

In my thesis, I attempt to outline the relation of the work of three prominent representatives of the 20th century American anthropology to Kari Marx's teachings. The text consists of four relatively independent parts joined by the subject of the application of materialist principles in the analysis of man and culture.

In the first part, I advance my interpretation of the picture of man and nature in Kari Marx's writings. Besides Marx's approach to an individual and his activity, I also pay attention to his conception of the structure and development of human activity on the social level, where this practice acquires the complexion of socioeconomic formations, the succession of which constitutes human history unfolding in accordance with dialectical laws.

In the second part, I examine Marx's influence on the concept of man and culture in the writings by Leslie Alvin White. Not only is it possible to identify the inspiration by Marx's theories in White's approach to the structure and development of a cultural system, but it is also obvious in his understanding of the relation of man to culture, and in certain passages on political economy.

The third part deals with Marvin Harris's cultural materialism. I hope to show here the way that Harris employed certain fragments of Marx's method of historical inquiry in the development of his research strategy. In principle, he dismissed dialectical epistemology together with the revolutionary doctrine of the unity of theory and practice and openly took over, but in modified version, Marx's formulation of the determining influence of production and other material processes. Basically, cultural and historical materialism differ as positivist and teleological views of reality do.