synthesis must evolve at all. Reasoning logically and dialectically one could imagine instead, for instance, a simple turn-about of the relationship with a reversal of the parts played by the two actors, the servant changing into the master and the master into the servant. One could also fancy a rapid formation of a new relationship of authority and subordination altering the system of the new "freedom". Certainly it is not simply unthinkable that an absolute turn towards freedom could occur, a turn which by eliminating once and for all the dynamics of the class struggle would at least bring to an end this specific dialectical development.

Belief in dialectical change reflects a deep feeling always to be found in every epoch; one only needs to recall some of the numerous proverbs such as "God is closest where distress is greatest" or "It has to get worse so that it may become better." And no doubt some situations both in nature and in history correspond to this dialectical evolution. Hence Marx cannot be criticized simply for having used these dialectical schemes. Despite all their shortcomings they are particularly important tools for our understanding of historical and cultural situations. But a dialectical synthesis is by no means assured only by the fact that it is desirable at a given moment. How often has man's distress been infinite without the imminent presence of "God"! Marx should have been more cautious in his use of dialectical statements as mere hypotheses, to be constantly verified by, and revised through, experience. Instead he and, still more, the Marxists, somewhat naively and unconsciously turned time and again a dialectical hypothesis into a self-evident dogma and eternal truth, thus succumbing to that self-alienation that Marx himself never tired of criticizing in others.

VII

What may be logically or dialectically quite conceivable may be, from the historical point of view, highly improbable. Marx's and Engels' own numerous historical investigations have discovered so many-sided forms of class-cleavage and exploitation that their concept of the classless society appears almost as doubtful as, for example, the new world of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity dreamt of by the revolutionaries of 1789. Marx and Engels both reveal impressively how human society has undergone tremendous changes in the course of its development without ever getting rid of the plight of class society, at least during the age of "civilizations". If the class societies of civilized man have been preceded by primitive, classless, tribal communities, Engel's attempt to prove that the primitive social order was that of "freedom, equality, and fraternity"[70], as against the later class societies, was not quite successful.

70) F. Engels, *Der Ursprung*, p.176, quoting from Lewis H. Morgan's *Ancient Society*... London 1877, p.552.