

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

Introduction

I did not originally set out to write a study of the young Karl Marx. The roots of the present volume lie in a broader, and rather different, project which I subsequently abandoned.¹ When I should really have been reading other things, I found myself returning again and again to Marx's early writings. The allure of these texts may not be immediately apparent. After all, they have been described accurately as 'a number of meagre, obscure, and often unfinished texts which contain some of Marx's most elusive ideas'.²

Nevertheless, the writings of the young Marx seemed to me to possess two signal properties: they were *suggestive*, that is, they gave the impression of containing ideas worthy of further consideration; and they were *opaque*, that is, their meaning was far from transparent. It was these characteristics which led eventually to the writing of the present volume. In attempting to understand works which I found interesting but unclear, I hoped to reach a sounder judgement of their worth.

THE 'DISCOVERY' OF THE EARLY WRITINGS

Not everyone has been similarly beguiled by these early writings. They certainly failed to attract much attention from Marx's own contemporaries. Several of the most important of these texts, including the *Kritik* and the *Manuskripte*, were not written for publication, and their existence was discovered only after Marx's death. Other works were published at the time, but in radical periodicals with small and uncertain circulations. Marx's article 'Zur Judenfrage', for example, was published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, a journal of which only one (double) edition ever appeared, in a print-run of one thousand copies of which some eight hundred seem to

¹ A fragment of that earlier project – which was concerned with certain aspects of left-Hegelianism – appears in the introduction and apparatus of Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, ed. David Leopold (Cambridge, 1995).

² John Plamenatz, *Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man* (Oxford, 1975) p. 33.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)

have been seized by the authorities.³ At the time, none of these published works attracted either popular or critical acclaim on any scale.

The only writings from the early 1840s which were subsequently reprinted during Marx's lifetime were two pieces of his earliest journalism, which pre-date the early writings as defined here (a somewhat narrow definition elaborated below). These two articles on contemporary German conditions – a comment on the latest Prussian censorship instructions, and a report of the debate concerning freedom of the press in the Sixth Rhineland Diet (both written in 1842) – were reprinted by Hermann Becker under the seemingly inflated title *Gesammelte Aufsätze von Karl Marx* (1851). The rarity of this emaciated 'collection' would be hard to exaggerate. It appears that only a handful of copies were ever printed and that these were never distributed outside of Cologne. (Only recently has the provenance of this exceptionally scarce volume become clearer.⁴)

With this lone, partial, and underwhelming exception, neither Marx nor any of his contemporaries showed much interest in rescuing the early writings from the obscurity into which they had almost immediately fallen. Although he preserved his study notebooks from this period, Marx appears to have been less than assiduous in keeping copies of his own published writings. The 1840s were a turbulent, as well as highly formative, period in his life, during which Marx lived in three different countries – Germany, France, and Belgium – before finally settling into (permanent) exile in England (arriving in August 1849). It is, nonetheless, surprising to discover that he had failed to retain a copy of his first book – *Die heilige Familie* (written jointly with Friedrich Engels, and published in February 1845). It was 1867 before he acquired his own copy, presented by Ludwig Kugelmann (a gynaecologist and communist living in Hanover), who, Marx reported to Engels, 'has in his possession a far better collection of our works than the two of us together'.⁵ As late as 1892, Engels was having to contact Kugelmann in search of the more *recherché* of Marx's publications.⁶

³ These estimates are from Hal Draper, *The Marx–Engels Cyclopedia*, volume 1: *The Marx–Engels Chronicle* (New York, 1985) p. 16. See also Maximilien Rubel and Margaret Manale, *Marx Without Myth: A Chronological Study of His Life and Work* (Oxford, 1975) p. 38.

⁴ Evidence now suggests that it was a hastily printed and poorly distributed fascicle, comprising one fifth of the first volume of a projected two-volume set. Police action against Cologne communists prevented the completion of the project. The rest of the first volume was to have included the bulk of Marx's contributions to the *Rheinische Zeitung*. The precise contents of the intended second volume are not certain. See *MEGA*® 1, 1, pp. 976–9.

⁵ Marx to Engels, 24 April 1867, *MEW* 31, p. 290; *MECW* 42, p. 360. 'I was pleasantly surprised', Marx continues, 'to find that we have no need to feel ashamed of the piece.'

⁶ See Engels to August Bebel, 26 September 1892, *MEW* 38, p. 475; *MECW* 49, p. 543; and Engels to Ludwig Kugelmann, 4 October 1892, *MEW* 38, p. 485; *MECW* 50, p. 3.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

A sustained and coordinated effort to publish some of Marx's out-of-print and unpublished writings did take place following his death in 1883. It was directed by Engels, not only Marx's closest collaborator, his literary executor, and a highly respected figure in the burgeoning international socialist movement, but also – in his own estimation – the only 'living soul' who could decipher Marx's notorious handwriting.⁷ However, Engels devoted most of his declining editorial energies to the remaining volumes of *Capital* and to new editions of those (usually previously published) texts which offered clear and relevant practical guidance to the European socialist movement. The works of the young Marx were adjudged not to fulfil those criteria. (The so-called 'Thesen über Feuerbach' were published, but these form part of Marx's preparatory work on *Die deutsche Ideologie*, and so fall outside the 'early writings' as defined here.) Indeed, Engels appears to have considered the early writings to be of rather limited significance.⁸ Even where their content was of some interest, he maintained that the 'semi-Hegelian language' of works from this period was 'untranslatable' and – even in the original German – had lost 'the greater part of its meaning'.⁹ He resisted proposals for a French translation of the 'Kritik: Einleitung', and dismissed the language of the 'Briefwechsel von 1853' as 'incomprehensible'.¹⁰

At the beginning of the twentieth century – as a result, in part, of Marx's apparent lack of interest and Engels's considered disapproval – even the most dedicated admirer of Marx's writings would not have known of the existence of, let alone have read, the overwhelming majority of the texts which are considered in the present volume. At most, such an admirer might have heard of *Die heilige Familie*, but never have seen a copy of it.

The first serious effort at unearthing Marx's early writings began with the publication in 1902 of Franz Mehring's collection *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, und Ferdinand Lassalle*. However, this edition included only previously published works by the young

⁷ Marx to Pytor Lavrov, 5 February 1884, *MEW* 36, p. 99; *MECW* 47, p. 93. See also Engels to Karl Kautsky, 28 January 1889, *MEW* 37, p. 144; *MECW* 48, pp. 258–9. Kurt Müller, who learnt graphology in a Nazi prison, subsequently compiled the 'Müller Primer' to help editors decipher Marx's script.

⁸ See, for example, Alexis Voden, 'Talks With Engels', Institute of Marxism-Leninism (ed.), *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow, n.d.) pp. 330–2.

⁹ Engels to Florence Kelley-Wischnewetzky, 25 February 1886, *MEW* 36, p. 452; *MECW* 47, p. 416. The quoted remarks concern his own *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, but Engels maintained that Marx's early writings suffered the same limitations.

¹⁰ See Engels to Laura Lafargue, 14 October 1893, *MEW* 39, p. 146; *MECW* 50, p. 21; and Engels to Wilhelm Liebknecht, 18 December 1890, *MEW* 37, p. 527; *MECW* 49, pp. 93–4.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Marx (such as *Die heilige Familie* and articles from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*).¹¹

It was 1927 before the early writings began to appear more fully, as part of the *Marx–Engels Gesamtausgabe* edition (henceforth *MEGA*Ⓢ) directed by David Ryazanov – a figure of enormous importance in the history of the collection, preservation, and publication of the work of Marx and Engels.¹² Ryazanov published scholarly versions of many of the works of the young Marx discussed here (including the *Kritik*, the *Manuskripte*, and the *Auszüge aus James Mill*). However, in the early 1930s, whilst still in its initial stages, this project was effectively cancelled (and copies of the published volumes subsequently proved difficult to locate). The most important of Marx's early writings were now in print, but they could scarcely be described as widely available.

The wider dissemination of the young Marx's work, and the publication of early writings omitted by *MEGA*Ⓢ, was a leisurely and uneven process. For example, satisfactory editions of the *Manuskripte* appeared in English only in 1956, and in French in 1962. (Earlier translations existed, but they were either incomplete or problematic in some respect.¹³) A central element in the wider story here is the emergence of a new *Marx–Engels Gesamtausgabe* (henceforth *MEGA*Ⓢ), whose first volumes appeared in 1975. Not the least important contribution of this new edition was the commitment to include, for the first time, all of his extant study notebooks. It was Marx's lifelong habit to make excerpts from the books that he was reading, occasionally interspersing his own remarks and criticisms. (Some two hundred of these study notebooks have been preserved.) Notwithstanding many difficulties and some significant editorial changes, the *MEGA*Ⓢ project continues today. It was placed under the 'non-Soviet' managerial auspices of the Internationale Marx-Engels Stiftung (IMES) in 1990, and the first volumes under that new regime were published in 1998. It is scarcely an exaggeration to claim that detailed textual knowledge of the early writings is still in a process of evolution: some interesting texts have only recently been

¹¹ These are the only early writings mentioned in the bibliography attached to Lenin's famous *Granat Encyclopaedia* article 'Karl Marx' (1913). V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, volume 21 (Moscow, 1964) pp. 41–91. This article has been identified as the best indicator of the availability of Marx's works before 1914. See Eric J. Hobsbawm, 'The Fortunes of Marx and Engels's Writings', Eric J. Hobsbawm (ed.), *The History of Marxism*, volume 1: *Marxism in Marx's Day* (Bloomington IN, 1982) p. 332.

¹² See Rolf Hecker (ed.), *David Borisovic Rjazanov und die erste MEGA* (Berlin, 1997).

¹³ The 1962 French translation by Emile Bottigelli, for example, was preceded by the Molitor translation, which was not based on the *MEGA*Ⓢ arrangement of the text and omitted the 'first manuscript'. The 1936 English translation by Martin Milligan was preceded by a version by Ria Stone, which – whatever its merits (I have been unable to obtain a copy) – circulated only in mimeographed form.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

5

published;¹⁴ the occasional piece of correspondence is still discovered;¹⁵ some familiar items have been expelled from the corpus;¹⁶ and certain textual disputes remain without definitive resolution.¹⁷

THEIR CONTESTED STATUS

The main purpose of this abbreviated history is to underline the late appearance of the early writings. It was some fifty years after Marx's death before the bulk of the early writings appeared properly in print. Moreover, the circumstances in which the work of the young Marx was first published and circulated were not entirely propitious. In particular, it occurred at a time when Marxism was increasingly identified with the Soviet experience and with the approved or 'orthodox' body of theory that had begun to solidify around it. That authorised version of Marxism found it difficult to incorporate the language and concerns of the early writings into its systematic world view. The unease of Stalinism with any intellectual work outside of those official parameters was reflected in the fate of the original *MEGA*® project. Following the effective cancellation of this edition, many of its original staff 'disappeared'. Ryazanov himself was first exiled to Saratov, then allowed to return to Moscow after 1934, only to be re-arrested during the great purges, accused of 'Trotskyism', and executed in 1938. This Soviet unease continued in a variety of less dramatic forms. As recently as the 1960s, for example, the collected *Marx Engels Werke* (edited from Moscow and Berlin) posted a symbolic health warning on the early writings by relegating most of them to an unnumbered 'Ergänzungsband', published outside of the chronological sequence of the other volumes.

Reflecting and reinforcing this hostile reaction, other, less conventional, voices took up the young Marx with enthusiasm, in part as a stick with which to beat that orthodoxy. In such quarters the publication of the early writings was welcomed as a significant event precisely because these works appeared to cast doubt on the authority of Soviet Marxism.

This sharply divided response to the early writings is illustrated by the publication of the *Manuskripte* in 1932. Having lain undisturbed for over

¹⁴ For example, the young Marx's notes on Rousseau's *Contrat social* (discussed in Chapter 4) appeared only in 1981.

¹⁵ See, for example, Marx to Wilhelm Saint-Paul, March 1843, *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch*, volume 1 (Berlin, 1978) pp. 328–9.

¹⁶ For example, the 1843 article 'Luther als Schiedsrichter zwischen Strauss und Feuerbach' is no longer held to be by Marx.

¹⁷ For example, there is a continuing disagreement about the status and editorial arrangement of the *Manuskripte*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)

eight decades, the *Manuskripte* now appeared in two competing German editions in the same year. The MEGA[©] version possessed greater textual authority, but the alternative volume had a significant interpretative impact.¹⁸ The editors of the latter – Siegfried Landshut and J. P. Mayer – maintained that the *Manuskripte* revealed the previously hidden thread that ran throughout Marx's entire output, allowing his later work to be understood properly for the first time, and casting doubt on received accounts of its meaning.¹⁹

This enthusiastic embrace of the apparent heterodoxy of the early writings was repeated in a variety of different contexts. Consider the following two examples, separated by some thirty years and several thousand miles.

Herbert Marcuse would become one of the central figures in the intellectual movement now known as Western Marxism, but it was as an ambitious post-doctoral student of Martin Heidegger, at the University of Freiburg, that he wrote one of the first reviews of the *Manuskripte*. In his review for *Die Gesellschaft* (published in 1932), Marcuse insisted that this newly discovered text could not simply be slotted into existing readings of Marx, but rather required a fundamental revision of those received interpretations. The publication of the *Manuskripte*, Marcuse maintained, was a 'crucial event' precisely because it cast doubt on orthodox accounts of the 'meaning' of Marx's theoretical system, and, in particular, put the entire theory of 'scientific socialism' into question.²⁰ (The date of this review provides a striking reminder of wider historical events; within twelve months Hitler would be named Chancellor, Heidegger would enter the Nazi Party as Rector of the University, and Marcuse and his family would have abandoned Germany.)

In America in the late fifties and early sixties, the publication of an English translation of the *Manuskripte* generated a similar response, especially amongst those who would form part of the intellectual current subsequently known as the New Left. Marshall Berman has provided an evocative description of his excitement when, as a student at Columbia in 1959, he discovered the '*Kabbalah*' written by Marx 'before he became Karl Marx', and now available in English for the first time.²¹ Berman bought twenty

¹⁸ See Michael Maidan, 'The *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of the Paris Manuscripts', *History of European Ideas*, volume 12 (1990) pp. 767–81.

¹⁹ See Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus*, volume 1: *Die Frühschriften*, ed. Siegfried Landshut and J. P. Mayer (Leipzig, 1932) p. xiii. This edition omitted the 'first manuscript', and its organisation of the remaining text differed from that of MEGA[©].

²⁰ Herbert Marcuse, 'Neue Quellen zur Grundlegung des Historischen Materialismus', *Die Gesellschaft*, volume 2 (1932) pp. 136–7.

²¹ Marshall Berman, *Adventures in Marxism* (London, 1999) pp. 6–7.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

7

copies of this ‘great new product that would change the world’ as Hanukkah gifts for friends and family, revelling in the certainty that he had discovered ‘something special, something that would both rip up their lives and make them happy’.²² That ‘product’ was ‘Marx, but not communism’.²³ Berman’s reference to Kabbalah is not entirely frivolous. The early writings provided an alternative and esoteric vantage point, with its own sacred literature, which profoundly influenced subsequent generations; the *Manuskripte*, it might be said, became a second Bible to some, at least as venerated as *Kapital*, if not more so.

As the reactions of Marcuse and Berman illustrate, many welcomed the early writings precisely because they appeared to cast doubt on the authority of the orthodox Soviet account of Marx’s work. In this way, responses to the early writings became polarised from the very beginning. These texts had to be identified, *either* as rightly abandoned juvenilia, *or* as the long-lost key to a proper interpretation of Marx’s entire output. The relative merits of these two sets of disputants is not at issue here. The point is rather to draw attention to the way in which this *Rezeptionsgeschichte* – with its barely concealed political agenda – hampered the study of Marx’s intellectual evolution, and distorted the interpretation of the early writings. There are some serious and sophisticated contributions to this interpretative literature, but commentators have found it difficult to get beyond an explanatory framework which offers the impoverished alternative of ‘one Marx or two’ (the author, either of a coherent body of work whose real achievements are established in its early stages, or of a fractured corpus whose mature accomplishments rest on the abandonment of an earlier false start).²⁴ This simplistic and suspect dichotomy, together with the historical background which produced it, constitutes an ongoing ‘external’ obstacle to understanding the early writings which should not be underestimated.

Present circumstances are, of course, rather different. Whilst that ‘external’ obstacle to understanding undoubtedly still survives, the historical context which created and sustained it has been transformed. I am tempted to offer the optimistic conjecture that our own times might prove comparatively congenial to the serious evaluation of the nature and significance of Marx’s thought. (There is, at least, some early and anecdotal evidence

²² *Ibid.* p. 9. ²³ *Ibid.* p. 15.

²⁴ Althusser’s account, for example, whilst knowledgeable and stimulating, is framed around the implausible notion that a single fundamental division can make sense of Marx’s intellectual evolution. Althusser adopts and develops a series of concepts – *lecture symptomale*, *problématique*, and *coupure épistémologique* – whose primary purpose is to justify an ‘inventory of possibilities’ that he concedes ‘may well seem derisory’ (namely whether or not the young Marx was ‘already and wholly’ Marx). See Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London, 1969) p. 53.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)

of a normalisation of Marx scholarship within academia.) The existence of Soviet communism undoubtedly helped distort our knowledge of his work, and its subsequent collapse might provide an unexpected opportunity, not to bury Marx, but better to understand him.

ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES

Overcoming the distortions generated by the distinctive history of the early writings is not the only interpretative difficulty confronting students of the young Marx. These texts present a formidable variety of additional obstacles, including problems arising from the form, content, status, and polemical focus of these texts.

Perhaps the most obvious difficulty for modern readers is the style of Marx's prose. To adopt a quip made (in a different context) by Engels, all too often the young Marx wrote like 'a German philosopher', which is to say he wrote 'very badly'.²⁵ The language of the early writings can be difficult, largely because it reflects the intellectual currents and fashions of its time.²⁶ These wider historical difficulties are compounded by Marx's occasional enthusiasm for style at the expense of clarity in his own prose. Consider, for example, his use of chiasmus (the left-Hegelian Szeliga's talent is said to be 'not that of disclosing what is hidden (*Verborgne zu enthüllen*), but of hiding what is disclosed (*Enthüllte zu verbergen*)');²⁷ his use of paradiastole (the 'perfected Christian state' is said to be 'the atheist state');²⁸ and his use of contemporary allusion (a reference to the 'out-pourings of the heart (*Herzensergießungen*)' of Friedrich Wilhelm IV is unlikely to remind many modern readers of a collection of essays on art and music by Ludwig Tieck and Wilhelm Wackenroder).²⁹ I do not mean to suggest that Marx was never clear and precise, only that he was not always so. Indeed, the young Marx can sometimes appear keener to press such standards on others than he was to adopt them himself. Consider, for example, his caustic remark about the need to translate Hegel into

²⁵ 'Briefe aus London' 475/386. This comment was directed at Robert Owen, but, elsewhere, Engels identified 'bad, abstract, unintelligible and clumsy' forms of expression as a distinctive feature of the early development of socialist ideas in Germany. 'Fourier' 605/614.

²⁶ Marx subsequently recognised (some of) these limitations. See, for example, his sarcastic reference to the use of a term ('*Entfremdung*') which 'will be comprehensible to the philosophers'. *Die deutsche Ideologie* 34/48.

²⁷ *Die heilige Familie* 58/56. 'Szeliga' was the pseudonym adopted by the Prussian officer, and sometime left-Hegelian, Franz Zychlin von Zychlinsky.

²⁸ 'Zur Judenfrage' 357/156/222.

²⁹ 'Briefwechsel von 1843' 341/140/204. The book is the wonderfully titled *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

9

‘prose’;³⁰ his pointed criticism of Arnold Ruge for making ‘every object the occasion for stylistic exercises in public’;³¹ and his relentless ridiculing of Szeliga’s ‘dialectical reasoning’.³²

There are also problems with the content of the early writings. Some of the central ideas with which Marx is preoccupied – of alienation, ‘objectification’, self-realisation, and so forth – are difficult ones, even considered apart from his occasionally obscuring prose. Moreover, that problem of intrinsic complexity is compounded, for modern readers, at least, by the unfamiliarity of some of those concepts.

The status of many of the early writings also creates problems. These writings include published works, pieces intended for eventual publication but not published, and pieces never intended for publication. The assumption that these various texts should have equal authority is open to doubt. It might seem reasonable to attribute extra weight to those writings which constituted a public statement of Marx’s views.³³ However, the wider political context, including the complexities of contemporary censorship, complicates matters here, and published texts certainly cannot be assumed to include all that Marx might have wanted to say. Unpublished texts are no less problematic. Some of the most important of the early writings appear in study notebooks whose primary purpose was the clarification of Marx’s own ideas to himself. The problem here is not simply that Marx’s prose was never polished for public consumption, but rather that these texts are frequently part of an internal dialogue whose wider meaning is uncertain.

In addition, the polemical focus of these works creates problems for modern readers. It is a striking feature of the early writings that, almost without exception, Marx proceeds by criticising the writings of others. The *Kritik* is a critical commentary on Hegel’s *Rechtsphilosophie*; ‘Zur Judenfrage’ and *Die heilige Familie* are attacks on the work of Bruno Bauer; the ‘Kritische Randglossen’ is a polemic against Arnold Ruge’s journalism; and so on. This adversarial focus may say something about the young Marx’s personality and ambition – all of these targets were older and better known than himself – but it also demonstrates his characteristic way of working. Marx tended to develop his own ideas through a critical engagement with the writings of others, and this creates a number of interpretative difficulties for modern readers. In particular, one cannot rely on the young Marx himself

³⁰ *Kritik* 205/7/61. See also *ibid.* 215/16/72.

³¹ ‘Kritische Randglossen’ 405/202/416.

³² *Die heilige Familie* 67/64.

³³ See, for example, Keith Graham, *Karl Marx, Our Contemporary: Social Theory for a Post-Leninist World* (Toronto, 1992) p. 2.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-87477-9 - The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing

David Leopold

Excerpt

[More information](#)

for an accurate account of his critical targets.³⁴ This is largely the result of Marx taking the reader's knowledge of those critical targets for granted (and not, I think, of any systematic or deliberate attempt to mislead). Given his limited contemporary audience this was not an unreasonable attitude, but modern readers are obviously a very different matter. As a result, in what follows I provide (often extensive) accounts of several authors other than Marx, in particular of G. W. F. Hegel, Bruno Bauer, and Ludwig Feuerbach.³⁵ Without some knowledge of their work, it is not only impossible to understand and judge the success of Marx's criticisms, but also difficult to make sense of his own positive views. The latter have to be reconstructed, at least in part, from Marx's critical assessment of others.

HUMAN NATURE AND THE MODERN STATE

Thus far it might appear as if the present book were limited only by a particular – if (as yet) imprecisely specified – time frame. However, my remit is doubly restricted, bound by both chronology and content. Both of these constraints require some elaboration.

I have already referred to the first restriction (my limited chronological remit) noting, for example, the narrow definition of 'the young Marx' and 'the early writings' that is adopted here.³⁶ To be more precise, I use these expressions to refer to Marx (who was then in his mid-twenties) and the work that he produced (beginning with the 'Briefwechsel von 1843' and ending just before he began writing *Die deutsche Ideologie*) during a two-and-a-half-year period from March 1843 to September 1845. Of course, in adopting this nomenclature, I do not mean to deny the existence of perfectly plausible senses in which Marx was also 'young' in 1846, or his writings still 'early' in 1842. However, this is a close study of a chronologically limited group of writings and some economical way of referring to those texts and their author was required.

The second restriction concerns the content or subject matter of those texts. I am interested, not in all aspects of his early writings, but rather in the political thought of the young Marx. More precisely (if somewhat

³⁴ See David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (London, 1969) p. 51; and Allan Megill, *Karl Marx: The Burden of Reason (Why Marx Rejected Politics and the Market)* (Lanham MD, 2002) p. 156.

³⁵ To avoid confusion, Bauer's brothers – unlike Bruno himself – always appear with their first name attached.

³⁶ 'Narrow' since the early writings are often defined more broadly, typically as all of those works written in and before 1845. See, for example, Jonathan Wolff, *Why Read Marx Today?* (Oxford, 2002) p. 10.