

Marx's Revolution in a Post non-Truth Political Economy

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Abstract

Throughout the 500 years of its history, capitalism has incentivized and furthermore required certain types of non-virtuous behavior(s) from economic agents in order to perpetuate itself. This led to dilemmas for the political class who have promoted the euphemisms of capitalist apologetics whilst holding to a conscious responsibility to encourage and represent ethical behavior in society. There is a systemic need for intellectual ideologues to obfuscate some of the reality of capitalist mechanics, thus forming disingenuous narratives or, at worst, the need to lie. Since this language dis-resonates with reality, it periodically lead to forms of grassroots protest that manifest in support for populist leaders like Trump. Marx held the view that genuine observers of the capitalist system were hindered by the falsehood promoted by the state, and posited that it needed to be overcome in order for transformation to occur. This paper evaluates some of the philosophical foundations of capitalism since the European Enlightenment, and argues that the Hegelian and Marx dialectic provide adequate explanation of poignant times of historic transformation and the trajectory towards human emancipation. It also suggests, however, that the removal of *false consciousness* may not be fully sufficient to further the cause of emancipation since the dialectical process of change involves the heart as well as the mind. Notwithstanding, it is argued that Marx's philosophical contribution to this issue enriches one of the key debates of our time and provides us with an abiding legacy.

Keywords: Post-Truth, False Consciousness, Emancipation, Marx/Hegel Dialectic

Introduction

After Trump's election, and the UK Brexit vote, the Anglo Saxon world seems very different. In particular, objective truths are less likely to shape public opinion than appeal to emotion and personal belief – a phenomenon defined by the Oxford Dictionary as *post-truth* (Oxford Dictionary 2017). Since the 2008 crash, people feel increasing dissatisfaction with capitalism, and lied to by the political class (including the media). This dis-resonates with their perceived realities of alienation, devaluation, lack, exclusion and minimal empowerment. The narrative of the political class, therefore, and the objective truths they present, are being rejected in favor of populist ideas that appeal to the emotions. In addition, as Wrenn has identified, the heightened uncertainty of the neoliberal era has galvanized the process (Wrenn 2014). Has capitalism always been the same? If a systemic imperative requires the political class to lie or obfuscate the realities, it is not the propensity towards disingenuous behavior by individual politicians at fault but it's rather a necessary condition for capitalism's function. Furthermore, the rising populist views in society are actually rejecting historic *non-truth*, rather than truth and expressing a current desire for more reality. The problem with this development is that if the narrative of populist leaders like Trump also obfuscates the capitalist realities, people are going to be disappointed as their aspirations fail to materialize. Bullshit thrives, as Ball notes, when there is a market for it i.e. the producers of bullshit gain political office or influence and

the consumers get an alternative narrative to the (perceived) falsehood of the political class. Sadly, this is likely to end badly without the hoped-for substantive change (Ball 2017, p.199).

It is the consciousness of this false narrative of capitalism that Marx regarded as a crucial prerequisite for the emancipation of humanity. In this conception, social classes, determined by material relations of production, become aware of the 'rational kernel inside the mystical shell' and then driven by their 'revolutionary praxis', the historical dialectical process occurs (Marx 1976 [1867], p.103; Lowy 2003, p.98). It is argued in this paper that these ideas formed in Marx during the 1840s and constituted the philosophical underpinning of his entire mature work. The paper is set out in three sections. The first examines the philosophical roots of the capitalist narrative, from the European Enlightenment to its modern manifestation. The second section explores Marx's conception of the Hegelian dialectic, and the formation of his own view on historical transformation. It is concluded that Marx is often and erroneously presented as holding to a crude materialist dialectic. The final section explores the process of the dialectic in the context of broader thinking on psychological factors and the mystical dimension. It is posited that this reframed Marx dialectic provides plausible explanation of the necessary conditions for meaningful change (or even revolution) in the post-truth political economy of today. For the sake of the survival of humanity and the planet, this is imperative.

European Enlightenment

To claim capitalism has had a disingenuous narrative from the outset is not to suggest there are no qualities of the system, but rather it suggests certain realities have been downplayed, lied about or ignored. In addition, since economic systems require order, which presuppose an ethical code, it also has its own rules. The use of property must be protected, for instance, for labor to be productive, and capitalism depends on this being privately owned. John Locke is usually cited as providing the philosophical justification for this, claiming there is plenty to provide for all and the political class should protect property rights (Locke 1988 [1689], chap.5). Yet, the accumulation of assets without limit, and formation of intellectual, legal or physical monopoly, mean large parts of society are *de facto* excluded from capital altogether. In addition, to protect property it is not necessary for it to be privately owned, the state or commune can do this, but the capitalist narrative has not presented this as a viable option.

In the early days of mercantilist capitalism new entrepreneurial wealth was in the ascendance, and the land-owning feudal class faced fresh challenge to the political order. Since the feudal economic system relied on duties and obligations to the pope and king, with consequences for non-compliance, early enlightenment thinkers were reserved in the content and promulgation of their ideas. Religious belief was also still pervasive, with those in public office expected to uphold the ethic. Mandeville, for instance, was castigated for inferring that vices enabled the economy to function better, that 'prodigality, that noble sin; whilst luxury employed a million of the poor, and odious pride a million more' (Mandeville 1989 [1714]). Smith later balked at Mandeville's implication even though, as Robinson notes, Smith conceded that he had some points (Robinson 1962, p.23). Yet, the establishment of Smith, as a capitalist narrator, is itself subject to suspicion since Smith provides a sanitized version of the enclosures that wrought misery on huge numbers of the rural poor in Britain, from Tudor times onwards. At the time of writing, Perelman notes, there were several other commentators with much more realistic accounts of the suffering (including famines) that took place but were ignored by the elites (Perelman 2000). The enclosures are seen by some as part of the political project of the ascendant capitalist class, rather than the contextual pursuit of profit per se, to create a needy

proletariat ready and eager to work in the emerging factory system (Perelman 2000; Polanyi 1944; Shaw 1944). Be that as it may, the capitalist narrative has instead tended to emphasize the increase in the agricultural yields that enclosures facilitated, rather than its poor ethics, which prepared the ground for the onset of the industrial revolution since the new industrial proletariat could be fed. This stylized version of history downplays the aspirational drive of the capitalist class, whether the impact of the enclosures was an unintended consequence of their activity or a premeditated plan to dispossess the rural poor of their sustenance. Workers were later persuaded by the protestant work ethic, or the American dream, to believe in better future circumstances, only to discover that harder (more efficient) work cheapened the value of their wage rate (in labor terms). Money has also been subject to a disingenuous narrative.

The rise of endogenous credit in the mercantilist era was facilitated by Calvin's justification of usury, reversing the monetary ideas of the scholastics. Rothbard notes that this had been a courageous edict by Calvin, based on a theoretical and theological reasoning, which also had broader religious support, e.g. devout banker, Jacob Fugger (Rothbard 1995, p.141). At first, capitalist banking, such as the discounting of bills of exchange, did not involve the levying of excessive interest (Calvin posited a 5% cap). Yet, banking has been an exploitative activity after Calvin, leading to great fortunes for investors. Whilst Calvin's narrative did not conceal the nature of usury, the failure of the political class to accurately reflect the increased level of exploitation since, does represent a disingenuous capitalist apologetic. In the pursuit of 'life, liberty and happiness', capitalist firms have pursued profits and paid a proportion of their surplus value to the financial rentiers in the process. In the later industrial revolution, Smith also ignored excessive usury to focus on technical and allocative efficiencies to be derived from competitive markets and the profit motive (Smith 2003 [1776]) His 'real bills doctrine', for instance, simply emphasized the significance of finance being productively applied, rather than spent on conspicuous consumption, and was less concerned with private bank profits per se (Itoh and Lapavitsas 1999, p.18) Ricardo, conversely, wanted more political control of banking, to meet the needs of the economy, via a public national bank (Itoh and Lapavitsas 1999, p.23; Ricardo 1824) In addition to the usual *currency school* concern with excess credit creation, it may also imply Ricardo wanted less exploitative private banks. Notwithstanding this, the classical narrative focused on free market incentives that facilitated efficiencies and innovation, whilst ignoring their more negative consequences. As business competes for profit, for instance, latent synergies in scientific innovation that may pertain to their sector (through cooperation) are less likely to occur, and the drive to maximize profit can also incentivize waste or encourage planned obsolescence. This is clearly not likely to aid a more sustainable global ecology.

Marx praised Smith and Ricardo for adhering to their versions of the labor theory of value, though he was unhappy with their lack of focus on labor's exploitation, and also commended the economists for the holistic and scientific nature of their commentary (Ormazabal 2004). Yet, Marx had noted, by the mid-1800s the language of the subject of economics changed, thus the presentation of economic concepts and categories by the political class exhibited a diminished integrity:

It was thenceforth no longer a question whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not. In place of disinterested inquirers, there were hired prizefighters, in place of genuine research, the bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetics.

(Marx 1976 [1867], Afterword to the 2nd German Edition)

As a consequence, as Robinson comically stated, it then became the task of the economists to justify the contradictions of capitalism, since no one wanted to live with a bad conscience (Robinson 1962, p.25). At the end of the 1800s, with Marshall et al., the modern formation of economics (as a distinct discipline) became established, complete with its new language and mathematics, rendering meaningful political economy discourse inaccessible to the common man (Marshall 1890; Walras 1926 [1874]) Since then, the professional economists have inhabited the policy-making, academic and media circles that have defined the capitalist narrative. New students of economics are confronted with the so-called 'economic problem', a scarcity in conjunction with unlimited wants and needs, as the basis for study. Yet, the possibility of a manipulated scarcity, or the existence of practical alternative economic systems, that are (at least theoretically) able to provide an absence of scarcity, are not explored. Heterodox ideas of economics are therefore necessary in order to dispel some of the myths, obfuscations, lies and fallacies of mainstream economics, if the contradictions of capitalism are to be first seen and then overcome. Marx and Engels, in their theoretical conception of false consciousness and understanding of the dialectical process, provided such a framework for change towards the emancipation of humanity and the future sustainability of the planet. To this we now turn.

The Marx Dialectic

Marx held that the essence of man was not able to find its expression in the capitalist mode of production. In contrast to Rousseau and Kant, who had argued for a social contract between people and state through the law (the general will or categorical imperative), enabling society to transcend the (selfish) state of nature, Marx posited that if the social relations that derived from capitalist production were changed, so our human nature would change (Rousseau 1968 [1762]; Sullivan 1994, p.10) In other words, it is the economic system that drives agent behavior, and man's inner nature is not inherently selfish. It is alienation (or estrangement) from this human essence that Marx viewed as the problem, and constituted the aspiration towards emancipation. Yet, crucially, Marx recognized that since man changes his own environment, i.e. the economic system itself, and his thinking engages both subjective and objective elements, the removal of false consciousness was an essential ingredient in the emancipatory process.

Hegel's dialectic had dominated German philosophy whilst Marx was at university, and Marx was an avid student. Hegel developed his system partly in response to philosophical dualism, which maintained the Descartes separation of mind and matter, and he posited instead that all matter (including language) *was* our conscious and sub-conscious thought. Yet, for Hegel, the thought was not subjective, since it was all derived from reality and was, therefore, objective reality (Blunden 2012, p.9) The idealist system of Hegel was a direct critique of Kant, who had maintained certain aspects of reality were *noumena*, or unknowable things in themselves, because they cannot be perceived either by reason or by the sensual experience. Kant used a few illustrations, such as whether or not matter is infinitely divisible, to illustrate his point. Hegel agreed with this conclusion of Kant's but posited the *noumena* could be included in the idealist system of ideas, rather than excluded from reason, since they constituted a reality of thought. Hegel also broke with the Greek syllogism, i.e. a form of reasoning whereby being A was separated from a non-A being by positing instead that since A was knowable (in part), as a direct result of non-A's existence, so together they formed part of the thought-reality in a so-called 'unity of opposites'. In the Hegelian dialectic, the central entity was the *idea*, which was constituted by reasoned, intuitive, imaginative, and mystical thought that went through a

time process of reasoning. The idea was first posited and then, via its internal reasoning, was subjected to negation. According to Hegel, the negation transcended the initial presentation of the idea, but also *preserved* its essential nature in the negation's existence. Finally, a negation of the negation then transcends but yet preserves both the initial idea and the negation in the system of thought. The mental laboring, as the basis for human action, therefore accounts for historical transformation and the *idea*, rather than being conceived as the 'final *outcome* of a never ending historical process, the idea is a *process*' (Ibid, p.16). In this sense, the historical trajectory towards emancipation, for Hegel, is not linear but evolves according to a dialectical process firmly located in human thinking, that is itself derived from realities. This may mean the process may take a step backwards before progress is made. An example of the dialectical process could be the social contract between society and the political class. In the Hobbesian state of nature, where life is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short', at least the individual has a perception of their freedom (Hobbes 1968 [1651], chap.13) The negation of the idea, through reasoning, suggests that if they deferred to a Leviathan they will then transcend the inadequacy of their initial 'freedom', since the concept of freedom is nonsensical if one's life is dangerous and short. Yet, in the process of reasoning with the idea, the deference to the Leviathan is then theorized as providing a much-improved perception of freedom in the order created – the negation of the negation. The idea has now developed to a higher stage, by transcending and preserving the initial stages (Hegel called this process sublation). In contrast to the existential Kant, Hegel also conceived of the idea being present in groups, which after the dialectic process had advanced, he termed 'spirit'. Rather than the spirit being rooted in an historical form of life, such as a revolution or laboring with tools, the 'spirit manifested itself in the activity of a people' i.e. it *is* the thinking rather than the activity (Blunden 2012, p.6). As the spirit seeks to be established, because as Hegel writes 'the world is continually at odds with how it should be', the historical dialectical process then becomes the story of the resolution of these conflicts in the arena of thought per se (Ibid, p.15).

Marx had been in agreement with the Hegelian system after the philosopher's death, and was counted amongst the so-called 'left Hegelians', but following Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's work, Marx's views began to change. Feuerbach claimed that Hegel departs from a 'sense-certainty' with the initial positing of an idea as a philosophy rather than the sensual, and then after puts the actual sensuous in its place and then (in the negation of the negation) returns to philosophy. In this sense Hegel had discovered what Marx calls 'only the abstract, logical and speculative expression for the movement of history. This is not the actual history of man as a pre-supposed subject, but only the act of generation' (Marx 2017 [1844], p.64) Marx regards this as an alienated thought-form that he claims 'descends from heaven to earth' whereas his method does not start with what 'men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated' but rather starts with the 'real, active men' with their 'ideological reflexes' (Marx 2017 [1845]) In this sense, Marx is arguing for comprehending the actual social processes rather than simply attributing a theoretical logic to the process. In addition, Marx viewed Hegel's concept of man's alienation from his engagement with the material world as missing the point. Whereas Hegel thought that the human essence 'materializes itself from, and in opposition to, abstract thinking', Marx believed the human essence also 'materializes itself in an *inhuman* manner in opposition to itself' e.g. in producing commodities for market (Marx 2017 [1844], p.66). It was important to Marx to illustrate the exploitative and alienating aspects of human activity.

Marx also criticized the crude materialism of Feuerbach, for not taking into consideration the subjective aspects of the dialectic. Feuerbach had dismissed religious thinking, for instance, as 'the dream of the human mind' (Feuerbach 2008 [1841], p.xii). Marx wanted to focus on

the subjective 'human sensuous activity', rather than just one-sided objectivity (Marx 2017 [1845], p.1). In other words, rather than Marx being considered as rigidly holding to a crude materialist dialectic, it is argued in the paper that Marx needs to be considered as positing a dialectical process in which subjective and objective reasoning, combined in ideological activity, are manifested in the revolutionary activity itself. In short, the differences between Marx and Hegel are wafer-thin. Marx sees historic transformation deriving from a dialectical process that is firmly located in human activity and its integrated thinking, whereas Hegel's system posits independence of thought, with the idealist dialectic process driving behavior, yet both unify the material and the ideal. Marx has theorized revolutionary praxis, and Hegel a thinking process defined by an objective reality. It is a direct consequence of Marx's views on the dialectic that makes the removal of false consciousness crucial to revolution, as Lenin noted 'there is no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory' (Lowy 2003, p.108). Marx also contended that allegiance to pope and king falsified the consciousness, in the same way that Feuerbach reasoned man was alienated by religion, because this led to deference to a sense of appropriate behavior rather than an enlightened consciousness of the actual ability to change the material conditions of existence.

It was during the 1840s, and his writing in the Paris (Economic and Philosophic) manuscripts, that Marx explores this break from Hegel's system and changes his focus from a philosophic reasoning process to one which focused on proletariat activity. Instead of the intelligentsia providing the theoretical input to the revolutionary movement, Marx argued the theory should emerge from the practice (praxis) of the revolutionaries themselves. Marx criticizes the case of the Lyon silk workers protest in 1834, for instance, where the political understanding that was provided to the workers 'falsified their ability to find their own consciousness' (Ibid, p.93). In this sense, Marx mused that the likes of Bauer and Kautsky were unhelpful to the cause of revolution, since it needed to derive from the mind of the proletariat itself. Marx writes that 'a philosophical people can find its corresponding practice only in socialism, hence it is only in the proletariat that it can find the dynamic element of its emancipation' (Ibid, p.94). Marx, unlike many of his contemporary thinkers, was particularly excited by the Silesian uprising of 1844, that he viewed as surpassing the recent uprisings in France and England as a consequence of the 'consciousness of the nature of the proletariat' (Ibid, p.92). It was this *real* consciousness, which invariably contained elements of objective and subjective thought, which constituted the key ingredient for successful revolution. Indeed it is real consciousness that is needed, yet without a compliant heart i.e. an emotional engagement this is unlikely to succeed. It is these broader psychological, mystical and emotive factors that need to be taken into closer consideration for a successful revolution.

Successful Revolution: The Necessary Conditions

A cursory glance at the history of China, Cambodia, Russia or France reveals that revolution tends to be shortly followed by counter-revolutionary elements that need to be subjugated, by force if necessary. Hayek had pointed out that a new well-meaning political class begins with a plan that is soon thwarted by some. The planners are then faced with a dilemma, they first endeavor to persuade the recalcitrant individuals to change their view and comply, but if the strategy fails the planners must subjugate those concerned or be forced to abandon their plans altogether (Hayek 1994 [1944]). If there is a broad social consensus conversely, particularly one based on a populist mood, a revolution has more chance of success. Yet, this implies that simply becoming aware of the non-truth of the capitalist narrative, such as the persistence of alienation or exploitation, may not be sufficient condition for this populist mood since broad

psychological factors are at work. Marx was fully aware of the subjectivity that inhabited the ideological narrative of capitalist production, reinforced by vulgar economics practice ‘which is nothing more than a didactic and more or less doctrinaire translation of the everyday notions of the actual agents of production’ (Marx 1981 [1894], p.969). However, the *de facto* pervasiveness of this narrative suggests it is unlikely that all revolutionary praxis can be entirely immune from this ‘bewitched’ world. Thus, if the removal of ‘false consciousness’ does not engender a consensual *mood* sufficient for successful revolution, an analysis of psychological factors, especially emotional factors, will be beneficial.

New research on consciousness suggests that much of consciousness consists of ‘perceptions with shades of feeling’ (Holmes 2017, p.29). Also, in conjunction with emotional responses, our behaviors are mostly driven by our evaluation of perceived threats and rewards. Since this sub-conscious and conscious evaluation engages intuition, instinct (from both nature and nurture), imagination, emotions, values and mystical dimensions as well as logical reasoning we cannot assume that logic is sufficient to provide a change of propensity i.e. our mood. The work of John and Beatrice Lacey (1960s and 1970s) on the heart’s role in cognitive function revealed that we have under-estimated the role of the heart in thinking. They identified the heart as a self-organizing processing system that communicates with the brain via the nervous system. Neural messages sent are not only received, but also are acted upon (McCraty 2001, p.3). The physiology of this consists of neurons, neurotransmitters and proteins, whereby inputs to the brain, via neural pathways from the heart, can inhibit or facilitate brain electrical activity. Degrees of positive or negative emotions alter brain perceptions. In this sense, when a person experiences new stimuli, our emotions influence the brain processing in terms of its selection and prioritization of information. If there is an emotional attachment to the capitalist narrative therefore, no matter how small, then this impacts the current form of consciousness.

It is a fair assertion that many people possess a strong emotive need to belong and thus tend to be aware of the consensual mood(s) of any particular group that they wish to participate in. Veblen, for instance, had noticed in the late 19th century that members of leisure classes, as economic agents, made purchase decisions that were primarily driven by their reputation in their group context, rather than by rational evaluation of utility at money price (Veblen 1922 [1899], p.75). In this scenario, a compliance with consensual culture can take preference over an individual’s preferences, for the sake of the feeling of belonging. Decision-making is then determined by the perceived preferences of others, like in Keynes’ beauty contest where the competitors pick the six prettiest faces from a hundred faces and the winner is the closest to the average preferences of the other competitors (Keynes 1936, p.156). In order to win, the entrant must guess the decisions of other entrants, but since they are all doing the same it is unlikely that the results will reflect their actual views on the beauty judged, except by chance. Clearly, the emotional need to belong can be a stumbling block to the necessary revolutionary praxis, derived from a removal of false consciousness, unless there is a clear understanding of the real views and motivations of others, and an autonomously derived consensus on what is hoped for. In reality, however, it is very difficult to find this level of autonomy, and it is more likely that the human relations involved contain some element of emotional dependency. In so-called transaction analysis, used in social work practice, an analysis of our emotional ego-state, which defaults to an adult-to-child, child-to-adult or adult-to-adult mode of relationship, is undertaken. Berne’s seminal work suggests that if the client has adopted an inappropriate ego-state, either by habit, instinct or emotionally dependent relationship they can and should be reoriented (Berne 1964). Since emotional attachments become familiar, and can prevent us from achieving a revolutionary mindset, they form structures of human relations that together constitute society. Gramsci, in his work that emphasized ideology, values and beliefs, called

this a hegemony, whereby elites deliberately manufacture consent in order to reproduce class relations and conceal contradictions (Gramsci 1991). Gramsci was not replacing Engels' idea of false consciousness, and ignoring the significance of the 'rational kernel', but rather stating the *importance* of a focus on populist (emotional) mood in devising appropriate strategies. He focused on the emotion of the group dynamic, *and* its rationality, whilst appreciating that the concrete transition of the material is a clear pre-requisite for the emancipation of humanity. Fear is, of course, an important emotion. Wrenn identified that in times of fear, propensity toward populist belief, religion and traditional thinking is enhanced, and this is a factor in the current post-truth mood (Wrenn 2014). It is also argued that there is specific manipulation of fear by the political class, in their narrative and policies, in order to foster uncertainty that has the effect of enhancing the susceptibility of the narrative's audience to accept implausibility (Curtis 2016). In the globalization era, the enhanced integration of production, finance and trade has increased the political class' fears of various clamors for change, since they regard systemic change to be dangerous. So, they simply seek to maintain the capitalist narrative, and identify and manage any threats to the system. The people, as consumers of the narrative, also fear the change-theorists alternative, since this is presented to them through the lens of the current one. In addition, in the post-truth world there is now scope for further confusion, since a key complaint of Trump's administration is the 'fake news' media. If this leads to an alternative capitalist narrative, from the lead capitalist nation, any progress toward a Marxian revolution by the removal of false consciousness is hindered. Our thought is not clearer in the context of fear, or uncertainty-driven stress, as recent research has clarified. Training in the military, for example, known as hostile environment awareness training (HEAT), drills an automatic-response procedure into combat servicemen so they are able to act instinctively in moments of fear, since the efficacy of brain processing is diminished (Bond 2017). So, when people feel safe, they experience better thinking, whereas uncertainty and fear lead to poorer mental health.

Research on schizophrenia has explored the role of dopamine in brain function and identified that too much dopamine causes the brain to process stimuli in distorted ways. In the normal mind, facilitated by dopamine, fresh stimuli are processed and threats and rewards are placed in priority orders. In addition, objective and subjective brain perceptions are differentiated, categorized and stored. An excess of dopamine, therefore, causes these processes to become skewed: threats can be in the wrong order and/or impressions derived from the imagination, in response to stimuli, can be perceived as objective facts and mixed with that known to be objective fact. Fear, as psychologists have noted, exacerbates the condition (Fletcher 2017). Whilst all people can be considered to be on the schizophrenic spectrum, anti-psychotic drugs that suppress the dopamine are prescribed for those with much worse stages of the condition. The ailment could be seen as analogous to the impact of the capitalist narrative on the mental health of society. Given that there is an imperative to lie or obfuscate realities, an emotional attachment to the narrative, despite the objective facts to the contrary, can be considered to be a schizophrenic position. If the post-truth culture of today under-estimates reality, as the *Dark Mountain Project* have identified, this could lead to serious consequences for a civilization unaware of its vulnerability (Kingsnorth and Hine 2009).

Shamans, mediums, and prophets all claim a consciousness whereby the stimuli derive from a mystical dimension external to the mind i.e. transcendence. In a Kantian sense, the dimension is unknowable objectively, yet the believer claims knowledge of the realm, whilst the atheist sees the imagination at work. However, since we simply do not know if these realms exist or not, they cannot be discounted. Adherence to religious doctrine is easier to theorize. Simply put, astrologers, priesthoods and papacies deliver the edicts and the faithful adopt the code of

behavior or belief. At various pivotal moments of historical change, decision-makers have often been driven by mystical or religious thought, and so in conjunction with the emotional, intuitive and instinctual brain activity, the dimensions need to be considered as valid aspects of consciousness separate from the rational. So, conscious and sub-conscious brain activity is an integrated process, engaging in a variety of forms of thinking, and it is fairly clear that if revolutionary praxis is to be possible, a suitable analysis of the broader psychological factors is required. If Marx and Engels' aspirations for the proletariat to become aware of the reality of capitalist mechanics is satisfied, I argue that rational cognition combined with a consensual emotional attachment to a new 'bewitched' hegemony will provide its best chance of success. Yet, if Machiavelli's advice for political leaders to lie is heeded, an emotional attachment to a collective denial will result in the continuation of an evolving capitalist order with its inherent contradictions, exploitation and alienation (Machiavelli 2003 [1532]).

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the capitalist narrative, presented by the prevailing political class, has been a disingenuous one since the onset of the mercantilist era. Yet, the existence of a sanitized version of realities has been a systemic imperative, rather than resulting from the poor ethics of the political elites. The narrative has covered such topics as the enclosures, the existence and limits of private property, efficiency, competition, usury etc. and has engaged with specific language to effectively obfuscate certain realities. In the current post-truth era it has been argued there is fresh dissatisfaction with the political class, as a direct consequence of feeling lied to, and this has led to much more populist responses that are driven by emotive factors. In this context, any substantial transformation of our current economic system will therefore require an improved understanding of these psychological drivers, and policies that take account of the emotional attachments will have more chance of success. Marx's specific version of the Hegelian dialectic is a useful method of analysis for a consideration of these subjective factors, since the concept of 'human sensual activity' suggests a holistic evaluation of the ideological drivers that is human-centered. Yet, on the other hand, the Engel's phrase 'false consciousness' implies that objective reasoning, derived from just revealing the 'non-truth', is a sufficient condition to change the emotional attachments that derive from intuitive, imaginative, instinctual and mystical sources. It is argued that this not likely to be sufficient. The paper concludes, therefore, that if a realistic capitalist narrative is presented, combined with an attention to these dynamics that trigger the required emotional response, prospects for a meaningful transition towards a desirable economic system is much more likely to occur.

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