to defend them or to destroy them— something real is at stake in these struggles, whose ideological and political character is obvious. It is not too much to say that what is at stake today, behind the argument about words, is *Leninism*. Not only the recognition of the existence and role of Marxist theory and science, but also the concrete forms of the fusion between the Labour Movement and Marxist theory, and the conception of materialism and the dialectic.' Louis Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism* (London: New Books, 1971), pp. 114–115.

> insignificant works by the young Hegelian Marx who had not yet developed Marxism.[32]

Both sides distorted Marx's text in various ways. The 'Orthodox' denied the importance of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] (indispensable though they are for an understanding of the evolution of Marx's thought) and carried this so far that they excluded them from Russian and German editions of the complete works of Marx and Engels. On the other hand, many representatives of so-called 'Western Marxism', as well as a number of existentialist philosophers, took this unfinished sketch by a young, inexpert student of economic theory and assigned to it a value greater than that of the product of more than 20 years of research: *Das Kapital*.

It is not possible here to give a full account of the vast critical literature on the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*]. Instead, we shall focus on the main works and try to show the major limitations of previous debate concerning both this text and Marx's work as a whole.

4. Early Interpretations of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*]

When they first appeared in print in 1932, the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] became one of the main bones of contention between 'Soviet Marxism' and 'Western Marxism'. The introductions accompanying their publication brought out this sharp difference of approach. Viktor Adoratskii, the MEGA director who had replaced Ryazanov in 1931 after a purge of the Marx–Engels Institute (recently renamed the Marx–Engels–Lenin Institute), presented the theme of the manuscripts as an 'analysis of money, wages, the interest of capital, and ground rent'; Marx, in his view, had put forward a 'general characterization of capitalism' (a term not yet used by Marx), which then reappeared in *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.[33] By contrast, Landshut and Meyer[34] spoke of a work that 'in essence already anticipated *Capital*',[35] since 'no fundamentally new idea' would subsequently appear in Marx's oeuvre. The [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], they wrote, was actually 'Marx's central work. It formed the crux of the development of his thought, deriving the principles of economic analysis directly from the idea of the "true reality of man"'. It was so important because it lifted the veil on Marx's philosophical terminology and made it possible to trace the theories developed in *Capital* back to concepts in his youthful period. The two German authors even asserted that Marx's aim was not 'the socialization of the means of production' and the overcoming of 'exploitation' through the 'expropriation of the expropriators', but rather the

[32] Iring Fetscher, *Marx and Marxism* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), p. 314.

[33] Victor Adoratskij, 'Einleitung', in MEGA I/3, op. cit., p. xiii.

[34] In reality, the introduction signed by the two editors was the work of Landshut alone, who published it the same year as a separate short work: Siegfried Landshut, *Karl Marx* (Lübeck: Charles Coleman, 1932). For a critique of this position, see Georg Lukács, *Der junge Marx* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1965), pp. 12–13.

[35] Landshut and Mayer, 'Vorwort der Herausgeber', op. cit., p. vi.

'realization of man (*die Verwirklichung des Menschen*) … without which everything else had no meaning'.[36] Despite the evidently forced character of their claim that the manuscripts of 1844 were the crux of Marx's development,[37] this interpretation soon achieved great success and may be seen as the original source of the 'Young Marx' myth.

The first two authors to review the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and to join the debate on the importance of Marx's early writings were Henri de Man and Herbert Marcuse, both of whom came to conclusions that were in some respects similar to those of Landshut and Meyer. In an article 'The Newly Discovered Marx', which appeared in *Der Kampf* in 1932, De Man referred to

> a hitherto unknown work, of the utmost importance for a correct assessment of the development and significance of Marx's theory. Rather more clearly than any other work by Marx, it revealed the ethical–humanist motives informing his socialist orientation and the value judgements expressed in his lifelong scientific activity.[38]

According to the Belgian writer, the key question that Marx's interpreters had to address was 'whether that humanist phase should be seen as a position he later overcame or, on the contrary, as an integral and lasting part of his theory'.[39] De Man clearly stated his own view that the Paris text already contained all the concepts on which Marx would later build. 'In the *Manuscripts*', he argued, 'and more generally in the writings from 1843 to 1846, Marx formulated positions and judgements that remained the basis of all his later works'. Therefore, 'the Marx of 1844 belonged to Marxism as much as did the Marx of 1867, or … the Engels of 1890'.[40] Nevertheless, De Man held that two Marxisms were present in Marx: the humanist one of his youth and the later one of his maturity. The first, which had achieved the greatest theoretical breakthroughs, was allegedly superior to the second, which had marked 'a decline in his creative capacities'.[41]

Marcuse too maintained that the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] brought to light the philosophical premises of Marx's critique of political economy. In an essay 'The Foundation of Historical Materialism', first published in 1932 in *Die Gesellschaft*, Marcuse argued that 'the publication of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* written by Marx in 1844 [was destined] to become a crucial event in the history of Marxist studies', since it placed 'the discussion about the origin and original meaning of historical materialism … on a new footing'. It was now possible to assert that 'economics and politics have become the economic–political *basis* of the theory of revolution through a quite particular, philosophical interpretation of human existence and its historical realization'. The 1844 manuscripts had shown the falseness of the view, variously put forward by exponents of the Second International and Soviet

[36] Ibid., p. xxxviii.
[37] Ibid., p. xiii.
[38] Henri de Man, 'Der neu entdeckte Marx', *Der Kampf*, XXV:5–6 (1932), p. 224.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., p. 276.
[41] Ibid., p. 277.

Communism, that in Marx there was 'simply … a transformation from a philosophical to an economic basis and that in its subsequent (economic) form philosophy had been overcome and "finished" once and for all'. Since the publication of the *Manuscripts*, it was no longer possible to think of Marxism as an essentially economic doctrine.[42]

A few years later, interest in the 'Young Marx' led on to study of his relationship to Hegel—a line of research encouraged by recent publication of the German philosopher's manuscripts from his period in Jena.[43] Georg Lukács, in his work of 1938, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, was one of the main Marxist theorists to compare these two sets of early writings—including Marx's on philosophy and Hegel's on economics—and to draw what he saw as certain analogies between them. In his opinion, Marx's references to Hegel in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] went well beyond the passages he directly quoted and commented on. Indeed, Marx's economic analysis itself had been inspired by a critique of Hegel's conception of philosophy.

> The link between economics and philosophy … in these manuscripts of Marx's is a profound methodological necessity, the precondition for actually transcending Hegel's idealist dialectic. For this reason it would be superficial to imagine that Marx's concern with Hegel begins in the last portion of the manuscript which contains the critique of the *Phenomenology*. The four preceding sections, which do not expressly concern themselves with Hegel at all, are nevertheless the foundation on which that criticism is built: they provide the economic clarification of the real nature of alienation.[44]

Alexandre Kojève was another writer who exerted a major influence on discussions of Marx and Hegel. In his lectures on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which he gave in Paris between 1933 and 1939 at the École pratique des hautes études, Kojève went more deeply into the relationship between the two thinkers, although now it was Hegel's work that was subjected to a Marxian reading.[45] Finally, Karl Löwith approached the theme in his book *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, without doubt one of the main studies of the time on Hegelian and post-Hegelian philosophy.[46]

The debate resumed in Germany after the end of the Second World War, and the early 1950s saw the publication in the Federal Republic of Erich Thier's *Anthropology*

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[42] Herbert Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (London: New Left Books, 1972), pp. 3f. Cf. the following assertion, one of many of this type: 'In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript* the original meaning of the basic categories is clearer than even before, and it could become necessary to revise the current interpretation of the later and more elaborated critique in the light of its origins.' Ibid.

[43] Georg W. F. Hegel, *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie*, edited by Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923); and Georg W. F. Hegel, *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, edited by Johannes Hoffmeister (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1931).

[44] *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics* (London: Merlin Press, 1975), pp. 548–549. Another important text that helps us to appreciate the revolutionary impact of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] is Lukács's biographical interview with *New Left Review*: 'Reading these manuscripts changed my whole relationship with Marxism and transformed my philosophical perspective.' 'Lukács on his Life and Work', *New Left Review*, 68 (July–August 1971), p. 57. Cf. Georg Lukács, *Towards the Ontology of Social Being*, 3 vols (London: Merlin Press, 1978–1980).

[45] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).

[46] Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, 3rd rev. edn (London: Constable, 1965).

of the Young Marx in the Paris Economic–Philosophical Manuscripts,[47] Heinrich Popitz's *Alienated Man*[48] and Jacob Hommes's *The Eros of Technology*.[49] These three books, though differing in nuances, helped to establish the view that the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] were the fundamental text of the whole Marxian oeuvre. In a short time, this reading won over many authors in various countries and disciplines, and one of the nodal points on which no serious student of Marx could fail to express an opinion was how the texts of the 'Young Marx' should be interpreted.

5. The 'Young Marx' Vogue in Postwar France

As the Second World War gave way to a sense of profound anguish resulting from the barbarities of Nazism and fascism, the theme of the condition and destiny of the individual in society acquired great prominence.[50] A growing philosophical interest in Marx was apparent everywhere in Europe, especially in France, where the study of his early writings was the most widespread.[51] As Henri Lefebvre put it, their assimilation was 'the decisive philosophical event [of] the period'.[52] In this variegated process stretching into the 1960s, a number of writers from different cultural and political backgrounds sought to accomplish a philosophical synthesis of Marxism, Hegelianism, existentialism and Christian thought. The debate generated a lot of shoddy writing and, on more than one occasion, distorted Marx's texts to fit the ideological convictions of those taking part.

In a work of 1948 entitled *Sense and Non-sense*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty stated that Marx's early thought had been 'existentialist'.[53] After reading the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], and under the influence of Kojève, he became convinced that genuine Marxism was a radical humanism completely unlike dogmatic Soviet economism, and that it was possible to reconstruct its basic premises from Marx's writings of the early 1840s. A number of existentialist philosophers engaged in a similar reading, limiting themselves to that minor (and never finished) part of Marx's intellectual output and often omitting almost entirely a study of *Capital*.[54]

[47] This essay took the form of a substantive editorial introduction ('Einleitung') to Marx, *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie*, op. cit, pp. 3–127 and was later reprinted as a separate book: Erich Thier, *Das Menschenbild des jungen Marx* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957).

[48] Heinrich Popitz, *Der entfremdete Mensch. Zeitkritik und Geschichtsphilosophie des jungen Marx* (Basle: Verlag fur Recht und Gesellschaft, 1953).

[49] Jakob Hommes, *Der technische Eros: Das Wesen der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1955).

[50] See Adam Schaff, *Marxism and the Human Individual* (New York: McGraw–Hill, 1970), Chapter 1.

[51] See Ornella Pompeo Faracovi, *Il marxismo francese contemporaneo fra dialettica e struttura (1945–1968)* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1972), especially pp. 12–18, where it is recalled that 'postwar French philosophical culture was for a long time interested almost exclusively in the thought of the young Marx'.

[52] Henri Lefebvre, 'Le marxisme et la pensée française', *Les Temps Modernes*, 137–138 (1957), p. 114.

[53] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-sense* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), especially the chapter on 'Marxism and Philosophy'. Cf. Lars Roar Langset, 'Young Marx and Alienation in Western Debate', *Inquiry*, 6:1 (1963), p. 11.

[54] Raymond Aron made fun of this position, suggesting that 'in the speculations of the young Marx' the existentialists found 'the secret of an "untranscendable" Marxism that Marx claimed to have "transcended" from the age of thirty'; *D'une Sainte Famille à l'autre. Essais sur les marxismes imaginaires* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 44.

The texts used to create the misleading image of a 'philosophical Marx' served others for the even less wieldy construction of a 'theological Marx'. For the Jesuit writers Pierre Bigo and Jean-Yves Calvez, Marx's thought had the features of an ethic very similar to the message of social justice contained in the most democratic and progressive strands of Catholicism. Indeed, some of their assertions are stupefying in their superficiality and confusion. In *Marxism and Humanism*, for example, Bigo wrote: 'Marx is not an economist; he made no contribution to political economy. … When he is indirectly led into considerations on such themes, he is strangely vague and self-contradictory'.[55] Calvez could write in *The Thought of Karl Marx*, published in 1956, that, although Marx 'did not publish the work today called the *Economic–Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, what we now know of it allows us to say that he had already acquired the basic principles that he would develop in the later works'.[56] In this context, Roger Garaudy too claimed to have recognized the central importance of the humanist influences in Marx's early writings, expressing himself in favour of dialogue between Marxism and other (especially Christian) cultures.[57]

Raymond Aron developed a pungent critique of such tendencies. Thus, in his book on 'imaginary Marxisms' published in 1969, he wrote of 'jesuitical priests' and 'Parisian para-Marxists' who, amid the success of phenomenological–existential philosophy, 'interpreted the works of [Marx's] maturity in the light of [an earlier] philosophical utopianism' and even 'subordinated *Capital* to his youthful writings (particularly the *Economic–Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*), whose obscurity, incompleteness and sometimes contradictory character were a source of fascination for readers instructed by A. Kojève and Father Fessard'.[58] What such writers failed to understand was that, 'if Marx had not had the hope and intention to ground the coming of communism with scientific rigour, he would not have needed to work for thirty years on *Capital* (still without finishing it). A few weeks and a few pages would have been enough.'[59]

Pierre Naville took a very different line in relation to existentialist and Christian thinkers, arguing that Marx changed his ideas significantly in the course of his development, passing 'from philosophy to science'.[60] Thus in 1954, in the first volume of his *Le nouveau Léviathan*, Naville took issue both with those who passed over 'the Hegelian origins of Marx's thought' and with those who failed to understand

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[55] Pierre Bigo, *Marxisme et humanisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1953), p. 248.

[56] Jean-Yves Calvez, *La Pensée de Karl Marx*, Paris: Seuil, 1956, p. 25.

[57] Roger Garaudy, *From Anathema to Dialogue: The Challenge of Marxist–Christian Cooperation* (London: Collins, 19670.

[58] Aron, op. cit., p. 74.

[59] Ibid., p. 119. Aron's book is full of polemical references to the paradoxes of French interpreters of Marx ('our Parisian philosophers prefer sketches to finished works, are fond of rough copies so long as they are obscure', p. 172) and to the success they managed to obtain ('Jupiter, it is said, first drove mad those he wished to destroy. In Paris, Marx—a benevolent Jupiter—promises fashionable success to those he leads', p. 286). On the role of Gaston Fessard in the French debate of the time, see Fessard, *Le dialogue catholique-communiste est-il possible?* (Paris: Grasset, 1937).

[60] Pierre Naville, *Le nouveau Léviathan 1. De l'aliénation à la jouissance* (Paris: Anthropos, 1967), p. 23.

that Marx 'had had to move away from them in order to reach the analyses of *Capital*'.[61] In a new preface written in 1967, Naville pointed out that Marx 'gave up a number of seductive and fascinating concepts such as alienation', which he 'consigned to the museum of philosophy and replaced with a much more rigorous analysis of the relations of expropriation and exploitation'.[62]

Originally this had also been the view of Auguste Cornu, whose doctoral thesis *Karl Marx—the Man and the Work*,[63] first published in 1934 as the embryo of his four-volume magnum opus *Marx and Engels*,[64] had situated the [*Economic–Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*] within the Soviet interpretive grid initiated by Adoratskii.[65] Later, however, in the third volume entitled *Marx in Paris*, which many consider the most complete intellectual biography of the early Marx, Cornu avoided comparing the youthful writings with the later critique of political economy and offered a more restrained assessment of the text of 1844.

In 1955, in his widely read *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, Jean Hyppolite emphasized the importance of Hegel for a rigorous analysis of the link between Marx's early and mature writings. Pointing out that 'Marx's work presupposes an underlying philosophy whose various elements are not easily reconstructed', he insisted that 'it is not possible to understand Marx's basic work, *Capital*, without a knowledge of the principal works that contributed to the formation and development of his thought, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Right*.'[66]

Maximilien Rubel too believed that there was a theoretical continuum between the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and Marx's later writings. In his book *Karl Marx: Essai de biographie intellectuelle*, published in 1957, he argued that the category of alienated labour in the *Manuscripts* was 'the key to all the subsequent work of [Marx] the economist and sociologist', and that it 'anticipated the central thesis of *Capital*'. So, one of the major Marxologists of the 20th century also saw an 'evident basic identity' between 'Marx's positions in his first critique of private property and in his later analysis of the capitalist economy'.[67] In *Alienation, Praxis and Technē in the Thought of Karl Marx* (1961), Kostas Axelos went even further, claiming that the 1844 manuscripts 'have been and remain the richest in ideas of all Marxian and Marxist writings'.[68]

Henri Lefebvre was among the few writers who adopted a more balanced approach to the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], always analysing their content in

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[61] Ibid., p. 22.

[62] Ibid., pp. 12–13.

[63] Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx—L'homme et l'oeuvre. De l'hégélianisme au matérialisme historique* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1934).

[64] Auguste Cornu, *Marx et Engels*, 4 vols (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1955–1970).

[65] This was also true of Émile Bottigelli, who wrote the introduction to the new translation of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] that appeared in the early 1960s. See Émile Bottigelli, 'Présentation' to Karl Marx, *Manuscrits de 1844 (*Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1962), especially pp. lxvi–lxix.

[66] Jean Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 148, 150.

[67] Maximilien Rubel, *Karl Marx: Essai de biographie intellectuelle* (Paris: Rivière, 1957), pp. 121–123.

[68] Kostas Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis and Technē in the Thought of Karl Marx* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 45.

light of the fact that they were not a finished work. In his *Critique of Everyday Life*, first published in 1958, he wrote:

> In his early writings, particularly in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844*, Marx had not yet fully developed his thought. It is there, however, germinating, growing, becoming. … My view is that historical and dialectical materialism *developed*. It did not come into being abruptly, with an absolute discontinuity, after a break, at *x* moment, in the works of Marx (and in the history of humanity), and to think that it did produces false problems. To begin with, Marxism is made to appear like a system, a *dogma*. … Any radical newness must be born, must grow and take shape, precisely because it is a new reality. … The thesis which put a date on Marxism, or tries to, seriously runs the risk of dissecting it, and of interpreting it in a one-sided way. … The mistake, the false option which must be avoided, is to *overestimate* or else to *underestimate* Marx's early writings. They already contain Marxism, but as a potential, and certainly not *all* Marxism.[69]

The writer who insisted more than any other on an 'absolute discontinuity' in Marx's work was Louis Althusser. His collection of essays *For Marx* triggered numerous reactions and polemics following its publication in 1965, becoming the most widely discussed text on Marx's early writings. Althusser's position was that the [*Theses on Feuerbach*] and [*The German Ideology*] marked a clear 'epistemological break' (*coupure épistemologique*), 'a critique of his [Marx's] erstwhile philosophical (ideological) conscience',[70] and that his work may thus be divided into 'two long essential periods: the "ideological" period before, and the scientific period after, the break in 1845'.[71] The relationship between Hegel and Marx had been of major importance, but only in relation to the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and hence for Marx's 'ideological–philosophical' period.

> [T]he Young Marx was never strictly speaking a Hegelian, …; rather, he was first a Kantian Fichtean, then a Feuerbachian. So the thesis that the Young Marx was a Hegelian, though widely believed today, is in general a myth. On the contrary, it seems that Marx's one and only resort to Hegel in his youth, on the eve of his rupture with his 'erstwhile philosophical conscience', produced the prodigious 'abreaction' indispensable to the liquidation of his 'disordered' consciousness.[72]

Althusser therefore regarded the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] as pardoxically 'the text the furthest removed from the day that is about to dawn':[73]

> [T]he Marx furthest from Marx is this Marx, the Marx on the brink, on the eve, on the threshold—as if, before the break, in order to achieve it, he had to give philosophy every chance, its last, this absolute empire over its opposite, this boundless theoretical triumph, that is, *its defeat*.[74]

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[69] Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 79–80.
[70] Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), p.33.
[71] Ibid., p. 34.
[72] Ibid., p. 35.
[73] Ibid., p. 36.
[74] Ibid., p. 159.

Althusser's curious conclusion was that 'we cannot say absolutely that "Marx's youth is part of Marxism"'. The Althusserian school made this one of the cardinal points of its interpretation of the split in Marx: there was the pre-1845 Marx, still tied to Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology, and there was the Marx of [*The German Ideology*] and beyond, the scientific founder of a new theory of history. As for Jacques Rancière, in his essay 'The Concept of 'Critique' and the 'Critique of Political Economy' (from the 1844 manuscript to Capital)'—which appeared in the first French edition of *Reading Capital* and was one of the first and most important contributions in this connection—he believed that one of the main obstacles to a correct understanding of Marx was that 'he never made a critique of his own vocabulary'. Thus, in Rancière's judgement, 'although we can identify in Marx's theoretical practice the break that he did no more than assert, … he never really grasped and theorized the difference'. Sometimes, as with alienation or fetishism, 'the same words serve to express the anthropological concepts and the concepts of *Capital*, [… and] because Marx does not meet the demand for rigour the first figuration always threatens to gain entry where it no longer has a place'.[75]

Althusser always remained convinced that there were 'two Marxes'. In his 'Reply to John Lewis', a response to the British Communist philosopher published in 1972 in *Marxism Today*, he reviewed self-critically some of the formulations in *For Marx*:

> In my first essays, I suggested that after the 'epistemological break' of 1845 (after the discovery by which Marx founded the science of history) the philosophical categories of *alienation* and the *negation of the negation* (among others) disappear. John Lewis replies that this is not true. And he is right. You certainly do find these concepts (directly or indirectly) in *The German Ideology*, in the *Grundrisse* (two texts which Marx never published) and also, though more rarely (alienation) or much more rarely (negation of the negation: only one explicit appearance) in *Capital*.[76]

Despite this admission, however, he reaffirms the idea of a watershed in Marx's theoretical development:

> If you look at the whole of Marx's work, there is no doubt that there does exist a 'break' of some kind in 1845. Marx *says so* himself. … The whole work of Marx shows him to be right on this point. … The epistemological break is a point of no return. … It is true that Marx several times uses the term 'alienation'. But all that disappears in Marx's later texts and in Lenin. Completely. We could therefore simply say: what is important is the tendency: and Marx's scientific work does tend to get rid of these philosophical categories. … But that is not sufficient. And here is my self-criticism. … I identified the 'epistemological' (= scientific) break with Marx's philosophical revolution. More precisely, I did not separate Marx's philosophical revolution from the 'epistemological break'. … That was a mistake. … Since that time, I have begun to 'put things right'. … 1. It is impossible to reduce philosophy to science, and it is impossible to reduce Marx's philosophical revolution to the 'epistemological break'. 2. Marx's philosophical revolution preceded Marx's 'epistemological break'. It made the break possible.[77]

[75] Rancière, op. cit.
[76] 'Reply to John Lewis', in Louis Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism* (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 65.
[77] Ibid., pp. 65–66.

In his revised thesis, Althusser now adds that 1845 there was a kind of 'intermittent survival of categories like alienation'.

> For alongside their *tendency* to disappear in Marx's work, considered as a whole, there is a strange phenomenon which must be accounted for: their total disappearance in certain works, then their subsequent reappearance. … For example, … there are many references to alienation in the *Grundrisse* (preparatory notes made by Marx in the years 1857–58, and which he did not publish).[78]

According to Althusser, Marx came to use this category again only because he 'had "by chance" re-read Hegel's *Logic* in 1858 and had been fascinated by it'.[79] However, this explanation is unconvincing, since in the *Grundrisse* he probably had recourse to the concept also in the parts written before he had re-read Hegel's *Logic*. In any event, Marx's treatment of alienation is very different from Hegel's. Whereas, for Althusser, it is a 'philosophical category' that 'Marx's scientific work tended to get rid of', the truth is that, not only in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], but also in the [*Grundrisse*], *Capital* and its preparatory manuscripts, it plays an important role in characterizing labour and social relations in the capitalist system of economy and production.[80]

Contrary to Althusser's claims, Marx never wrote of or hinted at the presence of a 'break' in his work. Even less is it possible to establish a theoretical or political continuum between the thought of Marx and Lenin in this regard, or to invoke Lenin's failure to mention alienation as proof of an 'epistemological break' on Marx's part.

In the end, the weightiest objections to the Althusserian account arise from a philological analysis of Marx's actual writings: for, although the [*Grundrisse*] are 'notes made by Marx in the years 1857–58 … which he did not publish',[81] it should be borne in mind that [*The German Ideology*] was also left unfinished, and that even its so-called First Chapter on Feuerbach, on which Althusser rests much of his case for an 'epistemological break', was assigned that position only when the MEGA editors published the manuscript in 1932 as if it constituted an almost complete work.[82] The point is not to deny that Marx's thought underwent huge changes as it matured and grappled with the critique of political economy—that is evident enough, as it is for countless other authors—but to contest Althusser's theorization of a rigid break according to which the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and the other writings prior to the [*Grundrisse*] are extraneous to Marxism rather than an integral part of its development.

Althusser did not modify his position on this even in the later *Essays in Self-Criticism*. He did point out, rightly, that in the [*German Ideology*] manuscripts 'fundamental theoretical concepts' appear that one would look for in vain 'in Marx's earlier texts'

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[78] Ibid., p. 70.

[79] Ibid., p. 70.

[80] Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (New York: Humanity Books, 1999), p. 258: '[A]ll the philosophical concepts of Marxian theory are social and economic categories. … Even Marx's early writings are not philosophical. They express the negation of philosophy, though they still do so in philosophical language.'

[81] Althuser, 'Reply to John Lewis', op. cit., p. 70.

[82] See Marcello Musto, 'Vicissitudini e nuovi studi de "L'ideologia tedescha"', *Critica marxista*, 6 (2004), pp. 45–49; and Terrell Carver, '*The German Ideology* Never Took Place', *History of Political Thought*, XXXI:1 (2010), pp. 107–127.

('mode of production, relations of production, productive forces', etc.), but he still made the mistake of excluding 'alienated labour' from this process of development, attaching to it the label of a merely philosophical notion. For Althusser, the Marx of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] 'does not modify' the concepts of political economy and, 'when he criticizes them, he does so "philosophically", therefore from the outside'.[83] The Marx of [*The German Ideology*], however, is considered the originator of an 'unprecedented' and 'irreversible' event: the opening up of the 'continent of history'—as if that event were something so utterly fixed that it had happened in the space of a few weeks.

One critic of this account was Ernest Mandel, who in his *Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx* (1967) traced Althusser's error back to his attempt 'to present the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* as a work with a finished ideology, "forming a whole"'. In his view, Althusser

> is right to oppose the analytico-teleological method which examines the work of a young writer exclusively in order to see how close it comes to the 'goal', meaning the writer's mature work. But he is wrong to set against a method that arbitrarily cuts up into ideologically coherent slices the successive phases in a writer's evolution, on the pretext of regarding every ideology as a whole.

To the question of whether Marx, in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], 'rid himself of all the philosophical slag from a way of thinking that thenceforth became rigorously social and economic', Mandel answered in the negative. For the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], mark

> the transition of the young Marx from Hegelian and Feuerbachian philosophy to the working out of historical materialism. In this transition, elements from the past are inevitably combined with elements belonging to the future. Marx combines in his own way—that is, by profoundly modifying them—the dialectics of Hegel, the materialism of Feuerbach, and the social facts established by political economy. This combination is not a coherent one; it does not create a new 'system', a new 'ideology'. It presents us with scattered fragments which contain many contradictions.[84]

In France, then, existentialists treated the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] as a highly stimulating text while Jesuits held them up as the banner of humanism; others scorned them as a youthful philosophical leftover or passed them over as a doubtful part of 'Marxism'; and others still acclaimed them as the key text containing the philosophical premises of Marx's later economic works. What is beyond doubt is that they captured huge attention, not only in Marxist circles, and were among the most widely sold philosophical works for more than two decades. In the postwar period, they informed French theoretical debate and helped to ensure that Marx was seen in a new way. To be sure, he thereby became less sharp in his features and more moralistic in tone, but he also appeared as an author more alert to the unease of the solitary individual generated by the social context. All this enabled him to speak to a wider audience.

[83] Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism*, op. cit., p. 109.

[84] Ernest Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), p. 158.

6. The [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] in the 'Socialist Bloc' and the English-speaking Countries

For many years, the most accredited Marxists in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe or in the orthodox Communist parties either ignored the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] or gave a shallow, restricted interpretation of them. Stalinist ideology, with Stakhanovism as one of its banners, remained deeply hostile to the concept of alienation that figured so prominently in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], and so Marx's early writings, which commanded ever greater attention in 'Western Marxism' from the 1930s on, took a very long time to gain ground there.

The Development of Karl Marx from Revolutionary Democrat to Communist, a book by the GDR author Georg Mende, is a clear case in point. Neither the first edition of 1954 nor the second of 1955 gave any account of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], simply referring to them as 'preparations for a major work'.[85] Only in 1960, when it was no longer possible to keep silent, did Mende decide to revise some parts of his book for a third edition.

Every other commentator displayed the same mixture of underestimation and aversion in the 1940s and 1950s, but things began gradually to change from the late 1950s on. Even in the 'socialist countries', study of the manuscripts now got underway and resulted in accounts at a higher level such as D.I. Rosenberg's *Development of the Economic Theory of Marx and Engels in the 1840s*, first published in 1958.[86]

In 1961 a special issue of *Recherches Internationales à la Lumière du Marxisme* entitled 'The Young Marx' published for the first time in a European language various essays by Soviet academics on the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*]. Along with articles by Soviet authors O. Bakouradze, Nikolai Lapin, Vladimir Brouchlinski, Leonid Pajitnov and A. Outbo, the volume contained work by the Polish researcher Adam Schaff, the Germans Wolfgang Jahn and Joachim Hoeppner, and the general secretary of the Italian Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti.[87] Although reflecting the ideological approach of the time, these contributions were a first attempt on the Communist side to grapple with the problem of 'the young Marx' and to challenge the interpretive monopoly of 'Western Marxists'. Some essays also offered food for thought

[85] Georg Mende, *Karl Marx' Entwicklung von revolutionären Demokraten zum Kommunisten* (Berlin: Dietz, 1960), p. 132.

[86] D. I. Rosenberg, *Die Entwicklung der ökonomischen Lehre von Marx und Engels in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Dietz, 1958).

[87] The essay 'Per una giusta comprensione del pensiero di Antonio Labriola' ['For a correct understanding of the thought of Antonio Labriola'], published for the first time in 1964 in *Rinascita*, the theoretical journal of the Italian Communist Party, contains a statement that shows how the importance of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] had become apparent also to Marxists such as Togliatti who were linked to the Soviet Union. In his view, the Paris manuscripts had 'opened the way to the critique of bourgeois society as a whole, which would be carried through in works in later years and culminate in *Capital*, but which may be said to have already been largely complete. … Despite its form, which is not simple, one feels that the whole of Marxism is already contained here' (in *Sur le jeune Marx*, op. cit., pp. 48–49). By contrast, Galvano Della Volpe argued in *Rousseau e Marx* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1956) that the main work of Marx's youth was not the Paris manuscripts of 1844 (a kind of economic–philosophical 'author's notebook') but the [*Critique of Hegel's* Philosophy of Right], which contained 'the general premises of a new philosophical method' (p. 150).

about a possible non-systematic reading of Marx's text. Pajitnov, for example, argued that in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*]:

> Marx's fundamental ideas are still taking shape, and, together with noteworthy formulations in which the new worldview is present *in nuce*, there are very often unripe thoughts that bear the mark of the theoretical sources that served as material for Marx's reflection, and which he took as his starting point for the elaboration of his doctrine.[88]

However, the stance of many authors in the collection was rather problematic. Unlike the interpretations in vogue at the time in France, which sought to rethink the concepts of *Capital* through the categories of the early works, the Soviet researchers generally made the opposite mistake: they analysed the early works on the basis of Marx's later theoretical development. As Althusser saw in his review of this volume, also entitled 'The Young Marx' and later republished as a chapter in *For Marx*, they read the early works through the filter of the texts of his maturity.[89] This kind of anticipation of Marx's thought prevented them from fully understanding the significance of his theoretical analyses in his earlier period:

> Of course, we now know that the Young Marx *did* become Marx, but we should not want to live faster than he did, we should not want to live in his place, reject for him or discover for him. We shall not be waiting for him at the end of the course to throw round him as round a runner the mantle of repose, for at last it is over, he has arrived.[90]

Quite different in nature was the work of Walter Tuchscheerer. In fact, his book *Before Capital*, published posthumously in 1968, was the best of the studies of the economic thought of the young Marx to appear in the Eastern bloc countries, critically examining for the first time the Paris notebooks of extracts alongside the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*].[91]

While the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] made slow headway in the canons of dialectical materialism ('Diamat' in Soviet parlance), and only after facing a great deal of ideological and political resistance, their reception in the English-speaking countries experienced a similar delay. In fact, the first translation to arouse a discreet interest appeared only in 1961, in the United States. The cultural and political climate of the times, still marked by the oppressive wave of MacCarthyism, probably influenced the publisher's decision to feature the name of Erich Fromm in the title and to print the text only after his long introductory essay presenting it as 'Marx's main philosophical work'[92] and arguing that 'the concept of alienation was and remained the focal point in the thinking of the young Marx who wrote the *Economical and Philosophical Manuscripts*, and the "old" Marx who

[88] Léonide Pajitnov, 'Les Manuscrits économico–philosophiques de 1844', in *Sur le jeune Marx*, op. cit., p. 98.
[89] Althusser, *For Marx*, op. cit., pp. 56f.
[90] Ibid., p. 70.
[91] Walter Tuchscheerer, *Bevor 'Das Kapital' entstand: die Entstehung der ökonomischen Theorie von Karl Marx* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1973).
[92] Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1961), p. iv.

wrote *Capital*'.[93] Numerous studies repeating this position appeared over a short period in the United States, invariably stressing Marx's intellectual debt to Hegel.[94] However, there were also discordant voices which, sometimes in order to challenge the excessive emphasis on the 1844 sketches, went too far in the opposite direction. Daniel Bell, for example, argued that the insistent twinning of Marx and Hegel was 'only further myth-making', since, 'having found the answer to the "mysteries" of Hegel in political economy, Marx promptly forgot all about philosophy'.[95]

One of the main books in this connection was Robert Tucker's *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (1961), which argued that there was 'a continuity of [Marx's] thought from the early writings to *Capital*'[96] and a 'centrality of the alienation theme throughout'.[97] So sure was he of this that he could write:

> The explicit philosophy of alienation presented in the early writings was Marx's final contribution to the subject. … the development of Marx's thought from the early philosophical to the later mythic stage was prefigured in the manuscripts of 1844 themselves. *Capital* was the logical fruition of all his thought from the beginning.[98]

In the 1960s and 1970s, most of the Anglo-American interpreters of Marx leaned toward this thesis. Thus, although there was no link between the early Paris notes of a young researcher barely 26 years old and the magnum opus published a quarter of a century later, David McLellan felt able to state in *Marx before Marxism* (1970) that 'during the summer of 1844, Marx began to compose a critique of political economy that was, in effect, the first of several drafts preceding *Capital* in 1867'.[99] And he concluded that 'the early writings contain all the subsequent themes of Marx's thought and show them in the making'.[100]

Bertell Ollman's *Alienation*, published in 1971 and destined to be one of the most influential writings in the 'Young Marx' debate, also adopted a favourable attitude to the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*]. He wrote: 'I do not emphasize alterations in Marx's thinking because I do not see many there, especially when

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[93] Ibid., p. 50. It is striking that this book, which aims to synthesize Marx's thought as a whole (not only his early work), has no more than six references to *Capital*, compared with 36 to the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*]. A similar point could be made about quite a few authors during this period. To appreciate how widespread this tendency was, we might also quote such a rigorous researcher as István Mészáros: 'In discussing Marx's theory of alienation the centre of analysis must be, needless to say, the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.' *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London: Merlin Press, 1975), p. 24.

[94] The precursor of this tendency was Sidney Hook, in his *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx* (London: Gollancz, 1933).

[95] Daniel Bell, 'The 'Rediscovery' of Alienation: Some Notes along the Quest for the Historical', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 56:24 (1959), pp. 935 and 944.

[96] Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (London: Transaction, 2001), p. 7.

[97] Ibid., 169.

[98] Ibid., p. 238. Three years earlier, Raya Dunayevskaya had put forward a very similar argument in *Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 until Today* (London: Pluto Press, 1975): 'What Marx expressed in the early writings is the essence of Marxism as it was to remain and develop through the remaining thirty-nine years of his life. Marxism became richer, of course […, but] nothing from his early Humanism was ever jettisoned by him when at another period, he called it communism' (p. 64).

[99] McLellan, *Marx before Marxism*, op. cit., p. 162.

[100] Ibid., p. 256.

compared to the essential unity in Marxism from 1844 on.[101] … Even in the published version of *Capital*, there is much more of Marx's 'earlier' ideas and concepts than is generally recognized.'[102]

This thesis became very widely accepted everywhere, except among those under the hegemony of the Althusserian school. A version of it may be found in the work of the West German author Iring Fetscher, for example. One of the arguments of his book *Marx and Marxism* (1967) is:

> The critical categories that Marx developed in the *Philosophic and Economic Manuscripts* and in his notebooks of the mid-forties … are still the basis of the critique of political economy in the *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (1857–1858) as well as in *Capital* (1867) and were never disavowed by the old Marx. In other words [… not only does] an interpretation of the early writings help us to recognize the motives which led Marx to write a critique of political economy (*Capital*); but … the critique of political economy implicitly and, in part, even explicitly, still contains that same critique of alienation and reification which was the very topic of his early writings.[103]

In 1968 the Israeli scholar Shlomo Avineri brought out his *The Political and Social Thought of Karl Marx*, which opposed 'the totally unacceptable attitude sometimes taken by those who write off—according to preference—either the "young" or the "old£ Marx as wholly irrelevant'.[104] Two years later István Mészáros, a pupil of Lukács who had left Hungary to teach in England, also argued for the essential unity of Marx's thought. One of his merits was to insist that 'the rejection of the "young Marx versus mature Marx" dichotomy does not mean the denial of Marx's intellectual development. What is turned down is the dramatized idea of a radical reversal of his position in the aftermath of the *Manuscripts of 1844*'.[105] However, Mészáros fell into a twofold error. The first was to consider the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] as 'a coherent system of ideas', as 'Marx's first comprehensive system'.[106] Instead of suggesting to him something preliminary and incomplete, the fragmentary character of Marx's Paris manuscripts seemed to mark it out as 'one of the most complex and difficult works of philosophical literature'.[107] Indeed, according to Mészáros, 'as Marx proceeds with his critical inquiry in the *Paris Manuscripts*, the depth of his insight and the unparalleled coherence of his ideas become more and more evident'.[108] They seem to him to have 'adequately anticipated the later Marx', so that the 'concept of "transcendence (*Aufhebung*) of labour's self-alienation" provides the essential link with the totality

[101] Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. xiv.
[102] Ibid., p. xv.
[103] Fetscher, op. cit., p. 9.
[104] Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 13.
[105] Mészáros, op. cit., p. 232.
[106] Ibid., p. 17.
[107] Ibid., p. 11.
[108] Ibid., p. 20.

of Marx's work, including the last works of the so-called "mature Marx".'[109] He concludes:

> With the elaboration of [… the] concepts [of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*—M.M.], Marx's system *in statu nascendi* is virtually brought to its accomplishment. His radical ideas concerning the world of alienation and the conditions of its supersession are now coherently synthesized within the general outlines of a monumental, comprehensive vision. … All further concretizations and modifications of Marx's conception—including some major discoveries of the older Marx—are realized on the conceptual basis of the great philosophical achievements so clearly in evidence in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.[110]

Adam Schaff, one of the most influential Marxists in the 'socialist camp' to address Marx's early writings with intense interest and an open mind, committed a similar mistake. In his *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon*, published in 1977, he correctly opposed 'the various attempts to construct a theory of "two Marxes",'[111] but, while underlining that only the [*Grundrisse*] finally grasped the 'distinction between objectification and alienation … in their historical conditioning', he wrongly asserted that 'an embryo even of the concept of commodity fetishism … is to be found in the *Manuscripts*'.[112]

The dissemination of the [*Grundrisse*], beginning in Germany in 1953[113] and spreading to the rest of Europe and North America in the late 1960s, shifted the attention of researchers and political militants from Marx's early writings to this 'new' unpublished text. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, when work on Marx's thought became much rarer, a few studies did appear on the Hegel–Marx relationship that stressed the importance of the Paris manuscripts.[114] More recently, proving that their fascination is still alive, new studies have appeared that again take up the work of interpreting those theoretically dazzling pages from 1844.[115]

7. Superiority, Break or Continuity?

Whatever their academic discipline or political affiliation, interpreters of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] may be divided into three groups. The

[109] Ibid., 23.
[110] Ibid., pp. 112–113.
[111] Adam Schaff, *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 49.
[112] Ibid., p. 102.
[113] The first edition of 1939–1942 remained almost unknown: see Ernst Theodor Mohl, 'Germany, Austria and Switzerland' and Lyudmila L. Vasina, 'Russia and the Soviet Union' in *Karl Marx's Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy 150 Years Later*, edited by Marcello Musto (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 189–201 and 202–212.
[114] The books worthy of note during this period include: Solange Mercier-Josa, *Pour lire Hegel et Marx* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1980) and *Retour sur le jeune Marx. Deux études sur le rapport de Marx à Hegel* (Paris: Meridiens Klincksieck, 1986); Christopher J. Arthur, *Dialectics of Labour. Marx and His Relation to Hegel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); and Nasir Khan, *Development of the Concept and Theory of Alienation in Marx's Writings. March 1843 to August 1844* (Oslo: Solum, 1995).
[115] Takahisa Oishi, *The Unknown Marx* (London: Pluto, 2001); and Jean-Louis Lacascade, *Les métamorphoses du jeune Marx* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002).

first consists of all those who, in counterposing the Paris manuscripts to *Capital*, stress the theoretical pre-eminence of the former work. A second group attaches little significance in general to the manuscripts, while a third tends toward the thesis that there is a theoretical continuum between them and *Capital*.[116]

Those who assumed a split between the 'young' and the 'mature' Marx, argued for the greater theoretical richness of the former, presented the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] as his most valuable text and sharply differentiated it from his later works. In particular, they tended to marginalize *Capital* often without studying it in any depth—a book altogether more demanding than the 20-odd pages on alienated labour in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], about which almost all advanced various philosophical cogitations. The originators of this line of interpretation were Landshut and Meyer, shortly followed by Henri de Man. In casting Marx's thought as an ethical–humanist doctrine, these authors pursued the political objective of opposing the rigid orthodoxy of 1930s Soviet Marxism and contesting its hegemony within the workers' movement. This theoretical offensive resulted in something very different, tending to enlarge the potential field of Marxist theory.[117] Although the formulations were often hazy and generic, Marxism was no longer considered merely as an economic determinist theory and began to exert a greater attraction for large numbers of intellectuals and young people.

This approach began to make headway soon after the publication in 1932 of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and continued to win converts until the late 1950s, partly thanks to the explosive effect of a new text so unlike the dominant canon of Marxism. Its main sponsors were a motley group of heterodox Marxists, progressive Christians and existentialist philosophers,[118] who interpreted Marx's economic writings as a step back from what they saw as the centrality of the human person in his early theories. After the Second World War, the main figures were Thier, Poppitz and Hommes in Germany and—although they did not clearly endorse the claim to superiority of the 1844 manuscripts—Merleau-Ponty, Bigo, Calvez and Axelos in France and Fromm in the United States. Raymond Aron, who in 1968 took sharp issue with those who saw the manuscripts as the centre of gravity of Marxism, perfectly summed up their most striking paradox: 'Twenty years ago, Latin Quarter orthodoxy regarded the *Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* as the last word in Marxist philosophy, even though, if one sticks to the texts, Marx himself ridiculed the language and types of analysis he had adopted in his early works.'[119]

The second group of interpreters regarded the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] as a transitional text of no special significance in the development of Marx's thought. Since Adoratskii's preface to the 1932 MEGA edition, this was the most widely

[116] Other surveys of the literature on the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] may be found in Aldo Zanardo, *Filosofia e socialismo* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1974), in the chapter entitled 'Il giovane Marx e il marxismo contemporaneo', pp. 421–551; Mandel, op. cit., pp. 206ff.; and Jürgen Rojahn, 'Il caso dei cosiddetti "manoscritti economico-filosofici dell'anno 1844"', *Passato e Presente*, 3 (1983), pp. 39–46.

[117] See Schaff, *Marxism and the Human Individual*, op. cit., p. 5.

[118] See Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth*, op. cit., p. 168.

[119] Aron, op. cit., p. 285.

read account in the Soviet Union and its later satellite countries. The failure of the manuscripts to mention the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', together with the presence of themes such as human alienation and the exploitation of labour, which highlighted some of the most glaring contradictions of 'actually existing socialism', led to their ostracization at the top of the ruling Communist parties. Not by chance were they excluded from editions of the works of Marx and Engels in various countries of the 'socialist bloc'.[120] Moreover, many of the authors in question wholly endorsed Lenin's definition of the stages in the development of Marx's thought—an approach later canonized by Marxism–Leninism, which, apart from being in many respects theoretically and politically questionable, made it impossible to account for Marx's important work newly published for the first time eight years after the death of the Bolshevik leader.

As the influence of the Althusserian school grew in the 1960s, this reading also became popular in France and elsewhere in Western Europe. Yet, although its basic tenets are generally attributed to Althusser alone, the seeds were already there in Naville, that is, the belief that Marxism was a science and that Marx's early works, still imbued with the language and preoccupations of Left Hegelianism, marked a stage prior to the birth of a 'new science' in *Capital*.[121] For Althusser, as we have seen, the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] represented the Marx most distant from Marxism.

A philologically unfounded counterposition of Marx's early writings to the critique of political economy is shared by dissident or 'revisionist' Marxists eager to prioritize the former and by orthodox Communists focused on the 'mature Marx'. Between them, they contributed to one of the principal misunderstandings in the history of Marxism: the myth of the 'Young Marx'.[122]

The third and last group of interpreters of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] consists of those who, from different political and theoretical standpoints, identify a substantive continuity in Marx's work. Going back to Marcuse or Lukács in German and Hyppolite or Rubel in French, this approach became hegemonic in the English-speaking world through the work of Tucker, McLellan and Ollman, then spread to most other parts of the world more widely from the late 1960s on, as the writings of Fetscher, Avineri, Mészáros and Schaff testify. The idea of an essential Marxian continuum, as opposed to a sharp theoretical break that completely discarded all that came before, was the inspiration for some of the best interpretations of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], such as the non-dogmatic works

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[120] Apart from the previously mentioned context of the USSR and GDR, see Stanislav Hubik, 'Czechoslovakia', in Marcello Musto (ed.), *Karl Marx's Grundrisse*, op. cit., which recalls (on p. 241) that the Czech *Capital* had a print run of 50,000 and the complete works of Marx and Engels between 15,000 and 20,000, whereas the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] was printed in only 4000 copies (p. 241). Hungary and Yugoslavia were exceptions in this general panorama, since the official Marxism was less dogmatic than elsewhere in Eastern Europe and presented less of an obstacle to the introduction of the critical ideas in the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] and the [*Grundrisse*]. See, e.g., Giovanni Ruggeri (ed.), *La rivolta del 'Praxis'* (Milan: Longanesi 1969).

[121] See Henri Lefebvre, *Marx* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972), pp. 24 and 26.

[122] This counterposition also gave rise to conflicts about the terminology and fundamental concepts of Marxian theory—for example, historical materialism versus historicism, or exploitation versus alienation. Cf. Aron, op. cit., p. 129.

of Lefebvre and Mandel that could appreciate its value with all of its contradictions and incompleteness. Even then, however, there were a number of errors of interpretation—most notably, in certain authors, an underestimation of Marx's huge advances of the 1850s and 1860s in the field of political economy. This went together with a diffuse tendency to reconstruct Marx's thought through collections of quotations, without taking any account of the different periods in which the source texts had been written. All too often, the result was an author assembled out of pieces corresponding to the interpreter's particular vision, passing backwards and forwards from [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] to *Capital*, as if Marx's work were a single timeless and undifferentiated text.[123]

Underlining the importance of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] for a better understanding of Marx's development cannot involve drawing a veil of silence over the huge limits of this youthful text. Its author had scarcely begun to assimilate the basic concepts of political economy, and his conception of communism was no more than a confused synthesis of the philosophical studies he had undertaken until then. Captivating as they are, especially in the way they combine philosophical ideas of Hegel and Feuerbach with a critique of classical economic theory and a denunciation of working-class alienation, the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] are only a very first approximation, as is evident from their vagueness and eclecticism. They shed major light on the course Marx took, but an enormous distance still separates them from the themes and argument not only of the finished 1867 edition of *Capital* Volume 1, but also of the preparatory manuscripts for *Capital*, one of them published, that he drafted from the late 1850s on.

In contrast to analyses that either play up a distinctive 'Young Marx' or try to force a theoretical break in his work, the most incisive readings of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] have known how to treat them as an interesting, but only initial, stage in Marx's critical trajectory. Had he not continued his researches but remained with the concepts of the Paris manuscripts, he would probably have been demoted to a place alongside Bauer and Feuerbach in the sections of philosophy manuals devoted to the Hegelian Left.[124] Instead, decades of political activity, uninterrupted study and constant critical work on hundreds of volumes of political economy, history and other disciplines turned the young scholar of 1844 into one of the most brilliant minds in the history of humanity. As a result, the first stages of his theoretical progress, prominently featuring the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], acquired a significance that would stimulate whole generations of readers and researchers.

[123] See the critical points made in this connection by Schaff and Aron. For the former, 'Marx's texts from the 1840s cannot be quoted indiscriminately alongside those from the 1870s, as if they carried equal weight for our knowledge of Marxism and had an equal right of abode in our analysis' (Schaff, *Marxism and the Human Individual*, op. cit., p. 28, transl. modified). For the latter, 'In the years after the war, during the existentialist period, the Jesuit priests Bigo and Calvez and the existentialists treated the whole of Marxist thought as an atemporal whole, some using texts from 1845, others from 1867, as if Marx's thought did not develop, as if the rough copy of 1844 (not even finished, still less published) contained the best of Marxism' (Schaff, *D'une Sainte Famille à l'autre*, op. cit., p. 223).

[124] Schaff, *Marxism and the Human Individual*, op. cit., p. 28.

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Appendix: Main Editions of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] from 1927 to 1998[125]

1. 1927. In *Arkhiv Marksa i Engel'sa*, Volume III. Translation of part of the 'third' manuscript entitled *Preparatory Work for* The Holy Family.
2. 1929. In *La Revue Marxiste*, with the titles *Notes sur le communisme et la propriété privée* and *Notes sur les besoins, la production et la division du travail*. Translated from the Russian of no. 1 by Albert Mesnil.
3. 1929. In *K. Marks i F. Engel's Sochineniya*, Volume III. Same version as no. 1.
4. 1931. In *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*, Volume V. First publication in German of the fragment *Kritik der Hegelschen Dialektik und der Philosophie überhaupt*.
5. 1932. Under the title *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie*, in Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus. Die Frühschriften*, edited by Siegfried Landshut and Jacob Peter Mayer.
6. 1932. In MEGA, Volume III, ed. by Viktor Adoratskii, with the title *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*. This edition also included the notebooks of extracts from Levasseur, Engels, Say, Skarbek, Smith, Ricardo, Mill, MacCulloch, de Tracy and de Boisguillebert.
7. 1932. First partial Japanese translation. This version included the fragment [*Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole*] from the 'third' manuscript and the section [*Wages*] from the 'first' manuscript.
8. 1937. In *Oeuvres philosophiques*, Volume VI, entitled *Manuscrits économico-philosophiques de 1844*. The translation, by Jules Molitor, was based on the Landshut–Mayer edition (no. 5).
9. 1946. First Japanese translation, by Togo Kusaka.
10. 1947. In *La Revue Socialiste*. Translation by Maximilien Rubel of two fragments from the 'first' manuscript not previously published in French.
11. 1947. In *Three Essays by Karl Marx. Selected from the Economic Philosophical Manuscripts*, translation by Ria Stone. First partial English translation from the MEGA.
12. 1949. Italian translation, *Manoscritti economico-filosofici del 1844*, by Norberto Bobbio from the MEGA edition.
13. 1950. Italian translation, *Manoscritti economico-filosofici del 1844*, by Galvano della Volpe.
14. 1953. Revised edition of the 1932 text *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie*, edited by Landshut e Mayer (no. 5).
15. 1953. *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*. New Dietz Verlag edition, with important corrections of MEGA transcription errors in parts of the 'third' manuscript.
16. 1955. In *Kleine ökonomische Schriften*. Edition containing corrections of the main inaccuracies in the MEGA version.
17. 1956. First edition in Chinese.
18. 1956. *Iz rannikh proizvedennii*. Russian translation from the MEGA version.
19. 1956. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. English translation by Martin Milligan from the Russian version (no. 18).
20. 1960. Spanish translation from the English version (no. 19).
21. 1962. *Manuscripts de 1844*. Translation by Émile Bottigelli from the MEGA version, incorporating corrections from the editions in nos 15 and 16.
22. 1962. In *Marx-Studienausgabe*, Volume I. Edited by Hans-Joachim Lieber and Peter Furth.
23. 1966. In *Texte zu Methode und Praxis*. Edited by Günther Hillmann. Version very similar to no. 22.
24. 1968. *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, edited by Joachim Höppner. Edition following Marx's own pagination of the three manuscripts, with the addition of his remarks on the text by James Mill.
25. 1968. In *Marx–Engels Werke*. Edition based on the MEGA version, incorporating the revisions in no. 16.

[125] This bibliographical note takes account of the list of editions of the [*Economic–Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*] up to 1982 published in *Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels. Das elende der klassischen deutschen Philosophie. Bibliographie*, edited by Bert Andréas (Trier: Schriften aus dem Karl-Marx-Haus, 1983), pp. 64–72.

26. 1968. In *Oeuvres. Économie. II*. Translation by Maximilien Rubel. This version, which appeared with the title *Ébauche d'une critique de l'économie politique*, was based on the MEGA edition and also included the *Notes de lecture* (that is, Marx's comments on works he read during his period in Paris).
27. 1974. Publication of the text in the second *K. Marks i F. Engel's Sochineniya*, Volume XLII.
28. 1975. Publication of the text in *Marx–Engels Collected Works*, Volume III.
29. 1976. Publication of the Della Volpe version (no. 13)—and of the remarks on James Mill—in *Marx Engels Opere*, Volume III.
30. 1981. In MEGA², Volume IV/2: first publication of the extracts from Senofonte, Prevost, Schüz, List, Osiander and Buret.
31. 1982. *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* in MEGA², Volume I/2. The edition contained two versions of the text, one respecting the exact page sequence of the original manuscripts, the other following the repagination generally used by previous editions.
32. 1990. *La scoperta dell'economia politica*. Partial Italian translation of Marx's comments in the Paris notebooks of extracts.
33. 1998. MEGA² Volume IV/3: first publication of the extracts from Law and Lauderdale.