

## ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHIC MANUSCRIPTS OF 1844 (in part)

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### ALIENATED LABOR

We have proceeded from the presuppositions of political economy. We have accepted its language and its laws. We presupposed private property, the separation of labor, capital and land, hence of wages, profit of capital and rent, likewise the division of labor, competition, the concept of exchange value, etc. From political economy itself, in its own words, we have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity, the most miserable commodity; that the misery of the worker is inversely proportional to the power and volume of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands and thus the revival of monopoly in a more frightful form; and finally that the distinction between capitalist and landowner, between agricultural laborer and industrial worker, disappears and the whole society must divide into the two classes of *proprietors* and *propertyless* workers.

Political economy proceeds from the fact of private property. It does not explain private property. It grasps the actual, *material* process of private property in abstract and general formulae which it then takes as *laws*. It does not *comprehend* these laws, that is, does not prove them as proceeding from the nature of private property. Political economy does not disclose the reason for the division between capital and labor, between capital and land. When, for example, the relation of wages to profits is determined, the ultimate basis is taken to be the interest of the capitalists; that is, political economy assumes what it should develop. Similarly, competition is referred to at every point and explained from external circumstances. Political economy teaches us nothing about the extent to which these external, apparently accidental circumstances are simply the expression of a necessary development. We have seen how political economy regards exchange itself as an accidental fact. The only wheels which political economy puts in motion are *greed* and the *war among the greedy, competition*.

Just because political economy does not grasp the interconnections within the movement, the doctrine of competition could stand opposed to the doctrine of monopoly, the doctrine of freedom of craft to that of the guild, the doctrine of the division of landed property to that of the great estate. Competition, freedom of craft, and division of landed property were developed and conceived only as accidental, deliberate, forced consequences of monopoly, the guild, and feudal property, rather than necessary, inevitable, natural consequences.

We now have to grasp the essential connection among private property, greed, division of labor, capital and landownership, and the connection of exchange with competition, of value with the devaluation of men, of monopoly with competition, etc., and of this whole alienation with the *money-system*.

Let us not put ourselves in a fictitious primordial state like a political economist trying to clarify things. Such a primordial state clarifies nothing. It merely pushes the issue into a gray, misty distance. It acknowledges as a fact or event what it should de-

duce, namely, the necessary relation between two things for example, between division of labor and exchange. In such a manner theology explains the origin of evil by the fall of man. That is, it asserts as a fact in the form of history what it should explain.

We proceed from a *present* fact of political economy.

The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes a cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces. The *increase in value* of the world of things is directly proportional to the *decrease in value* of the human world. Labor not only produces commodities. It also produces itself and the worker as a *commodity*, and indeed in the same proportion as it produces commodities in general.

This fact simply indicates that the object which labor produces, its product, stands opposed to it as an *alien thing*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labor is labor embodied and made objective in a thing. It is the *objectification* of labor. The realization of labor is its objectification. In the viewpoint of political economy this realization of labor appears as the *diminution* of the worker, the objectification as the *loss of and subservience to the object*, and the appropriation as *alienation* [*Entfremdung*], as externalization [*Entäusserung*].

So much does the realization of labor appear as diminution that the worker is diminished to the point of starvation. So much does objectification appear as loss of the object that the worker is robbed of the most essential objects not only of life but also of work. Indeed, work itself becomes a thing of which he can take possession only with the greatest effort and with the most unpredictable interruptions. So much does the appropriation of the object appear as alienation that the more objects the worker produces, the fewer he can own and the more he falls under the domination of his product, of capital.

All these consequences follow from the fact that the worker is related to the *product of his labor* as to an *alien object*. For it is clear according to this premise: The more the worker exerts himself, the more powerful becomes the alien objective world which he fashions against himself, the poorer he and his inner world become, the less there is that belongs to him. It is the same in religion. The more man attributes to God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object; then it no longer belongs to him but to the object. The greater this activity, the poorer is the worker. What the product of his work is, he is not. The greater this product is, the smaller he is himself. The *externalization* of the worker in his product means not only that his work becomes an object, an *external* existence, but also that it exists *outside him* independently, alien, an autonomous power, opposed to him. The life he has given to the object confronts him as hostile and alien.

Let us now consider more closely the *objectification*, the worker's production and with it the *alienation* and *loss* of the object, his product.

The worker can make nothing without *nature*, without the *sensuous external world*. It is the material wherein his labor realizes itself, wherein it is active, out of which and by means of which it produces.

But as nature furnishes to labor the *means of life* in the sense that labor cannot live without objects upon which labor is exercised, nature also furnishes the *means of life* in the narrower sense, namely, the means of physical subsistence of the worker himself.

The more the worker *appropriates* the external world and sensuous nature through his labor, the more he deprives himself of the *means of life* in two respects: first, that the sensuous external world gradually ceases to be an object belonging to his labor, a *means of life* of his work; secondly, that it gradually ceases to be a *means of life* in the immediate sense, a means of physical subsistence of the worker.



In these two respects, therefore, the worker becomes a slave to his objects; first, in that he receives an *object of labor*, that is, he receives *labor*, and secondly that he receives the *means of subsistence*. The first enables him to exist as a *worker* and the second as a *physical subject*. The terminus of this slavery is that he can only maintain himself as a *physical subject* so far as he is a *worker*, and only as a *physical subject* is he a worker.

(The alienation of the worker in his object is expressed according to the laws of political economy as follows: the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more values he creates the more worthless and unworthy he becomes; the better shaped his product, the more misshapen is he; the more civilized his product, the more barbaric is the worker; the more powerful the work, the more powerless becomes the worker; the more intelligence the work has, the more witless is the worker and the more he becomes a slave of nature.)

*Political economy conceals the alienation in the nature of labor by ignoring the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production.* To be sure, labor produces marvels for the wealthy but it produces deprivation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but mutilation for the worker. It displaces labor through machines, but it throws some workers back into barbarous labor and turns others into machines. It produces intelligence, but for the worker it produces imbecility and cretinism.

*The direct relationship of labor to its products is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production.* The relationship of the rich to the objects of produc-

*Child factory labor, 1908, North Carolina. Young children were often used in textile mills because of their agility and dexterity. According to Marx, factory workers such as this child are alienated or cut off from (1) the products they produce, (2) their own work activities, (3) themselves, and (4) each other. (Lewis W. Hine/Courtesy George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography.)*



tion and to production itself is only a *consequence* of this first relationship and confirms it. Later we shall observe the latter aspect.

Thus, when we ask, What is the essential relationship of labor? we ask about the relationship of the worker to production.

Up to now we have considered the alienation, the externalization of the *worker* only from one side: his *relationship to the products of his labor*. But alienation is shown not only in the result but also in the *process of production*, in the *producing activity* itself. How could the worker stand in an alien relationship to the product of his activity if he did not alienate himself from himself in the very act of production? After all, the product is only the résumé of activity, of production. If the product of work is externalization, production itself must be active externalization, externalization of activity, activity of externalization. Only alienation—and externalization in the activity of labor itself—is summarized in the alienation of the object of labor.

What constitutes the externalization of labor?

First is the fact that labor is *external* to the laborer—that is, it is not part of his nature—and that the worker does not affirm himself in his work but denies himself, feels miserable and unhappy, develops no free physical and mental energy but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind. The worker, therefore feels at ease only outside work, and during work he is outside himself. He is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not at home. His work, therefore, is not voluntary, but coerced, *forced labor*. It is not the satisfaction of a need but only a *means* to satisfy other needs. Its alien character is obvious from the fact that as soon as no physical or other pressure exists, labor is avoided like the plague. External labor, labor in which man is externalized, is labor of self-sacrifice, of penance. Finally, the external nature of work for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own but another person's, that in work he does not belong to himself but to someone else. In religion the spontaneity of human imagination, the spontaneity of the human brain and heart, acts independently of the individual as an alien, divine or devilish activity. Similarly, the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. It belongs to another. It is the loss of his own self.

The result, therefore, is that man (the worker) feels that he is acting freely only in his animal functions—eating, drinking, and procreating, or at most in his shelter and finery—while in his human functions he feels only like an animal. The animalistic becomes the human and the human the animalistic.

To be sure, eating, drinking, and procreation are genuine human functions. In abstraction, however, and separated from the remaining sphere of human activities and turned into final and sole ends, they are animal functions.

We have considered labor, the act of alienation of practical human activity, in two aspects: (1) the relationship of the worker to the *product of labor* as an alien object dominating him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects as an alien world hostile to him; (2) the relationship of labor to the *act of production in labor*. This relationship is that of the worker to his own activity as alien and not belonging to him, activity as passivity, power as weakness, procreation as emasculation, the worker's own physical and spiritual energy, his personal life—for what else is life but activity—as an activity turned against him, independent of him, and not belonging to him. *Self-alienation*, as against the alienation of the *object*, stated above.

We have now to derive a third aspect of *alienated labor* from the two previous ones.

Man is a species-being [*Gattungswesen*] not only in that he practically and theoretically makes his own species as well as that of other things his object, but also—and



this is only another expression for the same thing—in that as present and living species he considers himself to be a *universal* and consequently free being.

The life of the species in man as in animals is *physical* in that man, (like the animal) lives by inorganic nature. And as man is more universal than the animal, the realm of inorganic nature by which he lives is more universal. As plants, animals, minerals, air, light, etc., in theory form a part of human consciousness, partly as objects of natural science, partly as objects of art—his spiritual inorganic nature or spiritual means of life which he first must prepare for enjoyment and assimilation—so they also form in practice a part of human life and human activity. Man lives physically only by these products of nature; they may appear in the form of food, heat, clothing, housing, etc. The universality of man appears in practice in the universality which makes the whole of nature his inorganic body: (1) as a direct means of life, and (2) as the matter, object, and instrument of his life activity. Nature is the *inorganic body* of man, that is, nature insofar as it is not the human body. Man *lives* by nature. This means that nature is his *body* with which he must remain in perpetual process in order not to die. That the physical and spiritual life of man is tied up with nature is another way of saying that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.

In alienating (1) nature from man, and (2) man from himself, his own active function, his life activity, alienated labor also alienates the *species* from him; it makes *species-life* the means of individual life. In the first place it alienates *species-life* and the individual life, and secondly it turns the latter in its abstraction into the purpose of the former, also in its abstract and alienated form.

For labor, *life activity*, and *productive life* appear to man at first only as a *means* to satisfy a need, the need to maintain physical existence. Productive life, however, is *species-life*. It is life begetting life. In the mode of life activity lies the entire character of a species, its species-character; and free conscious activity is the species-character of man. Life itself appears only as a *means of life*.

The animal is immediately one with its life activity, not distinct from it. The animal is *its life activity*. Man makes his life activity itself into an object of will and consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he immediately identifies. Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from the life activity of the animal. Only thereby is he a species-being. Or rather, he is only a conscious being—that is, his own life is an object for him—since he is a species-being. Only on that account is his activity free activity. Alienated labor reverses the relationship in that man; since he is a conscious being, makes his life activity, his *essence*, only a means for his existence.

The practical creation of an *objective world*, the *treatment* of inorganic nature, is proof that man is a conscious species-being, that is, a being which is related to its species as to its own essence or is related to itself as a species-being. To be sure animals also produce. They build themselves nests, dwelling places, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc. But the animal produces only what is immediately necessary for itself or its young. It produces in a one-sided way while man produces universally. The animal produces under the domination of immediate physical need while man produces free of physical need and only genuinely so in freedom from such need. The animal only produces itself while man reproduces the whole of nature. The animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body while man is free when he confronts his product. The animal builds only according to the standard and need of the species to which it belongs while man knows how to produce according to the standard of any species and at all times knows how to apply an intrinsic standard to the object. Thus man creates also according to the laws of beauty.

In the treatment of the objective world, therefore, man proves himself to be genuinely a *species-being*. This production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as *his* work and his actuality. The object of labor is thus the *objectification of man's species-life*: he produces himself not only intellectually, as in consciousness, but also actively in a real sense and sees himself in a world he made. In taking from man the object of his production, alienated labor takes from his *species-life*, his actual and objective existence as a species. It changes his superiority to the animal to inferiority, since he is deprived of nature, his inorganic body.

By degrading free spontaneous activity to the level of a means, alienated labor makes the species-life of man a means of his physical existence.

The consciousness which man has from his species is altered through alienation, so that species-life becomes a means for him.

(3) Alienated labor hence turns the *species-existence of man*, and also nature as his mental species-capacity, into an existence *alien* to him, into the *means* of his *individual existence*. It alienates his spiritual nature, his *human essence*, from his own body and likewise from nature outside him.

(4) A direct consequence of man's alienation from the product of his work, from his life activity, and from his species-existence, is the *alienation of man from man*. When man confronts himself, he confronts *other* men. What holds true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work, and to himself, also holds true of man's relationship to other men, to their labor, and the object of their labor.

In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species-existence means that one man is alienated from another just as each man is alienated from human nature.

The alienation of man, the relation of man to himself, is realized and expressed in the relation between man and other men.

Thus in the relation of alienated labor every man sees the others according to the standard and the relation in which he finds himself as a worker.

We began with an economic fact, the alienation of the worker and his product. We have given expression to the concept of this fact: *alienated, externalized* labor. We have analyzed this concept and have thus analyzed merely a fact of political economy.

Let us now see further how the concept of alienated, externalized labor must express and represent itself in actuality.

If the product of labor is alien to me, confronts me as an alien power, to whom then does it belong?

If my own activity does not belong to me, if it is an alien and forced activity, to whom then does it belong?

To a being *other* than myself.

Who is this being?

*Gods?* To be sure, in early times the main production, for example, the building of temples in Egypt, India, and Mexico, appears to be in the service of the gods, just as the product belongs to the gods. But gods alone were never workmasters. The same is true of *nature*. And what a contradiction it would be if the more man subjugates nature through his work and the more the miracles of gods are rendered superfluous by the marvels of industry, man should renounce his joy in producing and the enjoyment of his product for love of these powers.

The *alien* being who owns labor and the product of labor, whom labor serves and whom the product of labor satisfies can only be *man himself*.

That the product of labor does not belong to the worker and an alien power confronts him is possible only because this product belongs to a *man other than the worker*. If his activity is torment for him, it must be the pleasure and the life—



enjoyment for another. Not gods, not nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over man.

Let us consider the statement previously made, that the relationship of man to himself is *objective* and *actual* to him only through his relationship to other men. If man is related to the product of his labor, to his objectified labor, as to an *alien*, hostile, powerful object independent of him, he is so related that another alien, hostile, powerful man independent of him is the lord of this object. If he is unfree in relation to his own activity, he is related to it as bonded activity, activity under the domination, coercion, and yoke of another man.

Every self-alienation of man, from himself and from nature, appears in the relationship which he postulates between other men and himself and nature. Thus religious self-alienation appears necessarily in the relation of laity to priest, or also to a mediator, since we are here now concerned with the spiritual world. In the practical real world self-alienation can appear only in the practical real relationships to other men. The means whereby the alienation proceeds is a *practical* means. Through alienated labor man thus not only produces his relationship to the object and to the act of production as an alien man at enmity with him. He also creates the relation in which other men stand to his production and product, and the relation in which he stands to these other men. just as he begets his own production as loss of his reality, as his punishment; just as he begets his own product, as a loss, a product not belonging to him, so he begets the domination of the nonproducer over production and over product. As he alienates his own activity from himself, he confers upon the stranger an activity which is not his own.

Up to this point, we have investigated the relationship only from the side of the worker and will later investigate it also from the side of the non-worker.

Thus through *alienated externalized* labor does the worker create the relation to this work of man alienated to labor and standing outside it. The relation of the worker to labor produces the relation of the capitalist to labor, or whatever one wishes to call the lord of labor. *Private property* is thus product, result, and necessary consequence of externalized labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.

*Private property* thus is derived, through analysis, from the concept of *externalized labor*, that is, *externalized man*, alienated labor, alienated life, and *alienated* man.

We have obtained the concept of *externalized labor* (*externalized life*) from political economy as a result of the *movement of private property*. But the analysis of this idea shows that though private property appears to be the ground and cause of externalized labor, it is rather a consequence of externalized labor, just as gods are *originally* not the cause but the effect of an aberration of the human mind. Later this relation reverses.

Only at the final culmination of the development of private property does this, its secret, reappear—namely, that on the one hand it is the *product* of externalized labor and that secondly it is the *means* through which labor externalizes itself, the realization of this externalization.

This development throws light on several conflicts hitherto unresolved.

(1) Political economy proceeds from labor as the very soul of production and yet gives labor nothing, private property everything. From this contradiction Proudhon decided in favor of labor and against private property. We perceive, however, that this apparent contradiction is the contradiction of *alienated labor* with itself and that political economy has only formulated the laws of alienated labor.

Therefore we also perceive that *wages* and *private property* are identical: for when the product, the object of labor, pays for the labor itself, wages are only a necessary consequence of the alienation of labor. In wages labor appears not as an end in it-

self but as the servant of wages. We shall develop this later and now only draw some conclusions.

An enforced *raising of wages* (disregarding all other difficulties, including that this anomaly could only be maintained forcibly) would therefore be nothing but a *better slave-salary* and would not achieve either for the worker or for labor human significance and dignity.

Even the *equality of wages*, as advanced by Proudhon, would only convert the relation of the contemporary worker to his work into the relation of all men to labor.\* Society would then be conceived as an abstract capitalist.

Wages are a direct result of alienated labor, and alienated labor is the direct cause of private property. The downfall of one is necessarily the downfall of the other.

(2) From the relation of alienated labor to private property it follows further that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in its *political* form as the *emancipation of workers*, not as though it is only a question of their emancipation but because in their emancipation is contained universal human emancipation. It is contained in their emancipation because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of worker to production, and all relations of servitude are only modifications and consequences of the worker's relation to production.

As we have found the concept of *private property* through *analysis* from the concept of *alienated, externalized labor*, so we can develop all the *categories* of political economy with the aid of these two factors, and we shall again find in each category—for example, barter, competition, capital, money—only a *particular* and *developed expression* of these primary foundations.

Before considering this configuration, however, let us try to solve two problems.

(1) To determine the *general nature of private property* as a result of alienated labor in its relation to *truly human* and *social property*.

(2) We have taken the *alienation of labor* and its *externalization* as a fact and analyzed this fact. How, we ask now, does it happen that *man externalizes his labor*, alienates it? How is this alienation rooted in the nature of human development? We have already achieved much in resolving the problem by *transforming* the question concerning the *origin of private property* into the question concerning the relationship of *externalized labor* to evolution of humanity. In talking about *private property* one believes he is dealing with something external to man. Talking of labor, one is immediately dealing with man himself. This new formulation of the problem already contains its solution.

On (1) *The general nature of private property and its relation to truly human property*.

We have resolved alienated labor into two parts which mutually determine each other or rather are only different expressions of one and the same relationship. *Appropriation* appears as *alienation*, as *externalization*; *externalization* as *appropriation*; *alienation* as the true *naturalization*.

We considered the one side, *externalized labor*, in relation to the *worker* himself, that is, the *relation of externalized labor to itself*. We have found the *property relation of the non-worker to the worker* and *labor* to be the product, the necessary result, of this relationship. *Private property* as the material, summarized expression of externalized labor embraces both relationships—the *relationship of worker to labor*, the *product of his work*, and the *non-worker*, and the relationship of the *non-worker to the worker* and the *product of his labor*.

\*[Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), French socialist writer and precursor of anarchism, author of *What Is Property?* (1841).]



As we have seen that in relation to the worker who *appropriates* nature through his labor the appropriation appears as alienation—self-activity as activity for another and of another, living as the sacrifice of life, production of the object as loss of it to an alien power, an *alien* man—we now consider the relationship of this *alien* man to the worker, to labor and its object.

It should be noted first that everything which appears with the worker as an *activity of externalization* and an *activity of alienation* appears with the non-worker as a *condition of externalization*, a *condition of alienation*.

Secondly, that the *actual, practical attitude* of the worker in production and to his product (as a condition of mind) appears as a *theoretical attitude* in the non-worker confronting him.

*Thirdly*, the non-worker does everything against the worker which the worker does against himself, but he does not do against his own self what he does against the worker.\*

Let us consider more closely these three relationships.

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## PRIVATE PROPERTY AND COMMUNISM

The antithesis between *propertylessness* and *property*, however, still remains indifferent, not grasped in its *active connection* with its *internal* relationship as *contradiction*, so long as it is not understood as the antithesis of *labor* and *capital*. This antithesis can be expressed in the *first* form even without the advanced development of private property as in ancient Rome, in Turkey, etc. It does not yet *appear* as instituted by private property itself. But labor, the subjective essence of private property as exclusion of property, and capital, objective labor as the exclusion of labor, is *private property* as its developed relation of contradiction, hence a dynamic relation driving toward resolution.

The overcoming [*Aufhebung*] of self-alienation follows the same course as self-alienation. *Private property* is first considered only in its objective aspect—but still with labor as its essence. Its form of existence is therefore *capital which is to be overcome "as such"* (Proudhon). Or the *particular form* of labor—leveled down, parceled, and thus unfree labor—is taken as the source of the *perniciousness* of private property and its humanly alienated existence. *Fourier* agreeing with the physiocrats, thus regards *agricultural labor* as being at least *exemplary*, while *Saint-Simon* on the other hand holds *industrial labor* as such to be the essence of labor and thus seeks the *exclusive* predominance of the industrialists and the improvement of the workers' condition.\*\* *Communism* is ultimately the *positive* expression of private property as over-

\*[This paragraph is an allusion to Hegel's famous discussion of the "master and servant" in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. "Solely being-for-himself is the [master's] essence; he is the pure negative power to which the thing is nothing, and hence the pure essential doing in this situation; while the servant is not a pure doing, but an inessential one. But for true recognition there is lacking the moment that what the master does to the other he also does to himself, and what the servant does to himself he also does to the other." (See above page 46.)]

\*\*[Charles Fourier (1772–1837) and Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), French socialist writers. The Physiocrats were a school of eighteenth-century political economists, whose foremost representative was Francois Quesnay (1694–1774).]

come [*aufgehoben*]. Immediately it is *universal* private property. In taking this relation in its *universality* communism is: (1) In its first form only a *universalization* and *completion* of this relationship. As such it appears in a double pattern: On the one hand the domination of *material* property bulks so large that it wants to destroy *everything* which cannot be possessed by everyone as *private property*. It wants to abstract from talent, etc., by force. Immediate, physical *possession* is for it the sole aim of life and existence. The condition of the *laborer* is not overcome but extended to all men. The relationship of *private property* remains the relationship of the community to the world of things. Ultimately this movement which contrasts universal private property to private property is expressed in the animalistic form that *marriage* (surely a form of *exclusive private property*) is counterposed to the *community of women* where they become *communal* and *common* property. We might say that this idea of the *community of women* is the *open secret* of this still very crude, unthinking communism. As women go from marriage into universal prostitution, so the whole world of wealth—that is, the objective essence of man—passes from the relationship of exclusive marriage with the private owner into the relationship of universal prostitution with the community. This communism—in that it negates man's *personality* everywhere—is only the logical expression of the private property which is this negation. Universal envy establishing itself as a power is only the disguised form in which *greed* reestablishes and satisfies itself in *another* way. The thought of every piece of private property as such is *at the very least* turned against *richer* private property as envy and the desire to level so that envy and the desire to level in fact constitute the essence of competition. Crude communism is only the fulfillment of this envy and leveling on the basis of a *preconceived* minimum. It has a *definite delimited* measure. How little this overcoming of private property is an actual appropriation is shown precisely by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization, the reversion to the *unnatural* simplicity of the *poor* and wantless man who has not gone beyond private property, has not yet even achieved it.

The community is only a community of *labor* and an equality of *wages* which the communal capital, the *community* as universal capitalist, pays out. Both sides of the relationship are raised to a *supposed* universality—labor as the condition in which everyone is put, *capital* as the recognized universality and power of the community.

In the relationship with *woman*, as the spoil and handmaid of communal lust, is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself since the secret of this relationship has its *unambiguous*, decisive, *plain*, and revealed expression in the relationship of man to woman and in the way in which the *immediate, natural* species-relationship of human being to human being is the *relationship* of man to woman. In this *natural* species-relationship man's relationship to nature is immediately his relationship to man, as his relationship to man is immediately his relationship to nature, to his own *natural* condition. In this relationship the extent to which the human essence has become nature for man or nature has become the human essence of man is *sensuously manifested*, reduced to a perceptible *fact*. From this relationship one can thus judge the entire level of mankind's development. From the character of his relationship follows the extent to which *man* has become and comprehended himself as a *generic being*, as *man*; the relationship of man to women is the *most natural* relationship of human being to human being. It thus indicates the extent to which man's *natural* behavior has become *human* or the extent to which his *human* essence has become a *natural* essence for him, the extent to which his *human nature* has become *nature* to him. In this relationship is also apparent the extent to which man's *need* has become *human*, thus the extent to which the *other* human being, as human being, has become a need



for him, the extent to which he in his most individual existence is at the same time a social being.

The first positive overcoming of private property—*crude* communism—is thus only an *apparent form* of the vileness of private property trying to set itself up as the *positive community*.

(2) Communism (a) still of political nature, democratic or despotic; (b) with the overcoming of the state, but still incomplete and influenced by private property, that is, by the alienation of man. In both forms communism already knows itself as the reintegration or return of man to himself, as the overcoming of human self-alienation, but since it has not yet understood the positive essence of private property and just as little the *human* nature of needs, it still remains captive to and infected by private property. It has, indeed, grasped its concept but still not its essence.

(3) *Communism as positive overcoming of private property as human self-alienation*, and thus as the actual appropriation of the human essence through and for man; therefore as the complete and conscious restoration of man to himself within the total wealth of previous development, the restoration of man as a *social*, that is, *human* being. This communism as completed naturalism is humanism, as completed humanism it is naturalism. It is the *genuine* resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man; it is the true resolution of the conflict between existence and essence, objectification and self-affirmation, freedom and necessity, individual and species. It is the riddle of history solved and knows itself as this solution.

The entire movement of history is therefore both its *actual* genesis—the birth of its empirical existence—and also for its thinking awareness the *conceived* and *conscious* movement of its *becoming* whereas the other yet undeveloped communism seeks in certain historical forms opposed to private property a *historical* proof, a proof in what explicitly exists. It thereby tears particular moments out of the movement (Cabet, Villégardelle\* etc., particularly ride this horse) and marks them as proofs of its historical pedigree. Thus it makes clear that the far greater part of this movement contradicts its claims and that if it once existed, its *past* existence refutes the pretension of its *essence*.

It is easy to see the necessity that the whole revolutionary movement finds both its empirical as well as theoretical basis in the development of *private property*—in the economy, to be exact.

This *material*, immediately perceptible private property is the material, sensuous expression of *alienated human* life. Its movement—production and consumption—is the *sensuous* manifestation of the movement of all previous production, that is, the realization or actuality of man. Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only *particular* forms of production and fall under its general law. *The positive overcoming of private property as the appropriation of human life is thus the positive overcoming of all alienation and the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his human, that is, social existence.* Religious alienation as such occurs only in the sphere of the inner human *consciousness*, but economic alienation belongs to *actual life*—its overcoming thus includes both aspects. It is obvious that the movement has its *first* beginning among different peoples depending on whether their true *acknowledged* life proceeds more in consciousness or in the external world, is more ideal or real. Communism thus begins (*Owen*\*\*\*) with atheism, but atheism is at the beginning still

\*[Etienne Cabet (1788–1856), French communist, author of *Travels in Icaria* (1840); Francois Villégardelle (1810–1856), French communist writer and follower of Fourier.]

\*\*\*[Robert Owen (1771–1858), British communist and founder of utopian colonies.]

far from being *communism* since it is mostly an *abstraction*.\*—The philanthropy of atheism is at first therefore only a *philosophical*, abstract philanthropy; that of communism is at once *real* and immediately bent toward *action*.

On the assumption that private property has been positively overcome we have seen how man produces man, himself, and other men; how the object, the immediate activity of his individuality, is at the same time his own existence for other men, their existence, and their existence for him. Similarly, however, both the material of labor and man as subject are equally the result and beginning of the movement (and the historical *necessity* of private property lies precisely in the fact that they must be this *beginning*). Thus is the *social* character the general character of the whole movement; as society itself produces *man* as *man*, so it is *produced* by him. Activity and satisfaction [*Genuss*], both in their content and *mode of existence*, are *social*, *social* activity and *social* satisfaction. The *human* essence of nature primarily exists only for *social* man, because only here is nature a *link* with *man*, as his existence for others and their existence for him, as the life-element of human actuality—only here is nature the *foundation* of man's own *human* existence. Only here has the *natural* existence of man become his *human* existence and nature become human. Thus *society* is the completed, essential unity of man with nature, the true resurrection of nature, the fulfilled naturalism of man and humanism of nature.

Social activity and satisfaction by no means exist *merely* in the form of an *immediate* communal activity and immediate *communal* satisfaction. Nevertheless such activity and satisfaction, expressed and confirmed immediately in *actual association* with other men, will occur wherever that *immediate* expression of sociality is essentially grounded in its content and adequate to its nature.

Even as I am scientifically active, etc.—an activity I can seldom pursue in direct community with others—I am *socially* active because I am active as a *man*. Not only is the material of my activity—such as the language in which the thinker is active—given to me as a social product, but my *own* existence is social activity; what I make from myself I make for society, conscious of my nature as social.

My *general* consciousness is only the *theoretical* form of that whose *living* form is the *real* community, the social essence, although at present *general* consciousness is an abstraction from actual life and antagonistically opposed to it. Consequently the *activity* of my general consciousness is thus, as activity, my *theoretical* existence as a social being.

To be avoided above all is establishing "society" once again as an abstraction over against the individual. The individual is the *social being*. The expression of his life—even if it does not appear immediately in the form of a *communal* expression carried out together with others—is therefore an expression and assertion of *social life*. The individual and generic life of man are not *distinct*, however much—and necessarily so—the mode of existence of individual life is either a more *particular* or more *general* mode of generic life, or generic life a more *particular* or *universal* mode of individual life.

As *generic consciousness* man asserts his real *social life* and merely repeats his actual existence in thought just as, conversely, generic existence asserts itself in generic consciousness and in its universality exists explicitly as a thinking being. Though man is therefore a *particular* individual—and precisely his particularity makes

\*Prostitution is only a *particular* expression of the *general* prostitution of the *laborer*, and since prostitution is a relationship which includes not only the prostituted but also the prostitution—whose vile-ness is still greater—so also the capitalist, etc. falls in this category [Marx's footnote].



him an individual, an actual *individual* communal being—he is equally the *totality*, the ideal totality, the subjective existence of society explicitly thought and experienced. Likewise he also exists in actuality both as perception and actual satisfaction of social existence and as a totality of human expression of life.

Thinking and being, to be sure, are thus *distinct* but at the same time in *unity* with one another.

*Death* seems to be a harsh victory of the species over the particular individual and to contradict the species' unity, but the particular individual is only a *particular generic being* and as such mortal.

(( (4) Just as *private property* is only the sensuous expression of the fact that man becomes *objective* for himself and at the same time becomes an alien and inhuman object for himself, that his expression of life is his externalization of life and his realization a loss of reality, an *alien* actuality, so the positive overcoming of private property—that is, the *sensuous* appropriation of the human essence—and life, of objective man and of human *works* by and for man—is not to be grasped only as *immediate, exclusive satisfaction* or as *possession*, as *having*. Man appropriates to himself his manifold essence in an all-sided way, thus as a whole man. Every one of his *human* relations to the world—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, perceiving, sensing, wishing, acting, loving—in short, all the organs of his individuality, which are immediately communal in form, are an appropriation of the object in their *objective* relation [*Verhalten*] or their *relation to it*. This appropriation of *human* actuality and its relation to the object is the *confirmation of human actuality*. It is therefore as varied as are the *determinations* of the human *essence* and *activities*. It is human *efficacy* and human *suffering*, for suffering, humanly conceived, is a satisfaction of the self in man.

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is *ours* only if we have it, if it exists for us as a capital or is immediately possessed by us, eaten, drunk, worn, lived in, etc., in short, *used*; but private property grasps all these immediate forms of possession only as *means of living*, and the life they serve is the *life of private property*, labor, and capitalization.

Hence *all* the physical and spiritual senses have been replaced by the simple alienation of them *all*, the sense of *having*. Human nature had to be reduced to this absolute poverty so that it could give birth to its inner wealth. (On the category of *having*, see Hess in *Twenty-one Sheets*.)

The overcoming of private property means therefore the complete *emancipation* of all human senses and aptitudes [*Eigenschaften*], but it means this emancipation precisely because these senses and aptitudes have become *human* both subjectively and objectively. The eye has become a *human* eye, just as its *object* has become a social, *human* object derived from and for man. The *senses* have therefore become *theoreticians* immediately in their *praxis*. They try to relate themselves to their *subject matter* [*Sache*] for its own sake, but the subject matter itself is an *objective human* relation to itself and to man,\* and vice versa. Need or satisfaction have thus lost their *egoistic* nature, and nature has lost its mere *utility* by use becoming *human* use.

Similarly the senses and satisfactions of other men have become my *own* appropriation. Besides these immediate organs, *social* organs are therefore developed in the *form* of society; for example, activity in direct association with others, etc., has become an organ of a *life-expression* and a way of appropriating *human* life.

It is obvious that the *human* eye appreciates differently from the crude, inhuman eye, the human *ear* differently from the crude ear, etc.

\*I can practically relate myself to the subject matter in a human way only if it is itself humanly related to man [Marx's footnote].

Only if man's object, we have seen, becomes for him a *human* object or objective man, is he not lost in it. This is possible only when the object becomes *social* and he himself becomes social just as society becomes essential for him in this object.

On the one hand, therefore, it is only when objective actuality generally becomes for man in society the actuality of essential human capacities, human actuality, and thus the actuality of his *own* capacities that all *objects* become for him the *objectification* of himself, become objects which confirm and realize his individuality as *his* objects, that is, *he himself* becomes the object. *How* they become his depends on the *nature* of the *object* and the nature of the *essential capacity* corresponding to it, for it is precisely the *determinateness* of this relationship which shapes the particular, *actual* mode of affirmation. For the *eye* an object is different than for the *ear*, and the object of the eye is another object than that of the *ear*. The peculiarity of each essential capacity is precisely its *characteristic essence* and thus also the characteristic mode of its objectification, of its *objectively actual*, living *being*. Thus man is affirmed in the objective world not only in thought but with *all* his senses.

On the other hand and from the subjective point of view, as music alone awakens man's musical sense and the most beautiful music has no meaning for the unmusical ear—is no object for it, because my object can only be the confirmation of one of my essential capacities and can therefore only be so for me insofar as my essential capacity exists explicitly as a subjective capacity, because the meaning of an object for me reaches only as far as *my* senses go (only makes sense for a corresponding sense)—for this reason the *senses* of social man *differ* from those of the unsocial. Only through the objectively unfolded wealth of human nature is the wealth of the subjective *human* sensibility either cultivated or created—a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short, *senses* capable of human satisfaction, confirming themselves as essential *human* capacities. For not only the five senses but also the so-called spiritual and moral senses (will, love, etc.), in a word, *human* sense and the humanity of the senses come into being only through the existence of *their* object, through nature *humanized*. The *development* of the five senses is a labor of the whole previous history of the world. *Sense* subordinated to crude, practical need has only a *narrow* meaning.)) For the starving man food does not exist in its human form but only in its abstract character as food. It could be available in its crudest form and one could not say wherein the starving man's eating differs from that of *animals*. The care-laden, needy man has no mind for the most beautiful play. The dealer in minerals sees only their market value but not their beauty and special nature; he has no mineralogical sensitivity. Hence the objectification of the human essence, both theoretically and practically, is necessary to *humanize* man's *senses* and also create a *human sense* corresponding to the entire wealth of humanity and nature.

((Just as the coming society finds at hand all the material for this *cultural development* [*Bildung*] through the movement of *private property*, its wealth as well as its poverty both material and spiritual, so the fully *constituted* society produces man in this entire wealth of his being, produces the *rich*, deep, and *entirely sensitive* man as its enduring actuality.))

It is apparent how subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism, activity and passivity lose their opposition and thus their existence as antitheses only in the social situation; ((it is apparent how the resolution of *theoretical* antitheses is possible *only* in a *practical* way, only through man's practical energy, and hence their resolution is in no way merely a problem of knowledge but a *real* problem of life which *philosophy* could not solve because it grasped the problem as *only* theoretical.))

((It is apparent how the history of *industry*, industry as *objectively* existing, is the *open* book of *man's essential powers*, the observably present human *psychology*,



which has not been thus far grasped in its connection with man's *essential* nature but only in an external utilitarian way because in the perspective of alienation only the general existence of man—religion or history in its abstract-general character as politics, art, literature, etc.—was grasped as the actuality of man's essential powers and his human *generic action*. We have before us the *objectified essential powers* of man in the form of *sensuous, alien, useful objects*—in the form of alienation—in *ordinary material industry* (which can be conceived as a part of that general movement just as that movement can be grasped as a *particular* part of industry since all human activity up to the present has been labor, industry, activity alienated from itself). A *psychology* for which this book, that is, the most observably present and accessible part of history, remains closed cannot become an actual, substantial, and *real science*.) What indeed should one think of a science which *arbitrarily* abstracts from this large area of human labor and is unaware of its own incompleteness while such an extended wealth of human activity means no more to it than can be expressed in one word—"need," "*common need*"?

The *natural sciences* have become enormously active and have accumulated an ever growing subject-matter. But philosophy has remained as alien to them as they have to it. Their momentary unity was only a *fantastic illusion*. The will was there, but the means were missing. Historiography itself only occasionally takes account of natural science as a moment of enlightenment, utility, some particular great discoveries. But natural science has penetrated and transformed human life all the more *practically* through industry, preparing for human emancipation however much it immediately had to accentuate dehumanization. *Industry* is the *actual* historical relationship of nature, and thus of natural science, to man. If it is grasped as the *exoteric* manifestation of man's *essential powers*, the *human* essence of nature or the *natural* essence of man can also be understood. Hence, natural science will lose its abstract material—or rather idealistic—tendency and become the basis of *human science* as it has already become, though in an alienated form, the basis of actual human life. One basis for life and *another* for *science* is in itself a lie. ((Nature developing in human history—the creation of human society—is the *actual* nature of man; hence nature as it develops through industry, though in an *alienated* form, is true *anthropological* nature.))

*Sense perception* (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science. Science is only *actual* when it proceeds from sense perception in the twofold form of both *sensuous* awareness and *sensuous* need, that is, from nature. The whole of history is a preparation for "*man*" to become the object of *sensuous* awareness and for the needs of "*man as man*" to become sensuous needs. History itself is an *actual* part of *natural history*, of nature's development into man. Natural science will in time include the science of man as the science of man will include natural science: There will be *one* science.

*Man* is the immediate object of natural science because immediately *perceptible nature* is for man, immediately, human sense perception (an identical statement) as the *other* man immediately perceptible for him. His own sense perception only exists as human sense perception for himself through the *other* man. But *nature* is the direct object of the *science of man*. The first object for man—*man himself*—is nature, sense perception; and the particular, perceptible, and essential powers of man can attain self-knowledge only in *natural science* because they are objectively developed only in natural objects. The element of thought itself, the element of the life-expression of thought, *language*, is perceptible nature. The *social* actuality of nature and *human* natural science or the *natural science of man* are identical expressions.

((It is apparent how the rich man and wide *human* need appear in place of economic *wealth* and *poverty*. The rich man is simultaneously one who *needs* a totality of

human manifestations of life and in whom his own realization exists as inner necessity, as *need*. Not only the *wealth* but also the *poverty* of man equally acquire—under the premise of socialism—a *human* and thus social meaning. It is the passive bond which lets man experience the greatest wealth, the *other* human being, as need. The domination of the objective essence within me, the sensuous eruption of my essential activity, is *emotion* which thereby becomes the *activity* of my nature.))

(5) A *being* only regards himself as independent when he stands on his own feet, and he stands on his own feet only when he owes his *existence* to himself. A man who lives by the favor of another considers himself dependent. But I live entirely by the favor of another if I owe him not only the maintenance of my life but also its *creation*, its *source*. My life necessarily has such an external ground if it is not my own creation. The notion of *creation* is thus very difficult to expel from popular consciousness. For such consciousness the self-subsistence of nature and man is *inconceivable* because it contradicts all the *palpable facts* of practical life.

The creation of the *earth* has been severely shaken by geognosy [rather: by *geogony*], the science which presents the formation and development of the earth as a self-generative process. Generatio aequivoca is the only practical refutation of the theory of creation.

It is easy indeed to tell a particular individual what Aristotle said: You were begotten by your father and mother, so in you the mating of two human beings, a generic act of mankind, produced another. You see therefore that man owes even his physical existence to another. Here you must not keep in view only *one* of the two aspects, the *infinite* progression, and ask further, Who begot my father? Who his grandfather? etc. You must also keep in mind the *circular movement* sensibly apparent in that process whereby man reproduces himself in procreation; thus *man* always remains the subject. But you will answer: I grant this circular movement but you must allow the progression which leads even further until I ask, Who created the first man and nature as a whole? I can only answer: Your question is itself a product of abstraction. Ask yourself how you arrive at that question, whether it does not arise from a standpoint to which I cannot reply because it is twisted. Ask yourself whether that progression exists as such for rational thought. If you ask about the creation of nature and man, you thus abstract from man and nature. You assert them as *non-existent* and yet want me to prove them to you as *existing*. I say to you: Give up your abstraction and you will also give up your question. Or if you want to maintain your abstraction, be consistent and if you think of man and nature as *non-existent*, think of yourself as non-existent as you too are nature and man. Do not think, do not question me, for as soon as you think and question, your *abstraction* from the existence of nature and man makes no sense. Or are you such an egoist that you assert everything as nothing and yet want yourself to exist?

You may reply to me: I do not want to assert the nothingness of nature, etc. I only ask about its *genesis* as I ask the anatomist about the formation of bones, etc.

Since for socialist man, however, the *entire so-called world history* is only the creation of man through human labor and the development of nature for man, he has evident and incontrovertible proof of his *self-creation*, his own *formation process*. Since the *essential dependence* of man in nature—man for man as the existence of nature and nature for man as the existence of man—has become practical, sensuous and perceptible, the question about an *alien* being beyond man and nature (a question which implies the unreality of nature and man) has become impossible in practice. *Atheism* as a denial of this unreality no longer makes sense because it is a *negation of God* and through this negation asserts the *existence of man*. But socialism as such no longer needs such mediation. It begins with the *sensuous perception, theoretically and practically*, of man and nature as *essential beings*. It is man's *positive self-consciousness*,



no longer attained through the overcoming of religion, just as *actual life* is positive actuality no longer attained through the overcoming of private property, through *communism*. The position of communism is the negation of the negation and hence, for the next stage of historical development, the necessary actual phase of man's emancipation and rehabilitation. *Communism* is the necessary form and dynamic principle of the immediate future but not as such the goal of human development—the form of human society.

## CRITIQUE OF HEGELIAN DIALECTIC AND PHILOSOPHY IN GENERAL

This is perhaps the place at which to make some comments explaining and justifying what has been said about Hegel's dialectic in general, particularly its exposition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Logic*, and finally about its relation to the modern critical movement.

Modern German criticism has been so much preoccupied with the past, so much restricted by the development of its subject matter, that it has had a completely uncritical attitude toward methods of criticism and has been completely oblivious to the *seemingly formal* but actually *essential* question: How do we now stand in relation to the Hegelian dialectic? This lack of awareness concerning the relation of modern criticism to Hegel's philosophy in general and his dialectic in particular has been so great that critics like *Strauss* and *Bruno Bauer* have been completely entrapped in the Hegelian logic—the former completely and the latter at least implicitly in his [*Critique of the Gospel History of the*] *Synoptics*\* (where he substitutes the "self-consciousness" of abstract man for the substance of "abstract nature," in opposition to Strauss) and even in his *Revealed Christianity*\*\* where you find, for example: "As though self-consciousness in producing the world did not produce its difference and thereby produce itself in what it produced since it again transcends the distinction between what is produced and itself, since it exists only in this production and movement—as though it should not have its purpose in this movement," etc. Or again: "They (the French materialists) could not yet see that the movement of the universe has only become actual for itself and unified with itself as the movement of self-consciousness." Such expressions not only verbally agree with the Hegelian perspective but reproduce it literally.

How little awareness there was in relation to the Hegelian dialectic during the act of criticism (Bauer, *Synoptics*) and how little this awareness appeared even after the act of substantial criticism is shown by Bauer in his *Good Cause of Freedom [and My Own Concern]*\*\*\* when he discusses Herr Gruppe's† impertinent question—"What about logic now?"—and refers it to future critics.

But now that *Feuerbach* in his "Theses" appearing in the *Anekdotia* and more fully in his [*Principles of the*] *Philosophy of the Future* has destroyed the inner principle of the old dialectic and philosophy, the school of criticism which was unable to do

\*[Bruno Bauer, *Critique of the Gospel History of the Synoptics* (1841).]

\*\*[Bruno Bauer, *Revealed Christianity* (1843).]

\*\*\*[Bruno Bauer, *The Good Cause of Freedom and My Own Concern* (1842).]

†Otto Friedrich Gruppe (1804–1876), anti-Hegelian polemicist, regarded by some as a precursor of twentieth century linguistic philosophy.

this by itself but has seen it done has proclaimed itself pure, decisive, absolute, and entirely clear with itself. In its spiritual pride it has reduced the entire process of history to the relation between the rest of the world—which falls under the category of “the Mass”—and itself and has reduced dogmatic antitheses into the one between its own cleverness and the stupidity of the world, between the critical Christ and “Humanity” as the “*rabble*.” Daily and hourly it has demonstrated its own excellence against the stupidity of the masses and has finally announced the critical *last judgment* to the effect that the day is at hand when the whole of fallen humanity will assemble before it and be divided into groups with each particular mob receiving its testimonium pauper-tatis. Now that this school of criticism has publicized its superiority to human feelings as well as to the whole world, above which it sits enthroned in sublime solitude, from time to time letting fall from its sarcastic lips the laughter of the Olympian gods—even now after all these entertaining antics of idealism (of Young Hegelianism) expiring in the form of criticism—even now it has not once expressed the suspicion that there must be a reckoning with its own source, the Hegelian dialectic. It has not even indicated a critical relation to Feuerbach’s dialectic. This is a procedure with a completely uncritical attitude toward itself.

Feuerbach is the only one who has a *serious, critical* relation to Hegel’s dialectic, who has made genuine discoveries in this field, and who above all is the true conqueror of the old philosophy. The magnitude of Feuerbach’s achievement and the unpretentious simplicity with which he presents it to the world stand in a strikingly opposite inverse ratio.

Feuerbach’s great achievement is: (1) proof that philosophy is nothing more than religion brought to and developed in reflection, and thus is equally to be condemned as another form and mode of the alienation of man’s nature;

(2) the establishment of *true materialism* and *real science* by making the social relationship of “man to man” the fundamental principle of his theory;

(3) opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the self-subsistent positive positively grounded on itself.

Feuerbach explains Hegel’s dialectic (and thereby justifies starting out from the positive, from sense certainty) in the following way:

Hegel proceeds from the alienation of substance (logically, from the infinite, abstract universal), from absolute and fixed abstraction—that is, in popular language, he proceeds from religion and theology.

Secondly, he transcends [*hebt auf*] the infinite and posits the actual, the perceptible, the real, the finite, the particular (philosophy, the transcendence of religion and theology).

Thirdly, he then transcends the positive and re-establishes abstraction, the infinite. Re-establishment of religion and theology.

Feuerbach thus views the negation of the negation as *merely* a contradiction of philosophy with itself, as philosophy which affirms theology (the transcendent, etc.) after having denied it, thus affirming it in opposition to itself.

The positing or self-affirmation and self-confirmation in the negation of the negation is taken to be a positing which is still not sure of itself and hence is burdened with its opposite, is still doubtful of itself and hence is in need of proof, and is thus not demonstrated by its own existence and not grasped as a self-justifying position and hence directly and immediately confronts the self-grounded position of sense certainty.

Because Hegel conceived the negation of the negation from the aspect of the positive relation inherent in it as the only true positive, and from the aspect of the negative relation inherent in it as the only true and self-confirming act of all being, he



found only the *abstract, logical, speculative* expression of the movement of history, not the *actual* history of man as a given subject but only man's *genesis*, the *history of his origin*. We shall explain both the abstract form of this movement and the difference between this movement as conceived by Hegel and, in contrast, by modern criticism in Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*\* or rather the *critical* form of this movement which is still uncritical with Hegel.

Let us take a look at Hegel's system. [Marx's version of the table of contents from Hegel's *Phenomenology*, which follows here, has been deleted—F.B.]

\* \* \*

Since Hegel's *Encyclopedia* begins with logic, with *pure speculative thought*, and ends with *absolute knowledge*—with self-consciousness, self-comprehending or absolute, that is, superhuman, abstract mind [*Geist*]~~—it is altogether nothing but the expanded essence of the philosophical mind, its self-objectification. And the philosophical mind is only the alienated world-mind thinking within its self-alienation, that is, comprehending itself abstractly. Logic—the currency of mind, the speculative thought-value of man and nature, their essence indifferent to any actual determinate character and hence unreal—is thought externalized and hence thought abstracting from nature and actual men. It is abstract thinking. The externality of this abstract thinking . . . nature as it exists for this abstract thought. Nature is external to it, its self-loss, and is also conceived as something external, as abstract thought but as externalized abstract thought. Finally, [there is] mind, thinking which returns to its own birthplace and which as anthropological, phenomenological, psychological, ethical, and artistic-religious is not valid for itself until ultimately it finds itself and relates itself to itself as absolute knowledge in the absolute (i.e. abstract) mind containing its conscious and corresponding local existence. For its actual existence is abstraction.~~

Hegel makes a double mistake.

The first appears most clearly in the *Phenomenology*, the birthplace of the Hegelian philosophy. Where Hegel, to be specific, conceives wealth, state power, etc. as entities alienated from man's nature, this only happens in their thought form . . . They are thought-entities and hence merely an alienation of *pure*, that is, abstract, philosophical thinking. The whole movement, accordingly, ends with absolute knowledge. It is precisely abstract thought from which these objects are alienated and which they confront with their presumption of actuality. The *philosopher*—himself an abstract form of alienated man—sets himself up as the *measuring rod* of the alienated world. The entire *history of externalization* and the *withdrawal* from externalization is therefore nothing but the *history of the production* of abstract, that is, of absolute, logical, speculative thought. The *alienation* thus forming the real interest and transcendence of this externalization is the opposition of *in itself* and *for itself*, of *consciousness* and *self-consciousness*, of *object* and *subject*—that is, the opposition within thought itself between abstract thinking and sensuous actuality or actual sensibility. All other contradictions and their movements are only the *appearance*, the *cloak*, the *exoteric* form of these uniquely interesting opposites which constitute the *meaning* of the other profane contradictions. It is not that the human being *objectifies* himself *inhumanly* in opposition to himself, but that he *objectifies* himself by *distinction* from and *in opposition* to abstract thought—this is the essence of alienation as given and as to be transcended. The appropriation of man's essential capacities which have become

\*Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841).

things, even alien things, is thus primarily only an *appropriation* taking place in *consciousness*, in *pure thought*, that is, in *abstraction*. It is the appropriation of these objects as *thoughts* and *thought processes*. Hence there is already implicit in the *Phenomenology* as a germ, potentiality, and secret—despite its thoroughly negative and critical appearance and despite the actual criticism it contains which often anticipates later developments—the uncritical positivism and equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works, the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world.

Secondly, the vindication of the objective world for man—for example, the recognition that *sense* perception is no *abstract* sense perception but *human* sense perception, that religion, wealth, etc., are only the alienated actuality of *human* objectification, of *man's* essential capacities put to work, and therefore are only the *path* to genuine *human* actuality—this appropriation or insight into this process appears in Hegel as the affirmation that *sensuousness*, *religion*, state power, etc., are *mental* entities since *spirit* alone is the *genuine* essence of man and the true form of spirit is the thinking spirit, the logical, speculative mind. The *human quality* of nature, of nature produced through history, and of man's *products* appears in their being products of abstract spirit and hence phases of *mind*, *thought-entities*. The *Phenomenology* is thus concealed and mystifying criticism, unclear to itself, but inasmuch as it firmly grasps the *alienation* of man—even though man appears only as mind—all the elements of criticism are implicit in it, already *prepared* and *elaborated* in a manner far surpassing the Hegelian standpoint. The sections on the "unhappy consciousness," the "honest consciousness," the struggle between the "noble and base consciousness," etc., etc., contain the *critical* elements—though still in an alienated form—of whole spheres such as religion, the state, civil life, etc. just as the *entity* or *object* appears as a thought-entity, so is the *subject* always *consciousness* or *self-consciousness*; or rather the object appears only as *abstract* consciousness, man only as *self-consciousness*, and the diverse forms of alienation which make their appearance are therefore only different forms of consciousness and self-consciousness. Since abstract consciousness—the form in which the object is conceived—is *in itself* only a moment of distinction in self-consciousness, the result of the movement is the identity of self-consciousness with consciousness (absolute knowledge) or the movement of abstract thought no longer directed outward but proceeding only within itself. That is to say, the dialectic of pure thought is the result.

The great thing in Hegel's *Phenomenology* and its final result—the dialectic of negativity as the moving and productive principle—is simply that Hegel grasps the self-development of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the nature of *work* and comprehends objective man, authentic because actual, as the result of his *own work*. The *actual*, active relation of man to himself as a species-being or the confirmation of his speciesbeing as an actual, that is, human, being is only possible so far as he actually brings forth all his *species-powers*—which in turn is only possible through the collective effort of mankind, only as the result of history—and treats them as objects, something which immediately is again only possible in the form of alienation.

We shall now indicate in detail Hegel's one-sidedness and limitations in the closing chapter of the *Phenomenology* on absolute knowledge—a chapter containing the pervasive spirit of the whole book, its relation to speculative dialectic, and Hegel's *consciousness* of both and their interrelationship.

Provisionally, let us say this much in advance: Hegel's standpoint is that of modern political economy. He views *labor* as the *essence*, the selfconfirming essence of man; he sees only the positive side of labor, not its negative side. Labor is *man's coming-*



to-be for himself within externalization or as externalized man. The only labor Hegel knows and recognizes is abstract, mental labor. So that which above all constitutes the essence of philosophy—the externalization of man knowing himself or externalized knowledge thinking itself—Hegel grasps as its essence. Therefore, he is able to collect the separate elements of preceding philosophy and present his own as the philosophy. What other philosophers did—grasp separate phases of nature and human life as phases of self-consciousness, indeed, abstract self-consciousness—Hegel knows from doing philosophy. Hence his science is absolute.

Let us now proceed to our subject.

*Absolute knowledge. The last chapter of the Phenomenology.*

The main point is that the object of consciousness is nothing else but self-consciousness, or that the object is only objectified self-consciousness, self-consciousness as object (Assume man=self-consciousness.)

It is a question, therefore, of surmounting the object of consciousness. Objectivity as such is regarded as an alienated human relationship which does not correspond to the essence of man, to self-consciousness. Reappropriation of the objective essence of man, developed as something alien and determined by alienation, means not only the overcoming of alienation but also of objectivity—that is, man is regarded as a non-objective, spiritual being.

The process of surmounting the object of consciousness is described by Hegel as follows:

The object does not reveal itself as returning into the self (for Hegel that is a one-sided view of the movement, grasping only one aspect). Man is assumed as equivalent to self. But the self is only man conceived abstractly, derived through abstraction. Man is a self. His eye, his ear, etc., belong to a self; every one of his essential capacities has the quality of selfhood. But on that account it is quite false to say that self-consciousness has eyes, ears, essential capacities. Self-consciousness is rather a quality of human nature, of the human eye, etc.; human nature is not a quality of self-consciousness.

The self, abstracted and fixed for itself, is man as abstract egoist, purely abstract egoism raised to the level of thought. (We shall return to this later.)

For Hegel human nature, man, is equivalent to self-consciousness. All alienation of human nature is thus nothing but the alienation of self-consciousness. The alienation of self-consciousness is not taken to be an expression of the actual alienation of human nature reflected in knowledge and thought. Actual alienation, that which appears real, is rather in its innermost and concealed character (which philosophy only brings to light) only the appearance of the alienation of actual human nature, of self-consciousness. The science which grasps this is therefore called phenomenology. All reappropriation of that alienated objective nature thus appears as an incorporation into self-consciousness. The man who takes possession of his nature is only self-consciousness taking possession of its objective nature. Hence the return of the object into the self is its reappropriation.

Expressed comprehensively, the surmounting of the object of consciousness amounts to this: (1) that the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something vanishing; (2) that it is the externalization of self-consciousness which establishes thinghood; (3) that this externalization has not only a negative but a positive significance as well; (4) that it has this significance not only for us or in itself but for self-consciousness itself; (5) for self-consciousness the negative of the object or its self-transcendence thereby has positive significance—self-consciousness thus knows this negativity of the object—since self-consciousness externalizes itself and in this ex-

ternalization establishes *itself* as object or establishes the object as itself on behalf of the indivisible unity of *being-for-self*; (6) on the other hand, there is also present this other moment in the process, that self-consciousness has transcended and reabsorbed into itself this externalization, this objectivity, and is thus at one with itself in *its* other-being *as such*; (7) this is the movement of consciousness, and consciousness is therefore the totality of its phases; (8) consciousness must similarly have related itself to the object in all its aspects and have grasped the object in terms of each of them. This totality of its aspects gives the object *implicitly a spiritual nature*, and it truly becomes this nature for consciousness through the apprehension of every one of these aspects as belonging to the *self* or through what was earlier called the *spiritual* relation to them.

ad (1) that the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something vanishing—this is the *return of the object into the self* mentioned above.

ad (2) the *externalization of self-consciousness* establishes *thinghood*. Since man equals self-consciousness, his externalized objective nature or *thinghood* is equivalent to externalized *self-consciousness* and *thinghood* is established through this externalization. (Thinghood is that which is *an object for man* and an object is truly only for him if it is essential to him and thus his *objective* essence. Since it is not *actual man* and therefore also not *nature*—man being *nature as human*—who as such becomes a subject but only the abstraction of man, self-consciousness, thinghood can only be externalized self-consciousness.) It is entirely to be expected that a living, natural being endowed with objective (i.e. material) capacities should have *real natural objects* corresponding to its nature and also that its self-externalization should establish an *actual* objective world but a world in the form of *externality*, one which does not belong to such a being's nature, an overpowering world. There is nothing incomprehensible or mysterious in this. The contrary, rather, would be mysterious. But it is equally clear that a *self-consciousness*, that is, its externalization, can only establish *thinghood*, that is, only an abstract thing, a thing of abstraction and no *actual* thing. It is further clear that thinghood thus completely lacks *independence, essentiality*, over and against self-consciousness but is a mere artifice *established* by self-consciousness. And what is established, instead of confirming itself, is only a confirmation of the act of establishing which for a moment, but only a moment, fixes its energy as product and *apparently* gives it the role of an independent, actual nature.

When actual, corporeal *man* with his feet firmly planted on the solid ground, inhaling and exhaling all of nature's energies *establishes* his actual, objective *essential capacities* as alien objects through his externalization, the *establishing* is not the subject but the subjectivity of *objective capacities* whose action must therefore also be *objective*. An objective being acts objectively and would not act objectively if objectivity did not lie in its essential nature. It creates and establishes *only objects because* it is established through objects, because it is fundamentally part of *nature*. In the act of establishing, this objective being does not therefore descend from its "pure activity" to the *creation of the object*, but its *objective* product merely confirms its *objective activity*, its activity as that of an objective, natural being.

We see here how a consistent naturalism or humanism is distinguished from both idealism and materialism as well, and at the same time is the unifying truth of both. We also see how only naturalism is able to comprehend the act of world history.

(Immediately, *man is a natural being*. As a living natural being he is, in one aspect, endowed with the *natural capacities* and *vital powers* of an *active* natural being. These capacities exist in him as tendencies and capabilities, as *drives*. In another aspect as a natural, living, sentient and objective being man is a *suffering*, conditioned, and limited creature like an animal or plant. The *objects* of his drives, that is to say, exist



outside him as independent, yet they are *objects* of his *need*, essential and indispensable to the exercise and confirmation of his *essential capacities*. The fact that man is a *corporeal*, actual, sentient, objective being with natural capacities means that he has *actual, sensuous objects* for his nature as objects of his life-expression, or that he can only *express* his life in actual sensuous objects. To be objective, natural, sentient and at the same time have an object, nature, and sense outside oneself or be oneself object, nature, and sense for a third person is one and the same thing.)) Hunger is a natural *need*, it thus requires *nature and an object* outside itself to be satisfied and quieted. Hunger is the objective need of a body for an *object* existing outside itself, indispensable to its integration and the expression of its nature. The sun is the *object* of the plant, indispensable to it and confirming its life, just as the plant is object for the sun *expressing* its life-awakening, its *objective* and essential power.

A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a *natural* one and has no part in the system of nature. A being which has no object outside itself is not objective. A being which is not itself an object for a third being has no being for its *object*, that is, is not related objectively, its being is not objective.

An unobjective being is a *nonentity*.

Suppose there is a being which is not an object itself and does not have one. First of all, such a being would be the *only* being; no other being would exist outside of it; it would be solitary and alone. For as soon as there are objects outside of me, as soon as I am not *alone*, I am *another*, *another actuality* from the object outside me. For this third object I am thus an *other actuality* than it, that is, *its* object. To assume a being which is not the object of another is thus to suppose that no objective being exists. As soon as I have an object, it has me for its object. But a *non-objective* being is an unactual, non-sensuous, merely conceived being. It is merely imagined, an abstraction. To be *sensuous* or actual is to be an object of sense or *sensuous* object and thus to have sensuous objects outside oneself, objects of sensibility. To be sentient is to *suffer*.

As an objective sentient being man is therefore a *suffering* being, and since he feels his suffering, he is a *passionate* being. Passion is man's essential capacity energetically bent on its object.

((But man is not only a natural being; he is a *human* natural being. That is, he is a being for himself and hence a *species-being*; as such he must confirm and express himself as much in his being as in his knowing. Accordingly, *human* objects are not natural objects as they immediately present themselves nor is *human* sense immediately and objectively *human* sensibility, human objectivity. Neither objective nor subjective nature is immediately presented in a form adequate to the *human* being.)) And as everything natural must *have its genesis*, man too has his generic act, *history*, which is for him, however, known and hence consciously self-transcending. History is the true natural history of mankind. (We shall return to this later.)

Thirdly, since this establishment of thinghood is itself only an appearance, an act contradicting the essence of pure activity, it must again be transcended and thinghood must be denied.

ad 3, 4, 5, 6. (3) This externalization of consciousness has not only a *negative* significance but a *positive* significance as well, and (4) it has this positive significance not only *for us* or in itself but for consciousness itself. (5) For *consciousness* the negative of the object or its transcendence of its own self thereby has the *positive* significance or thereby *knows* the nullity of the object by the fact that it externalizes its *own self*, because in this externalization it *knows* itself as object or the object as its own self, serving the indivisible unity of *being-for-self*. (6) On the other hand there is equally present here the other moment or aspect, that consciousness has also transcended and

reabsorbed this externalization and objectivity and is thus *at one with itself in its other-being as such*.

As we have already seen, the appropriation of alienated, objective being or the transcendence of objectivity in the mode of *alienation*—which must proceed from indifferent otherness to actual, antagonistic alienation—for Hegel means also or primarily the transcendence of *objectivity* since the *objective* character of the object for self-consciousness, not its *determinateness*, is the scandal of alienation. Hence the object is something negative, a self-transcendence, a *nullity*. This nullity of the object has not merely a negative but also a *positive* meaning for consciousness because it is precisely the self-confirmation of non-objectivity, of the *abstraction* of itself. For *consciousness itself* this nullity therefore has a positive significance in that it knows this nullity, objective being, as its *self-externalization* and knows that it exists only as a result of its self-externalization. . . .

The way in which consciousness is and the way in which something is for it is *knowing*. Knowing is its only act. Hence something comes to exist for consciousness insofar as consciousness *knows* that *something*. Knowing is its sole objective relation. Consciousness knows, then, the nullity of the object (i.e., knows the non-existence of the distinction between object and itself, the non-existence of the object for it) because it knows the object is its *self-externalization*; that is, it knows itself—knowing as object in that the object is only the *appearance* of an object, a deception, which essentially is nothing but knowing itself which has confronted itself with itself and hence with a *nullity*, with a something which has no objectivity outside the knowing. Or, knowing knows that in relating itself to an object it is merely *outside* itself externalized, that it only *appears to itself* as object or that what appears to it as object is only itself.

On the other hand, says Hegel, there is equally present here the other moment or aspect, that consciousness has also transcended and reabsorbed this externalization and objectivity and thus is *at one with itself in its other-being as such*.

All the illusions of speculation are assembled in this discussion.

First, consciousness—self-consciousness—is *at one with itself in its other-being as such*. Hence if we here abstract from Hegel's abstraction and replace consciousness with the self-consciousness of man, it is *at one with itself in its other-being as such*. This means, for one thing, that consciousness—knowing as knowing, thinking as thinking—claims to be immediately the *other* of itself, sensibility, actuality, life—thought surpassing itself in thought. (Feuerbach.) This aspect is present inasmuch as consciousness as mere consciousness is offended at *objectivity as such*, not alienated objectivity.

Secondly, this implies that self-conscious man, insofar as he has recognized and transcended the spiritual world—or the general spiritual existence of his world—as self-externalization, then reaffirms it in this externalized form and presents it as his authentic existence, re-establishes it, and pretends to be *at one in his other-being as such*. Thus after transcending religion, for example, and recognizing it as a product of self-externalization, he yet finds confirmation of himself in *religion as religion*. Here is the root of Hegel's false positivism or of his merely *apparent* criticism which Feuerbach noted as the positing, negation, and reestablishment of religion or theology—but which has to be conceived in more general terms. Thus reason is at one with itself in unreason as unreason. Having recognized that man leads an externalized life in law, politics, etc., man leads in this externalized life as such his truly human life. Self-affirmation and self-confirmation in *contradiction* with itself and with the knowledge and essence of the object is thus authentic *knowledge* and authentic *life*.



There can thus no longer be any question about Hegel's accommodation in regard to religion, the state, etc., since this lie is the lie of his principle.

If I know that religion is the *externalized* self-consciousness of man, what I know in it as religion is not my self-consciousness but my externalized self-consciousness confirmed in it. Then I know my own self and its essential self-consciousness not as confirmed in *religion* but rather in the *suppression* and *transcendence* of religion.

Thus with Hegel the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of my authentic nature even through the negation of its appearance. It is the confirmation of the apparent or self-alienated nature in its denial—the denial of the apparent nature as objective, as existing outside and independent of man—and its transformation into a subject. *Transcendence*, therefore, has a special role in which *denial* and preservation, denial and affirmation, are bound together.

Thus in Hegel's philosophy of law, for example, *private right* transcended is *morality*, morality transcended is the *family*, the family transcended is *civil society*, civil society transcended is the *state*, the state transcended is *world history*. In *actuality* private right, morality, the family, civil society, the state, etc., remain in existence only as they have become *moments* or aspects, modes of the particular existence of man, which are meaningless in isolation but mutually dissolve and generate one another. They are *moments of process*.

In their actual existence their *process*-nature is hidden. It first appears and becomes manifest in thought, in philosophy. Hence my authentic religious existence is my existence in *philosophy of religion*, my authentic political existence is my existence in *philosophy of law*, my authentic natural existence is my existence in *philosophy of nature*, my authentic aesthetic existence is my existence in *philosophy of art*, and my authentic human existence is my existence in *philosophy*. Likewise the authentic existence of religion, the state, nature, and art is the *philosophy* of religion, of the state, of nature, and of art. But if the philosophy of religion, etc., is for me the only authentic existence of religion, I am only truly religious as a *philosopher of religion* and hence I deny *actual* religious feeling and the actually *religious* man. But at the same time I *assert* them, partly in my own particular existence or in the alien existence which I oppose to them—for this is only their *philosophical* expression—and partly in their particular original form, since for me they mean only the *apparent* other-being as allegories, forms of their own authentic existence concealed in sensuous coverings, that is, forms of my *philosophical* existence.

In the same way, *quality* transcended is *quantity*, quantity transcended is *magnitude*, magnitude transcended is *essence*, essence transcended is *phenomenon*, phenomenon transcended is *actuality*, actuality transcended is the *concept*, the concept transcended is *objectivity*, objectivity transcended is *absolute Idea*, the absolute Idea transcended is nature, *nature* transcended is *subjective spirit*, subjective spirit transcended is the ethical objective Spirit, the *ethical* objective Spirit transcended is *art*, art transcended is *religion*, and religion transcended is *absolute Knowledge*.

On the one hand this transcendence is transcendence of a thought-entity; thus private property as *thought* is transcended in the *thought* of morality. And because thought imagines itself to be immediately the other of itself or *sensuous actuality*—thus taking its own action for *actual*, *sensuous* action—this transcendence in thought which leaves its object intact in actuality believes it has actually overcome it. On the other hand, the object, having become a moment of thought for this transcendence, hence also becomes in its actuality a self-confirmation of the same transcendence, of self-consciousness, of abstraction.

From one aspect, the particular existence which Hegel *transcends* in philosophy is therefore not *actual* religion, not the *actual* state, and not *actual* nature but religion as already an object of knowledge, that is, *dogmatics*. (Similarly with *jurisprudence*, *political science*, and *natural science*.) In this respect he thus opposes both the actual nature of the object and the immediate unphilosophical *knowledge*—the unphilosophical concepts—of that nature. He therefore contradicts conventional *concepts*.

From the other aspect, the religious man, etc., can find his ultimate justification in Hegel.

Now the *positive* moments or aspects of the Hegelian dialectic—within the category of alienation—must be considered.

(a) *Transcendence* as an objective movement *reabsorbing* externalization into itself.—((This is the insight into the *appropriation* of objective being, expressed within alienation, through the transcendence of its alienation. It is the alienated insight into the *actual objectification* of man and into the actual appropriation of his objective nature by the destruction of the *alienated* character of the objective world, by the transcendence of the objective world in its alienated existence, just as atheism which transcends God is the emergence of theoretical humanism, and communism which transcends private property is the vindication of actual human life as man's property, the emergence of practical humanism. Or, atheism is humanism mediated through itself by the transcendence of religion, and communism is humanism mediated through itself by the transcendence of private property. Only through the transcendence of private property. Only through the transcendence of this mediation—which is, however, a necessary presupposition—emerges *positive* humanism, humanism emerging positively from itself.))

But atheism and communism are no flight from, no abstraction from, no loss of the objective world created by man as his essential capacities objectified. They are no impoverished return to unnatural, primitive simplicity. Rather they are primarily the actual emergence and the actual, developed realization of man's nature as something actual.

In grasping the *positive* significance of self-referring negation—even if again in an alienated way—Hegel thus grasps man's self-alienation, the externalization of his nature, his loss of objectivity and actualization as finding of self, expression of his nature, objectification, and realization. ((In short, he grasps labor, within the realm of abstraction, as man's *act of self-creation*, his relation to himself as something alien, and the manifestation of his developing *species-consciousness* and *species-life* as something alien.))

(b) But in Hegel—apart from or rather as a result of the inversion already described—this act of self-creation appears, first, as *merely formal* because it is abstract and because human nature itself is viewed only as *abstract*, as *thinking*, as self-consciousness.

Secondly, since the conception is *formal* and *abstract*, the transcendence of externalization affirms the externalization. Or, for Hegel the process of *self-creation* and *self-objectification* in the form of *self-externalization* and *self-alienation* is the *absolute* and hence final *expression of human life* which has itself as its goal, is at peace with itself, and is at one with its essence.

This movement in its abstract form as dialectic is therefore regarded as *authentic human life*, and since it is still an abstraction, an alienation of human life, it is regarded as a divine process and hence the *divine process* of mankind—a process carried out by man's abstract, pure, absolute nature as distinguished from himself.

Thirdly: This process must have a bearer, a subject. But the subject only emerges as a result—namely, the subject knowing itself as absolute self-consciousness which is



therefore *God, Absolute Spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting Idea*. Actual man and actual nature become merely predicates or symbols of this concealed, unreal man and nature. Hence subject and predicate are absolutely inverted in relation to each other. There is a *mystical subject-object* or a *subjectivity passing beyond the object*, the *absolute subject* as a *process* of self-externalization and returning from this externalization into itself but at the same time reabsorbing it into itself. And there is the subject as this process—a pure, restless revolving within itself.

First, the *formal and abstract* conception of man's act of self-creation or self-objectification.

With Hegel's identification of man and self-consciousness, the alienated object or alienated essence of man is nothing but consciousness, merely the thought of alienation, its *abstract* and hence empty and unreal expression, *negation*. The transcendence of externalization is thus also nothing but an abstract, empty transcendence of that empty abstraction, the *negation of the negation*. The rich, living, sensuous, concrete activity of self-objectification therefore becomes its mere abstraction, *absolute negativity*, an abstraction fixed as such and regarded as independent activity, as activity itself. Since this so-called negativity is only the *abstract, empty* form of that real living act, its content can only be *formal*, derived by abstraction from all content. Hence there are general, abstract *forms of abstraction*—thought forms and logical categories detached from *actual* spirit and *actual* nature—pertaining to any content and indifferent to all and valid for every content. (We shall develop the *logical* content of absolute negativity later.)

Hegel's positive achievement here (in his speculative logic) is his view that *determinate concepts*, universal *fixed thought-forms* independent of nature and spirit, are a necessary result of the universal alienation of human nature and human thought. Hegel has collated and presented them as moments of the abstraction process. For example, Being transcended is Essence, Essence transcended is Concept, Concept transcended . . . Absolute Idea. But what, then, is the Absolute Idea? It must again transcend its own self unless it wants to go through once more from the beginning the whole movement of abstraction and remain content with being a collection of abstractions or a self-comprehending abstraction. But a self-comprehending abstraction knows itself to be nothing; it must abandon itself as abstraction to arrive at something which is its exact opposite, *nature*. Hence the entire Logic is proof that abstract thought is nothing for itself, that the Absolute Idea is nothing for itself; and only *nature* is something.

The Absolute Idea, the *Abstract Idea* which "considered in its unity with itself is intuiting" [*Anschauen*] (Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., p. 222 [¶ 244]) and which "in its own absolute truth *decides* to let the moment of its particularity or of initial determination and other-being, the *immediate idea* as its reflection, freely *proceed from itself as nature*" (*ibid.*)—this entire Idea which behaves in such a peculiar and extravagant way and has given the Hegelians such terrible headaches is from beginning to end nothing but abstraction, that is, the abstract thinker. It is abstraction which, wise from experience and enlightened concerning its truth, decides under various conditions, themselves false and still abstract, to *release* itself and establish its other-being, the particular, and the determinate, in place of its oneness with itself, non-being, universality, and in-determinateness. It decides to let *nature*, which it hid within itself as a mere abstraction or thought entity, *proceed freely from itself*—that is, it decides to forsake abstraction and for once pay attention to nature *free* of abstraction. The abstract idea which becomes unmediated *intuiting* is through and through nothing but abstract thought abandoning itself and deciding on *intuition*. This entire transition from Logic

to Philosophy of Nature is nothing but the transition from *abstracting to intuiting*, very difficult for the abstract thinker and hence so quixotically described by him. The *mystical* feeling which drives a philosopher from abstract thinking to intuiting is *boredom*, the longing for a content.

(Man alienated from himself is also the thinker alienated from his *nature*, that is, from his natural and human essence. Hence his thoughts are fixed, ghostly spirits outside nature and man. Hegel has imprisoned all these spirits together in his Logic, conceiving each of them first as negation, as *externalization of human thought*, and then as the negation of the negation, the transcendence of this externalization as *actual externalization of human thought*. But since this negation of the negation is still itself imprisoned in alienation, it partly reestablishes these fixed spirits in their alienation and partly halts at the last step of alienation, self-reference, as their authentic existence.\* Insofar as this abstraction apprehends itself and experiences an infinite boredom with itself, Hegel abandons abstract thinking moving solely within thinking—without eyes, teeth, ears, everything—as he decides to recognize *nature* as essential being and devote himself to intuition.)

But *nature* too, taken abstractly, for itself, and fixedly isolated from man, is *nothing* for man. It is obvious that the abstract thinker who has committed himself to intuiting, intuiting nature abstractly. As nature lay enclosed in the thinker as absolute Idea, as a *thought-entity* in a form hidden and mysterious to the thinker himself, what he has in truth let proceed from himself was only this *abstract nature*, only nature as a thought-entity, but now with the significance of the other-being of thought, actual and perceived nature distinguished from abstract thought. Or, to speak in human terms, the abstract thinker perceives in his intuition of nature that the entities he thought he was creating out of nothing from pure abstraction, in a divine dialectic as pure products of the labor of thought weaving within itself and never perceiving outward actuality—these entities he thought he was creating are merely *abstractions from nature's characteristics*. The whole of nature thus only repeats logical abstractions to him in a sensuous, external form.—He again *analyzes* nature and these abstractions. His intuition of nature is thus only the act of confirming his abstraction by the intuition of nature, his conscious re-enactment of the process of producing his abstraction. Thus, for example, Time is its own self-related Negativity (*loc. cit.*, p. 238). To Becoming transcended as particular Being there corresponds, in *natural form*, Movement transcended as Matter. In natural form Light is *Reflection-in-itself*. Body as *Moon and Comet* is the *natural form of the opposition* which the Logic on one side calls the *positive grounded on itself* and on the other, the *negative grounded on itself*. The Earth is the *natural form of the logical ground* as the negative unity of the opposition, etc.

*Nature as nature*, that is, so far as it is sensuously distinguished from that secret meaning hidden within it, nature separated and distinguished from these abstractions, is *nothing*, a *nothing* proving itself to be *nothing*. It is *meaningless* or only means an externality which has been transcended.

\*That is, Hegel puts in place of these fixed abstractions the act of abstraction revolving within itself. He has thereby performed the service, in the first place, of having indicated the source of all these inappropriate concepts originally belonging to different philosophies, of having brought them together, and of having created the entire range of abstraction rather than some specific abstraction as the object of criticism. (Later we shall see why Hegel separates thinking from *subject*. But now it is already clear that if man is not human, his characteristic externalization cannot exist and hence thinking itself could not be viewed as the characteristic externalization of man as a human and natural subject with eyes, ears, etc., living in society, the world, and nature.) [Marx's parenthetical remark within the paragraph of the manuscript.]



"In the finite-*teleological* point of view is to be found the correct premise that nature does not contain in itself the absolute end or purpose" (p. 225 [¶ 245]). Its purpose is the confirmation of abstraction. "Nature has revealed itself as the Idea in the *form of other-being*. Since the *Idea* in this form is the negative of itself or *outside itself* nature is not just relatively outside this Idea [ . . . ] but *externality* determines how it exists as nature" (p. 227 [¶ 247]).

*Externality* is not to be understood here as *self-externalizing sensuousness* open to the light and to the *sensibility* of sensuous man. It is here to be taken as externalization, error, a defect which ought not be. For what is true is still the Idea. Nature is only the *form of the other-being* of the Idea. And since abstract thought is the *essence* of things, something external to it is in essence merely *external*. The abstract thinker also recognizes that *sensuousness*, *externality* as distinguished from thought weaving *within itself* is the essence of nature. But at the same time he expresses this distinction in such a way as to make this *externality of nature*, its *contrast* to thought, its *defect*. And inasmuch as nature is distinct from abstraction it is something defective. Something which is defective not only for me, in my eyes, but also in itself has something outside itself which it lacks. That is to say, its essence is something other than itself. For the abstract thinker nature must consequently transcend itself since it is already promulgated by him as a potentially *transcended* existence.

"For us, *Spirit* has nature as its *presupposition* since it is nature's *truth* and hence its *absolute prius*. In this truth nature has *disappeared* and Spirit has yielded to the Idea as Being-for-itself whose *object* as well as *subject* is the *Concept*. This identity is *absolute negativity* because in nature the Concept has its complete external objectivity but here its externalization has been transcended and in this transcendence the Concept has become selfidentical. It is this identity only in being a return from nature" (p. 392 [¶ 381]).

"*Revelation*, as the abstract idea, is unmediated transition, the *becoming* of nature; as revelation of Spirit which is free it *establishes* nature as *its own world*. This establishing as reflection is likewise the *presupposition* of the world as independently existing nature. Revelation conceptually is the creation of nature as Spirit's own being in which Spirit gives itself the *affirmation and truth* of its freedom." "The *Absolute is Spirit*, this is the highest definition of the Absolute" [¶ 384].

## THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY (in part)

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### IDEOLOGY IN GENERAL, GERMAN IDEOLOGY IN PARTICULAR

German criticism has, right up to its latest efforts, never quitted the realm of philosophy. Far from examining its general philosophic premises, the whole body of its inquiries has actually sprung from the soil of a definite philosophical system, that of Hegel. Not only in their answers but in their very questions there was a mystification. This dependence on Hegel is the reason why not one of these modern critics has even attempted a comprehensive criticism of the Hegelian system, however much each professes to have advanced beyond Hegel. Their polemics against Hegel and against one another are confined to this—each extracts one side of the Hegelian system and turns this against the whole system as well as against the sides extracted by the others. To begin with they extracted pure unfalsified Hegelian categories such as “substance” and “self-consciousness,” later they desecrated these categories with more secular names such as “species,” “the Unique,” “Man,” etc.

The entire body of German philosophical criticism from Strauss to Stirner is confined to criticism of *religious* conceptions. The critics started from real religion and actual theology. What religious consciousness and a religious conception really meant was determined variously as they went along. Their advance consisted in subsuming the allegedly dominant metaphysical, political, juridical, moral and other conceptions under the class of religious or theological conceptions; and similarly in pronouncing political, juridical, moral consciousness as religious or theological, and the political, juridical, moral man—“man” in the last resort—as religious. The dominance of religion was taken for granted. Gradually every dominant relationship was pronounced a religious relationship and transformed into a cult, a cult of law, a cult of the State, etc. On all sides it was only a question of dogmas and belief in dogmas. The world was sanctified to an ever-increasing extent till at last our venerable Saint Max was able to canonise it *en bloc* and thus dispose of it once for all.

The Old Hegelians had *comprehended* everything as soon as it was reduced to an Hegelian logical category. The Young Hegelians *criticised* everything by attributing to it religious conceptions or by pronouncing it a theological matter. The Young Hegelians are in agreement with the Old Hegelians in their belief in the rule of religion, of concepts, of a universal principle in the existing world. Only, the one party attacks this dominion as usurpation, while the other extols it as legitimate.

Since the Young Hegelians consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence, as the real chains of men (just as the Old Hegelians declared them the true bonds of human society) it is evident that the Young Hegelians have to fight only against these illusions of the consciousness. Since, according to their fantasy, the relationships of men, all their doings, their chains and their limitations are products of their consciousness, the



Young Hegelians logically put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical or egoistic consciousness, and thus of removing their limitations. This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e., to recognise it by means of another interpretation. The Young-Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly "world-shattering" statements, are the staunchest conservatives. The most recent of them have found the correct expression for their activity when they declare they are only fighting against "*phrases*." They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world. The only results which this philosophic criticism could achieve were a few (and at that thoroughly one-sided) elucidations of Christianity from the point of view of religious history; all the rest of their assertions are only further embellishments of their claim to have furnished, in these unimportant elucidations, discoveries of universal importance.

It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings.

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself—geological, orohydrographical, climatic and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.

This production only makes its appearance with the *increase of population*. In its turn this presupposes the *intercourse* of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production.

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognised. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external inter-

course. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried. Each new productive force, insofar as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known (for instance the bringing into cultivation of fresh land), causes a further development of the division of labour.

The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of *town* and *country* and to the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labour. At the same time through the division of labour inside these various branches there develop various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labour. The relative position of these individual groups is determined by the methods employed in agriculture, industry and commerce (patriarchalism, slavery, estates, classes). These same conditions are to be seen (given a more developed intercourse) in the relations of different nations to one another.

The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership, i.e., the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labour.

The first form of ownership is tribal ownership. It corresponds to the undeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by the rearing of beasts or, in the highest stage, agriculture. In the latter case it presupposes a great mass of uncultivated stretches of land. The division of labour is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the natural division of labour existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves. The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, both of war and of barter.

The second form is the ancient communal and State ownership which proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a city by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Beside communal ownership we already find movable, and later also immovable, private property developing, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal ownership. The citizens hold power over their labouring slaves only in their community, and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal ownership. It is the communal private property which compels the active citizens to remain in this spontaneously derived form of association over against their slaves. For this reason the whole structure of society based on this communal ownership, and with it the power of the people, decays in the same measure as, in particular, immovable private property evolves. The division of labour is already more developed. We already find the antagonism of town and country; later the antagonism between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests, and inside the towns themselves the antagonism between industry and maritime commerce. The class relation between citizens and slaves is now completely developed.

This whole interpretation of history appears to be contradicted by the fact of conquest. Up till now violence, war, pillage, murder and robbery, etc., have been accepted as the driving force of history. Here we must limit ourselves to the chief points and take, therefore, only the most striking example—the destruction of an old civilisation by a barbarous people and the resulting formation of an entirely new organisation of society. (Rome and the barbarians; feudalism and Gaul; the Byzantine Empire and the Turks.) With the conquering barbarian people war itself is still, as indicated above, a regular form of intercourse, which is the more eagerly exploited as the increase in pop-



ulation together with the traditional and, for it, the only possible, crude mode of production gives rise to the need for new means of production. In Italy, on the other hand, the concentration of landed property (caused not only by buying-up and indebtedness but also by inheritance, since loose living being rife and marriage rare, the old families gradually died out and their possessions fell into the hands of a few) and its conversion into grazing-land (caused not only by the usual economic forces still operative today but by the importation of plundered and tribute-corn and the resultant lack of demand for Italian corn) brought about the almost total disappearance of the free population. The very slaves died out again and again, and had constantly to be replaced by new ones. Slavery remained the basis of the whole productive system. The plebeians, midway between freemen and slaves, never succeeded in becoming more than a proletarian rabble. Rome indeed never became more than a city; its connection with the provinces was almost exclusively political and could, therefore, easily be broken again by political events.

With the development of private property, we find here for the first time the same conditions which we shall find again, only on a more extensive scale, with modern private property. On the one hand, the concentration of private property, which began very early in Rome (as the Licinian agrarian law proves) and proceeded very rapidly from the time of the civil wars and especially under the Emperors; on the other hand, coupled with this, the transformation of the plebeian small peasantry into a proletariat, which, however, owing to its intermediate position between propertied citizens and slaves, never achieved an independent development.

The third form of ownership is feudal or estate property. If antiquity started out from the town and its little territory, the Middle Ages started out from the country. This different starting-point was determined by the sparseness of the population at that time, which was scattered over a large area and which received no large increase from the conquerors. In contrast to Greece and Rome, feudal development at the outset, therefore, extends over a much wider territory, prepared by the Roman conquests and the spread of agriculture at first associated with it. The last centuries of the declining Roman Empire and its conquest by the barbarians destroyed a number of productive forces; agriculture had declined, industry had decayed for want of a market, trade had died out or been violently suspended, the rural and urban population had decreased. From these conditions and the mode of organisation of the conquest determined by them, feudal property developed under the influence of the Germanic military constitution. Like tribal and communal ownership, it is based again on a community, but the directly producing class standing over against it is not, as in the case of the ancient community, the slaves, but the enserfed small peasantry. As soon as feudalism is fully developed, there also arises antagonism to the towns. The hierarchical structure of landownership, and the armed bodies of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs. This feudal organisation was, just as much as the ancient communal ownership, an association against a subjected producing class; but the form of association and the relation to the direct producers were different because of the different conditions of production.

◀ This feudal system of landownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organisation of trades. Here property consisted chiefly in the labour of each individual person. The necessity for association against the organised robber-nobility, the need for communal covered markets in an age when the industrialist was at the same time a merchant, the growing competition of the escaped serfs swarming into the rising towns, the feudal structure of the whole country: these combined to bring about the guilds. The gradually accumulated small

capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country.

Thus the chief form of property during the feudal epoch consisted on the one hand of landed property with serf labour chained to it, and on the other of the labour of the individual with small capital commanding the labour of journeymen. The organisation of both was determined by the restricted conditions of production—the small-scale and primitive cultivation of the land, and the craft type of industry. There was little division of labour in the heyday of feudalism. Each country bore in itself the antithesis of town and country; the division into estates was certainly strongly marked; but apart from the differentiation of princes, nobility, clergy and peasants in the country, and masters, journeymen, apprentices and soon also the rabble of casual labourers in the towns, no division of importance took place. In agriculture it was rendered difficult by the strip-system, beside which the cottage industry of the peasants themselves emerged. In industry there was no division of labour at all in the individual trades themselves, and very little between them. The separation of industry and commerce was found already in existence in older towns; in the newer it only developed later, when the towns entered into mutual relations.

The grouping of larger territories into feudal kingdoms was a necessity for the landed nobility as for the towns. The organisation of the ruling class, the nobility, had, therefore, everywhere a monarch at its head.

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they *really* are; i.e., as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology



and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting-point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as *their* consciousness.

This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

Where speculation ends—in real life—there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men. Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history. On the contrary, our difficulties begin only when we set about the observation and the arrangement—the real depiction—of our historical material, whether of a past epoch or of the present. The removal of these difficulties is governed by premises which it is quite impossible to state here, but which only the study of the actual life process and the activity of the individuals of each epoch will make evident. We shall select here some of these abstractions, which we use in contradistinction to the ideologists, and shall illustrate them by historical examples.

## A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY (in part)

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### Author's Preface

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In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of produc-

## 2. THE GENERAL RELATION OF PRODUCTION TO DISTRIBUTION, EXCHANGE, AND CONSUMPTION

Before going into a further analysis of production, it is necessary to look at the various divisions which economists put side by side with it. The most shallow conception is as follows: By production, the members of society appropriate (produce and shape) the products of nature to human wants; distribution determines the proportion in which the individual participates in this production; exchange brings him the particular products into which he wishes to turn the quantity secured by him through distribution; finally, through consumption the products become objects of use and enjoyment, of individual appropriation. Production yields goods adopted to our needs; distribution distributes them according to social laws; exchange distributes further what has already been distributed, according to individual wants; finally, in consumption the product drops out of the social movement, becoming the direct object of the individual want which it serves and satisfies in use. Production thus appears as the starting point; consumption as the final end; and distribution and exchange as the middle; the latter has a double aspect, distribution being defined as a process carried on by society, while exchange, as one proceeding from the individual. In production the person is embodied in things, in [consumption] things are embodied in persons; in distribution, society assumes the part of go-between of production and consumption in the form of generally prevailing rules; in exchange this is accomplished by the accidental make-up of the individual.

Distribution determines what proportion (quantity) of the products the individual is to receive; exchange determines the products in which the individual desires to receive his share allotted to him by distribution.

Production, distribution, exchange, and consumption thus form a perfect connection, production standing for the general, distribution and exchange for the special, and consumption for the individual, in which all are joined together. To be sure this is a connection, but it does not go very deep. Production is determined [according to the economists] by universal natural laws, while distribution depends on social chance: distribution can, therefore, have a more or less stimulating effect on production: exchange lies between the two as a formal social movement, and the final act of consumption which is considered not only as a final purpose, but also as a final aim, falls, properly, outside of the scope of economics, except in so far as it reacts on the starting point and causes the entire process to begin all over again.

The opponents of the economists—whether economists themselves or not—who reproach them with tearing apart, like barbarians, what is an organic whole, either stand on common ground with them or are *below* them. Nothing is more common than the charge that the economists have been considering production as an end in itself, too much to the exclusion of everything else. The same has been said with regard to distribution. This accusation is itself based on the economic conception that distribution exists side by side with production as a self-contained, independent sphere. Or [they are accused] that the various factors are not treated by them in their connection as a whole.



As though it were the text books that impress this separation upon life and not life upon the text books; and the subject at issue were a dialectic balancing of conceptions and not an analysis of real conditions.

*a. Production is at the same time also consumption.* Twofold consumption, subjective and objective. The individual who develops his faculties in production, is also expending them, consuming them in the act of production, just as procreation is in its way a consumption of vital powers. In the second place, production is consumption of means of production which are used and used up and partly (as, e.g., in burning) reduced to their natural elements. The same is true of the consumption of raw materials which do not remain in their natural form and state, being greatly absorbed in the process. The act of production is, therefore, in all its aspects an act of consumption as well. But this is admitted by economists. Production as directly identical with consumption, consumption as directly coincident with production, they call productive consumption. This identity of production and consumption finds its expression in Spinoza's proposition, *Determinatio est negatio*. But this definition of productive consumption is resorted to just for the purpose of distinguishing between consumption as identical with production and consumption proper, which is defined as its destructive counterpart. Let us then consider consumption proper.

Consumption is directly also production, just as in nature the consumption of the elements and of chemical matter constitutes production of plants. It is clear, that in nutrition, e.g., which is but one form of consumption, man produces his own body; but it is equally true of every kind of consumption, which goes to produce the human being in one way or another. [It is] consumptive production. But, say the economists, this production which is identical with consumption, is a second production resulting from the destruction of the product of the first. In the first, the producer transforms himself into things; in the second, things are transformed into human beings. Consequently, this consumptive production—although constituting a direct unity of production and consumption—differs essentially from production proper. The direct unity in which production coincides with consumption and consumption with production, does not interfere with their direct duality.

Production is thus at the same time consumption, and consumption is at the same time production. Each is directly its own counterpart. But at the same time an intermediary movement goes on between the two. Production furthers consumption by creating material for the latter which otherwise would lack its object. But consumption in its turn furthers production, by providing for the products the individual for whom they are products. The product receives its last finishing touches in consumption. A railroad on which no one rides, which is, consequently not used up, not consumed, is but a potential railroad, and not a real one. Without production, no consumption; but, on the other hand, without consumption, no production; since production would then be without a purpose. Consumption produces production in two ways.

In the first place, in that the product first becomes a real product in consumption; e.g., a garment becomes a real garment only through the act of being worn; a dwelling which is not inhabited, is really no dwelling; consequently, a product as distinguished from a mere natural object, proves to be such, first *becomes* a product in consumption. Consumption gives the product the finishing touch by annihilating it, since a product is the [result] of production not only as the material embodiment of activity, but also as a mere object for the active subject.

In the second place, consumption produces production by creating the necessity for new production, i.e., by providing the ideal, inward, impelling cause which constitutes the prerequisite of production. Consumption furnishes the impulse for production

as well as its object, which plays in production the part of its guiding aim. It is clear that while production furnishes the material object of consumption, consumption provides the ideal object of production, as its image, its want, its impulse and its purpose. It furnishes the object of production in its subjective form. No wants, no production. But consumption reproduces the want.

In its turn, production—

First, furnishes consumption with its material, its object. Consumption without an object is no consumption, hence production works in this direction by producing consumption.

Second. But it is not only the object that production provides for consumption. It gives consumption its definite outline, its character, its finish. Just as consumption gives the product its finishing touch as a product, production puts the finishing touch on consumption. For the object is not simply an object in general, but a definite object, which is consumed in a certain definite manner prescribed in its turn by production. Hunger is hunger; but the hunger that is satisfied with cooked meat eaten with fork and knife is a different kind of hunger from the one that devours raw meat with the aid of hands, nails, and teeth. Not only the object of consumption, but also the manner of consumption is produced by production; that is to say, consumption is created by production not only objectively, but also subjectively. Production thus creates the consumers.

Third. Production not only supplies the want with material, but supplies the material with a want. When consumption emerges from its first stage of natural crudeness and directness—and its continuation in that state would in itself be the result of a production still remaining in a state of natural crudeness—it is itself furthered by its object as a moving spring. The want of it which consumption experiences is created by its appreciation of the product. The object of art, as well as any other product, creates an artistic and beauty-enjoying public. Production thus produces not only an object for the individual, but also an individual for the object.

Production thus produces consumption: first, by furnishing the latter with material; second, by determining the manner of consumption; third, by creating in consumers a want for its products as objects of consumption. It thus produces the object, the manner, and the moving spring of consumption. In the same manner, consumption [creates] the *disposition* of the producer by setting him up as an aim and by stimulating wants. The identity of consumption and production thus appears to be a three fold one.

First, direct identity: production is consumption; consumption is production. Consumptive production. Productive consumption. Economists call both productive consumption, but make one distinction by calling the former reproduction, and the latter productive consumption. All inquiries into the former deal with productive and unproductive labor; those into the latter treat of productive and unproductive consumption.

Second. Each appears as the means of the other and as being brought about by the other, which is expressed as their mutual interdependence; a relation, by virtue of which they appear as mutually connected and indispensable, yet remaining outside of each other.

Production creates the material as the outward object of consumption; consumption creates the want as the inward object, the purpose of production. Without production, no consumption; without consumption, no production; this maxim figures in political economy in many forms.

Third. Production is not only directly consumption and consumption directly production; nor is production merely a means of consumption and consumption the purpose of production. In other words, not only does each furnish the other with its ob-



ject; production, the material object of consumption; consumption, the ideal object of production. On the contrary, either one is not only directly the other, not only a means of furthering the other, but while it is taking place, creates the other as such for itself. Consumption completes the act of production by giving the finishing touch to the product as such, by destroying the latter, by breaking up its independent material form; by bringing to a state of readiness, through the necessity of repetition, the disposition to produce developed in the first act of production; that is to say, it is not only the concluding act through which the product becomes a product, but also [the one] through which the producer becomes a producer. On the other hand, production produces consumption, by determining the manner of consumption, and further, by creating the incentive for consumption, the very ability to consume, in the form of want. This latter identity mentioned under point 3, is much discussed in political economy in connection with the treatment of the relations of demand and supply, of objects and wants, of natural wants and those created by society.

Hence, it is the simplest matter with a Hegelian to treat production and consumption as identical. And this has been done not only by socialist writers of fiction but even by economists, e.g., Say; the latter maintained that if we consider a nation as a whole, or mankind *in abstracto*—her production is at the same time her consumption. Storch pointed out Say's error by calling attention to the fact that a nation does not entirely consume her product, but also creates means of production, fixed capital, etc. To consider society as a single individual is moreover a false mode of speculative reasoning. With an individual, production and consumption appear as different aspects of one act. The important point to be emphasized here is that if production and consumption be considered as activities of one individual or of separate individuals, they appear at any rate as aspects of one process in which production forms the actual starting point and is, therefore, the predominating factor. Consumption, as a natural necessity, as a want, constitutes an internal factor of productive activity, but the latter is the starting point of realization and, therefore, its predominating factor, the act into which the entire process resolves itself in the end. The individual produces a certain article and turns again into himself by consuming it; but he returns as a productive and a self-reproducing individual. Consumption thus appears as a factor of production.

In society, however, the relation of the producer to his product, as soon as it is completed, is an outward one, and the return of the product to the individual depends on his relations to other individuals. He does not take immediate possession of it. Nor does the direct appropriation of the product constitute his purpose, when he produces in society. Between the producer and the product distribution steps in, which determines by social laws his share in the world of products; that is to say, distribution steps in between production and consumption.

Does distribution form an independent sphere standing side by side with and outside of production?

*b. Production and Distribution.* In perusing the common treatises on economics one can not help being struck with the fact that everything is treated there twice; e.g., under distribution, there figure rent, wages, interest, and profit; while under production we find land, labor, and capital as agents of production. As regards capital, it is at once clear that it is counted twice: first, as an agent of production; second, as a source of income; as determining factors and definite forms of distribution, interest and profit figure as such also in production, since they are forms, in which capital increases and grows, and are consequently factors of its own production. Interest and profit, as forms of distribution, imply the existence of capital as an agent of production. They are forms

of distribution which have for their prerequisite capital as an agent of production. They are also forms of reproduction of capital.

In the same manner, wages is wage-labor when considered under another head; the definite character which labor has in one case as an agent of production, appears in the other as a form of distribution. If labor were not fixed as wage-labor, its manner of participation in distribution would not appear as wages, as is the case, e.g., under slavery. Finally, rent—to take at once the most developed form of distribution—by means of which landed property receives its share of the products, implies the existence of large landed property (properly speaking, agriculture on a large scale) as an agent of production, and not simply land, no more than wages represents simply labor. The relations and methods of distribution appear, therefore, merely as the reverse sides of the agents of production. An individual who participates in production as a wage laborer, receives his share of the products, i.e., of the results of production, in the form of wages. The subdivisions and organization of distribution are determined by the subdivisions and organization of production. Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in so far as the material goods are concerned, since only the results of production can be distributed; but also as regards its form, since the definite manner of participation in production determines the particular form of distribution, the form under which participation in distribution takes place. It is quite an illusion to place land under production, rent under distribution, etc.

Economists, like Ricardo, who are accused above all of having paid exclusive attention to production, define distribution, therefore, as the exclusive subject of political economy, because they instinctively regard the forms of distribution as the clearest forms in which the agents of production find expression in a given society.

To the single individual distribution naturally appears as a law established by society determining his position in the sphere of production, within which he produces, and thus antedating production. At the outset the individual has no capital, no landed property. From his birth he is assigned to wage-labor by the social process of distribution. But this very condition of being assigned to wage-labor is the result of the existence of capital and landed property as independent agents of production.

From the point of view of society as a whole, distribution seems to antedate and to determine production in another way as well, as a pre-economic fact, so to say. A conquering people divides the land among the conquerors establishing thereby a certain division and form of landed property and determining the character of production; or, it turns the conquered people into slaves and thus makes slave labor the basis of production. Or, a nation, by revolution, breaks up large estates into small parcels of land and by this new distribution imparts to production a new character. Or, legislation perpetuates land ownership in large families or distributes labor as an hereditary privilege and thus fixes it in castes.

In all of these cases, and they are all historic, it is not distribution that seems to be organized and determined by production, but on the contrary, production by distribution.

In the most shallow conception of distribution, the latter appears as a distribution of products and to that extent as further removed from and quasi-independent of production. But before distribution means distribution of products, it is first, a distribution of the means of production, and second, what is practically another wording of the same fact, it is a distribution of the members of society among the various kinds of production (the subjection of individuals to certain conditions of production). The distribution of products is manifestly a result of this distribution, which is bound up with



the process of production and determines the very organization of the latter. To treat of production apart from the distribution which is comprised in it, is plainly an idle abstraction. Conversely, we know the character of the distribution of products the moment we are given the nature of that other distribution which forms originally a factor of production. Ricardo, who was concerned with the analysis of production as it is organized in modern society and who was the economist of production *par excellence*, for that very reason declares not production but distribution as the subject proper of modern economics. We have here another evidence of the insipidity of the economists who treat production as an eternal truth, and banish history to the domain of distribution.

What relation to production this distribution, which has a determining influence on production itself, assumes, is plainly a question which falls within the province of production. Should it be maintained that at least to the extent that production depends on a certain distribution of the instruments of production, distribution in that sense precedes production and constitutes its prerequisite; it may be replied that production has in fact its prerequisite conditions, which form factors of it. These may appear at first to have a natural origin. By the very process of production they are changed from natural to historical, and if they appear during one period as a natural prerequisite of production, they formed at other periods its historical result. Within the sphere of production itself they are undergoing a constant change. E.g., the application of machinery produces a change in the distribution of the instruments of production as well as in that of products, and modern land ownership on a large scale is as much the result of modern trade and modern industry, as that of the application of the latter to agriculture.

All of these questions resolve themselves in the last instance to this: How do general historical conditions affect production and what part does it play at all in the course of history? It is evident that this question can be taken up only in connection with the discussion and analysis of production.

Yet in the trivial form in which these questions are raised above, they can be answered just as briefly. In the case of all conquests three ways lie open. The conquering people may impose its own methods of production upon the conquered (e.g., the English in Ireland in the nineteenth century, partly also in India); or, it may allow everything to remain as it was contenting itself with tribute (e.g., the Turks and the Romans); or, the two systems by mutually modifying each other may result in something new, a synthesis (which partly resulted from the Germanic conquests). In all of these conquests the method of production, be it of the conquerors, the conquered, or the one resulting from a combination of both, determines the nature of the new distribution which comes into play. Although the latter appears now as the prerequisite condition of the new period of production, it is in itself but a product of production, not of production belonging to history in general, but of production relating to a definite historical period. The Mongols with their devastations in Russia, e.g., acted in accordance with their system of production, for which sufficient pastures on large uninhabited stretches of country are the main prerequisite. The Germanic barbarians, with whom agriculture carried on with the aid of serfs was the traditional system of production and who were accustomed to lonely life in the country, could introduce the same conditions in the Roman provinces so much easier since the concentration of landed property which had taken place there, did away completely with the older systems of agriculture. There is a prevalent tradition that in certain periods robbery constituted the only source of living. But in order to be able to plunder, there must be something to plunder, i.e., there must be production. And even the method of plunder is determined

by the method of production. A stockjobbing nation, e.g., can not be robbed in the same manner as a nation of shepherds.

In the case of the slave the instrument of production is robbed directly. But then the production of the country in whose interest he is robbed, must be so organized as to admit of slave labor, or (as in South America, etc.) a system of production must be introduced adapted to slavery.

Laws may perpetuate an instrument of production, e.g., land, in certain families. These laws assume an economic importance if large landed property is in harmony with the system of production prevailing in society, as is the case, e.g., in England. In France agriculture had been carried on on a small scale in spite of the large estates, and the latter were, therefore, broken up by the Revolution. But how about the legislative attempt to perpetuate the minute subdivision of the land? In spite of these laws land ownership is concentrating again. The effect of legislation on the maintenance of a system of distribution and its resultant influence on production are to be determined elsewhere.

*c. Exchange and Circulation.* Circulation is but a certain aspect of exchange, or it may be defined as exchange considered as a whole. Since *exchange* is an intermediary factor between production and its dependent distribution, on the one hand, and consumption, on the other; and since the latter appears but as a constituent of production, exchange is manifestly also a constituent part of production.

In the first place, it is clear that the exchange of activities and abilities which takes place in the sphere of production falls directly within the latter and constitutes one of its essential elements. In the second place, the same is true of the exchange of products, in so far as it is a means of completing a certain product, designed for immediate consumption. To that extent exchange constitutes an act included in production. Thirdly, the so-called exchange between dealers and dealers' is by virtue of its organization determined by production, and is itself a species of productive activity. Exchange appears to be independent of and indifferent to production only in the last stage when products are exchanged directly for consumption. But in the first place, there is no exchange without a division of labor, whether natural or as a result of historical development; secondly, private exchange implies the existence of private production; thirdly, the intensity of exchange, as well as its extent and character are determined by the degree of development and organization of production, as, e.g., exchange between city and country, exchange in the country, in the city, etc. Exchange thus appears in all its aspects to be directly included in or determined by production.

The result we arrive at is not that production, distribution, exchange, and consumption are identical, but that they are all members of one entity, different sides of one unit. Production predominates not only over production itself in the opposite sense of that term, but over the other elements as well. With it the process constantly starts over again. That exchange and consumption can not be the predominating elements is self evident. The same is true of distribution in the narrow sense of distribution of products; as for distribution in the sense of distribution of the agents of production, it is itself but a factor of production. A definite [form of] production thus determines the [forms of] consumption, distribution, exchange, and *also the mutual relations between these various elements.* Of course, production in its one-sided form is in its turn influenced by other elements; e.g., with the expansion of the market, i.e., of the sphere of exchange, production grows in volume and is subdivided to a greater extent.

With a change in distribution, production undergoes a change; as, e.g., in the case of concentration of capital, of a change in the distribution of population in city



and country, etc. Finally, the demands of consumption also influence production. A mutual interaction takes place between the various elements. Such is the case with every organic body.

### 3. THE METHOD OF POLITICAL ECONOMY