

SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICE

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By JOHN FALCONER

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ABSTRACT

A vicious circle obtains: the philosophy of science cannot or will not concede the scientificity of sociology nor consequently provide it with a sound methodological foundation; while sociology in its search for theoretical validation constantly undermines the presuppositions of the philosophy of science. This kind of general discursive background constitutes the pretext for this thesis which, on one level, documents the changing historical structure of this fundamentally unstable relationship between the possibility of social science and the possibility of social criticism.

More than this, however, sociology, in the context of the present investigations, means not social science which gravitates towards naturalistic anthropological modes of conceptualization of social conditions, but social criticism. Sociology is construed as an off-shoot of the philosophy of practice and is discovered in the notion of critique that designates an attempt to comprehend moral, economic and cultural forms as practical and historical configurations. What follows, in other words, is a prolonged meditation on the implications of a definition of sociology as critique. At various locations, the question is put: What are the grounds of possibility of social criticism as it has been realized by such as Marx, Lukacs, Gramsci, Marcuse, Williams, Foucault and others ?

Ultimately, sociology as critique is found to consist in opposition to transcendentalist logic: authoritarianism in theory and practice. Logically, critique, itself, has to be defined in its negativism: in its indefatigable commitment to grasp transcendentalist logic, via various hermeneutic strategies, as ideology; which means both as theoretical mystification and beyond that, phenomenologically, or in substantive terms, as systematic deception and containment.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

What I presume to offer is an account of how the philosophy of practice has lurched forward through several metamorphoses, found some measure of self-recognition as ideology critique, never managed to ground itself epistemologically or methodologically, yet remained the only available theoretical medium for the principle of negativity: through which protest, dissent, unfulfilled desire and inarticulate need can appear in discourse. Sociology is understood to be, when rescued from its positivistic pretension, a variant of the philosophy of practice. To put it another way, sociology can only be a positive anthropology or an indefatigable critique of ideology. In the one case, it falls with the success of the critique of positivism (though its lack of philosophic credentials has not immobilized it; its thoughtlessness is probably essential to its continued performance). As a variant of the philosophy of practice, sociology remains submerged in methodological crisis, but it confronts the contemporary forms of estrangement on a theoretical dimension.

The real obstacle to sociology has always been those processes that overwhelm consciousness and render society invisible, which beleaguer individuals and populations, subjugating them in the name of the symbolic, whose anonymity and power elude comprehension. The problem has

been that subjectivity has always assumed a transcendent form, the true historical subject has been a transcendental subject, whose indifference to the thought and actions of the supernumeraries of history, has conferred upon it the appearance and status of a natural order. Sociology has found itself not with the task of breaking down a prejudice; it has instead to persuade the victims of history of the inconceivable: that society is primarily a political reality, an ensemble of social practices, and that the distribution of resources and the structure of human relations is to a considerable extent negotiable and transformable.

The historically induced myopia makes its way into theory, into sociological theory, as the problem of naturalism. In consequence, the major methodological stumbling-block is the naturalistic fallacy in whose terms sociology's task is to specify the dimensions of social reality, in general and finally. The main symptom of this delusion is the deferential relationship that exists between sociology and the philosophy of science. Sociologists enthralled by the naturalistic fallacy cherish as their theoretical ideal a knowledge of society that is commensurate with the knowledge accumulated by the natural sciences. Sociologists descend upon the philosophy of science to find the secret of "pure theory." Covetous of scientific status, these sociologists seek an unanswerable epistemological doctrine which would warrant an ontological

theory of society or a naturalistic anthropology: which would mean that society's various regions and the laws governing them would underpin a single sociological project.

The philosophy of science is nothing but the quest for "pure theory." Nothing more can be said for an imitative philosophy of social science. Science in itself is something different, however. Its practice and theory diverge, though it requires some sociological perspicuity to see this. In fact, it takes a very robust sociology to conceptualize this divergence, whereas the philosophy of science will neither admit the existence of this gap between the theory and practice of science, nor will it grant sociology, in whose light the difference can be made visible, a licence to operate. Ultimately, though it tolerates the efforts of "positive" sociology, the philosophy of science can always invoke the fact-value dichotomy to explain the possibility of "pure theory" in the natural world and the impossibility of "pure theory" in the social world.

Sadly, perhaps, (for the slow-witted theorist) the examples of "pure theory" so far examined have proven counterfeit. It has been the express purpose of ideology critique to demonstrate precisely this point. Substantiation of this claim would require at this juncture interpolation of the main part of this thesis, so let it be said meantime, only

that ideology critique confronts and unmasks the philosophic systems and their satellites, (notably the sciences but authoritative discourses generally), where they submit "pure theory," "objective knowledge," "a detached, disinterested truth," or some equivalent. The philosophy of practice advances where ideology critique confounds the ontological view point. Its main resource is dialectical logic which Richard Bernstein suggests is synonymous with an excess of irony over conviction.¹ Less sententiously, dialectical logic may be understood to involve a serious and subtle contest with the champions of "objective knowledge;" whose purpose is to expose implicit reliance upon a practical conception, or to define the limitation of a perspective in terms of its refusal of a practical standpoint. The aim of dialectics is to make the arrival of the philosophy of practice irrevocable. The irony intrinsic to that style of argumentation reflects the fact that the practical philosophy condemns every knowledge as fallible, as revisable.

Criticism gravitates towards the great philosophic systems. Ideology critique has arrived belatedly as the "bad conscience" of these systems. Where they proclaim the possibility of pure knowledge and reaffirm the immutability of human nature and social relations, dialectical logic is deployed to condemn them, or to have them condemn themselves as rationalisations and legitimations of the rule of an irrational symbolism, as partizans of a

conceptualism or essentialism that violates natural and social existence. At the same time, criticism attempts to appropriate and transform the prevalent philosophical anthropology, rather than to destroy it; the result of such "ideological work" should be an awareness of the limit imposed upon sociological knowledge by a particular conceptual universe; plus release of a repressed practical factor and familiarity with the transposition and displacement of meaning that betrays repression. In both respects criticism gravitates towards the great philosophic systems as the developed forms of social consciousness.

Philosophical discourse is the conceptually developed form of social existence, but not in the sense that it explicates the truth of practice in an absolutist fashion. It is misleading to suggest there are philosophic discourses on the one hand, and scientific discourses on the other. The intellectual division of labour pushes in this direction, tends to establish this taxonomy as a reality; but, in fact, discourse in general reconciles theory and practice. Society has no committee room from which the board of directors dictates policy to the shop-floor. Every practice generates its own self-consciousness. For example the mass media in its dissemination of a plurality of messages for public consumption, grounds that activity, self-consciously, in a brittle professional code. The natural sciences construct another kind of self-understanding. What Foucault calls

the episteme, that ubiquitous, multi-dimensional though inadequately conceptualized and fractured rationality which pervades and constrains social action; what Foucault has otherwise called the "unthought" to stress its basis in practice and referred to as "the historical a priori" to emphasize its sedimentation in the structure of social relations; this reconstruction of the "collective consciousness" and of the "collective unconscious", has no centre.² Philosophy, self-consciousness has no centralized locus of production; it scintillates in innumerable episodic events throughout social space and time.

The theme rehearsed is that of language as de-centred subjectivity. What is adjudged to be enormously important in this theme is this: firstly, that the philosophy of the age is everywhere, diffused though incompletely articulated throughout all its practices; secondly, that the historical subject in its incarnation as Language exists only as a conglomerate of discourses, that these disparate discourses do not emerge as the expression of a single authorial voice or central symbolic system; thirdly, that the linguistic subject can, nevertheless, be comprehended, in abstracto, as a hierarchy of supraindividual discourses, so that linguistically we can conceive of a certain "order of things." The reality or positivity of this hierarchy becomes apparent in every moment of moral or intellectual crisis. At any such moment, in any region of social space, philosophy is invoked. As pressure for rational

justification mounts a series of explorations is inaugurated and conducted through a spiral of upward referrals towards a distinctly philosophical discourse, where a contradiction of principle can be adequately handled.

It is in this sense, in the sense that there is a discursive hierarchy, that a prevailing philosophical anthropology can be said to represent an evolved conceptual form. No less than the sciences, philosophical anthropology of this kind responds to crisis in society. Where the sciences present technical answers, philosophy produces answers to moral and intellectual dilemmas. The dominant philosophical anthropology sketches the parameters of a society's consciousness of its experience of necessity and freedom. It thus defines a positive knowledge, insofar as it specifies the horizon of rational action. This positive knowledge also becomes a strategically decisive field of ideological conflict. Human existence remains subject to tyrannical forces; theory tends, in consequence, to dispel perplexity on the one hand and to offer obfuscating rationalizations on the other. Nevertheless philosophy, wherever it appears, contains all there is of reason in history, both as deception and enlightenment, ideology and utopia.

The achievement of the philosophy of practice, which has been dragged into existence on the coat-tails of the great

systems of Western philosophy, has been to demonstrate that, to date, every attempt to provide a universally valid knowledge, to reduce reality to the dimensions of an ontology, has failed. Effort to supply science with an ultimate foundation, the urge to elevate practical interest to the status of a transparent principle, the ideological work that eliminates the disturbing effects of the historical contradictions that rumble, as it were, in a subterranean region, has never been interrupted; but the search for a viable "philosophy of origins" has been compelled both by circumstance and by criticism to shift its ground. In fact, the ontological has been elaborated in three distinct categorial modalities: i.e., a notion of "pure theory" and a naturalistic anthropology have been propounded serially (leaving aside retrogressive currents) in the philosophy of consciousness, in the philosophy of labour and in the philosophy of language. Subsequently these categorial systems have become bankrupt as excessive demands have been made upon their resources. The role of critique has been to make this process visible, to conceptualize it. At the same time, criticism has had to explain and bear in mind that ideological bankruptcy has no inevitable political effect. There are varieties of ideological inflation, subsidy, regional and colonial policy. Indeed there is a burgeoning economy of the ideological to be taken account of.

Elaboration of the authoritative categorial systems of

consciousness, labour and language may be followed through the thought of Kant, Hegel, Marx and Heidegger. Their thought is understood to assume a totemic significance and to provide anchorages for lesser philosophical endeavours. They articulate a positive philosophical knowledge, they specify categorially what counts as the horizon of perception for a considerable population. Subsidiary discourses and their practices appear to cluster around them, whether or not an intellectual debt is acknowledged or empirically verifiable for that matter. These names signify not individual men, but authoritative discourses. In this sense, Marx was correct, for example to insist that Hegel's standpoint in the Phenomenology was the standpoint also of the political economists.³ (More precisely still, Marx saw the political economists as trapped, philosophically, exactly where Hegel had been, mid-way between a philosophy of mind and a philosophy of labour). Similarly, Sausure's science of linguistics is philosophically crystallized somewhere between Kant and Heidegger.

In what follows much is made of this relationship between systematic philosophy and subsidiary (reflexively dependent) anthropological theses on method. In Part 1 and subsequently, the major discourses (the philosophical, rather than the quasi-scientific anthropologies) are condemned as systematic-hermetic ontologies and redeemed as substrata of the philosophy of practice. In Chapter 1, the

limit of bourgeois sociology is discovered by Lukacs to be determined by total reliance upon the dualistic ontology fundamental to Kantian philosophy. In Chapter 2, Lucien Goldmann breaks through the interpretative prohibition imposed by the positivist philosophy of science, which suppresses the Kantian dialectic, to rescue a fragile, embryonic but indispensable theory of society and history. In Part 2, Marxism and to a lesser extent existentialism, figure as deconstructions and reformulations of the social theory that pervades Hegel's system. In Part 3, Gramsci's political philosophy as well as, for example, Raymond Williams' Marxist aesthetic, are presented as discourses that flourish in the intestines of Marx's texts. In Part 4, Foucault's genealogy of power is introduced as a critical perspective embedded in the philosophy of language whoses premisses are most clearly articulated by Heidegger.

These various discourses on man in society are not constituted by the philosophic systems, but they are represented there, their rationales are encapsulated in modes of discursive production that employ rigorous logical criteria. The master-discourses, however, succumb to naturalism both from within and without. Kant, Marx and Heidegger all valued systematicity; they offered conceptual matrices designed to encompass reality. Additionally, however, each provided the rudiments of a discourse over-determined many times by naturalistic interpretation.

Therefore, Marx no less than Heidegger, must be approached as the author of profoundly ambiguous texts which, nevertheless, remain eminently redeemable from the threat of naturalism. The major systems are polemical epicentres where the philosophy of practice struggles to elucidate the difference between the ontological and the historical. On the one hand, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, are the authors of the great systems of legitimation. They supply the conceptual soft-ware, they define a kind of quadrilateral within which the history of the human spirit can be grasped, somehow essentially. (If the notion of a conceptual hierarchy is accepted, surely the highest intellectual achievement will be admitted to consist in the delineation of the anatomical structure of the human condition.) Against this idealistic current the practical standpoint emphasises the need for constant attention to the circumstances in which knowledge is deployed, or in which famous names are dropped. It turns to theory from the matter-at-hand which it has consistently found to be the problem of estrangement. As Marx explained, every age defines itself, philosophically, in its encounter with determinate forms of alienation. The importance of the great names and systems accordingly is understood to inhere in their contributions towards decipherment of the multiple traces of alienation. All explicate the historical condition whose hall-mark is the unquestioned rule of the symbolic. Thus according to Adorno the enigmatic relation between Hegel and Marx turns on the fact of their common

perception of alienation as the "negative supremacy of the concept": the crucial difference being that Hegel became the apologist, Marx the critic of an irrational symbolic order.⁵

To approach the same distinction from the opposite direction or to consider the historical first: Kant, Hegel, Marx and Heidegger remain the original contributors to the philosophy of practice with their respective critiques of pure reason (which inaugurated the theme of the primacy of practical reason), of nominalism (as the absolute theoretical brake on historical understanding), of political economy (the practical philosophy of the bourgeoisie) and of rationalism (the progress of instrumental reason). In this sense, criticism reclaims the strategic philosophic ground. At the same time, however, sociological criticism, alive to the reality of the primacy of practical reason, has in successive forays, revealed the utopian promises articulated by the great systems as so many ideological wooden-horses. Criticism has focussed upon the manner in which the negative has been pressed into the service of the dominant logic. It recalls how utopias can mediate a transcendent constraint or conceal an oppressive universal principle. It recounts how the disaffection that fosters an alternative conviction has become disorientated and distracted in the labyrinths of an ideological dream-world.

In this light, the philosophy of consciousness may be seen to have conceived of the possibility and limit of freedom in thought: it celebrated the Enlightenment as release for the individual from moral-rational constraint; but it succumbed to the backwardness of economic and political conditions in Germany. Subsequently, the philosophy of labour may be said to have installed the worker, theoretically, at the controls of the system of production; while the economic juggernaut, through mechanization, organized, firstly, the formation of a working class and, secondly, the transformation of the working class into a consumer class. In a third visitation, philosophical anthropology has proclaimed language as the "home of man." Disillusionment with technology has been accompanied by theorization of language as defining the fundamental relation of freedom and necessity. In the sense that homo oeconomicus has become homo ludens, Wittgenstein is probably the representative figure. However, in the sense that the rise of ideology implies the fabrication of a spacious but controlled discursive universe, Heidegger's is the authentic voice.⁶ With Heidegger philosophy appears to have ratified an epochal reconstruction. At least Foucault's extended critique relates the emergence of a dominant linguistic philosophy to the historical closure of the possibility of utopia in the domain of labour or social production. Moreover, he situates those anthropological discourses, those satellites of language philosophy which address the problem of man and society, in the shadow of the

issue of surplus population attendant upon the triumph of instrumental reason.

Each of the domesticated utopias retains some social compulsion. Freedom is thus typically construed as freedom of conscience and as individual liberty that remembers not to infringe or disturb conventional expectations. Liberalism engenders conformism. Faith in proletarian action remains a strong palliative, even if it is increasingly forced to emigrate to the Third World and is expressed in nostalgia and reminiscence. Socialism has degenerated into historical romance. What is most topical, however, is theoretical representation and social construction of an "anthropological finitude"⁷ in language and in similar symbolic economies. Each of the categorial formulations of the relations of freedom and necessity has the function of proclaiming an ideal that is traduced in practice; but if containment of the problem of surplus population (perhaps, the problem of surplus energy is the more basic one) is of paramount importance for the continued existence of the established order; if the practical priority is the provision of "living space" in the domain of the ideological; then, criticism must offer itself as interlocutor of all positive discourses that might purvey estrangement and totalitarianism in language. If transposition of real relations in imaginary relations has become the predominant mode of political practice, criticism must respond accordingly.

Inflation in the ideological has two main manifestations: the proliferation of messages relayed in various semiotic systems and the organization of communication as a closed technological universe. To make sense of the new order is to engage those numerous discourses disseminated in the new symbolism through the modern media. Criticism must isolate elementary concepts and explain how these reach upward for rational vindication towards a counterfeit ontology. Previous critical successes which have demonstrated that there is no absolute knowledge and no natural society become an invaluable resource. Ideology critique has always supplied the need for de-mystification of the pretensions of naturalism. It is in this sense that media studies must, as Stuart Hall advises, raise the problem of ideology as "the return of the repressed"; since ideology is nothing but the occlusion of the historical, obliteration of evidence of practical intervention, denial that culture and society exist as variegated modes of production. More precisely still, ideology by its repression of the historicity of things withholds the possibility of criticism: which arises equally in the transformability of objective circumstances and in the inextinguishable difference between the representative systems of "transcendental subjectivity" and the under-represented and mis-represented bearers of mere "empirical subjectivity."

It is well known, of course, that the distance between

philosophic comprehension and social change is immeasurable. Nevertheless, the importance of theoretical success should not be underestimated. Theory remains, necessarily, the refuge of utopia. And so some titanic struggles and famous victories are recorded below.

A sociology that declares its solidarity with the philosophy of practice finds itself with new difficulties. In particular, the question arises, how, when the conventions of naturalism are discarded, is the problem of representation to be resolved? How, in other words is social reality to be conceptualized and represented in theory? Where is sociology to find its rationale after it has descried the efforts of positive philosophy and science to ground themselves epistemologically, so that they could offer a universally valid knowledge? No answers are supplied at this stage but only because this thesis is presented in the form of an enquiry as well as of a history.

Notes

1. Richard Bernstein, Praxis and Action, London, Duckworth, 1971, passim. Two examples of what Bernstein actually says about the point of dialectical logic as employed by Hegel and Marx convey the sense of its radically critical character. Firstly, with regard to Hegel's intention Bernstein remarks: "he wants to show us that the hard objectivity of the 'facts' before us dissolves into subjectivity." Ibid., p 23. Secondly, concerning the emancipatory promise projected by Marx's materialist dialectic, Bernstein says that it rests upon the rationalist principle that: "this emancipation will be achieved not by faith, but by scientific knowledge." Ibid., p 310.
2. Foucault's clearest formulation of the concept of the 'episteme' as an historical a priori is given thus: "This a priori does not consist of a set of constant problems uninterruptedly presented to men's curiosity by concrete phenomena as so many enigmas; nor is it made up of a certain state of acquired knowledge laid down in the course of the preceding ages and providing a ground for the more or less irregular, more or less rapid, progress of rationality, etc. This a priori is what, in a given period, delimits in the totality of experience a field of knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in that field, provides man's everyday perceptions with theoretical powers, and defines the conditions in which he can sustain a discourse about things that is recognized to be true...." Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, London, Tavistock, 1970, p 157. See also: Michel Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, London, Tavistock, 1972, pps 128 ff.
3. On this matter, Marx writes: "For the present, let us observe that Hegel adopts the standpoint of modern political economy. He sees labour as the essence, the self-confirming essence of man..." etc. See: Karl Marx, Early Writings, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975, p 386.
4. At the point in question Marx remarks: "It goes without saying that the supersession of estrangement always emanates from the form of estrangement which is the dominant power - in Germany, self-consciousness; in France, equality, because politics; in England, real, material, practical need...." See: Karl Marx, op. cit., p 364.
5. Adorno, Theodor, W., Negative Dialectics, London, R.K.P., 1973, p 335.

6. Heidegger's work is the fundamental point of reference in the sense that it rotates on the notion that language contains men's essential possibilities and that it constitutes the "home of man." See: Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings, D.F. Krell, (ed.), London, R.K.P., 1978, p 239.
7. For an account of the notion of "anthropological finitude" see: Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, London, Tavistock, 1970, pps. 256-57 and pps. 348 ff.
8. Hall, Stuart, 'The rediscovery of "ideology": the return of the repressed in media studies,' in Culture, Society and the Media, Gurevitch, M. et al., (eds), London, Methuen, 1982, pps. 56 ff.

PART I: REAPPROPRIATING KANT

CHAPTER ONE

Lukacs' Themes

In the present interpretation¹ the purpose that unifies Lukacs' writings on dialectics is understood to be that of demonstrating the authenticity of Marx's philosophy. Pre-eminent among four themes related to that purpose, is Lukacs' insistence that philosophy did not end with Kant. The reduction of classical German philosophy to a Kantian essence, subtly enforced in modern social theory, is a major polemical target.² Methodological questions, Lukacs argues, against the Neo-Kantian school and less directly against positivism, are not to be solved by returning to, and remaining with Kant.³ Following Hegel, Lukacs characterizes Kant's philosophy as "subjective idealism" and is at pains to emphasise the total inadequacy of this mode of thought for any supposedly historical science.⁴

Closely related, almost inseparable from this first theme, is Lukacs' insistence that our understanding of Kant's undeniable importance must be revised. Even the most cursory glance at the history of philosophy, Lukacs argues, will convince the student that classical German philosophy fulfilled itself in Hegel, or in Marx, but not in Kant. Accordingly it is stressed that Kant should be re-interpreted in the light of an understanding of Hegel. (Hegel in turn is understood by way of Marx). Thirdly, Lukacs' position can be differentiated from that of the

majority of Marxist writers by virtue of his constant reliance upon and his positive estimation of Hegel. For Lukacs, the possibility of a social science requires a full appreciation of Hegel's philosophy of history. Finally, Lukacs locates Marx firmly in the tradition of German Idealism (though, of course, Marx is understood to have escaped from that philosophy armed with its truth).

There are other readings of Hegel; but in his discussion of Kant, the crucial factor is always Lukacs' interpretation of Hegel as successor to Kant. In his introduction to "The Young Hegel", Lukacs explains that: "Within the context of the history of classical German philosophy Hegel discerned the starting point for the meteoric rise of the dialectical philosophy of idealism in the "transcendental", "critical" philosophy of Kant and he rightly regarded his own system as the consummation and conclusion of the movement Kant had initiated".⁵ In studying both Hegel and Kant, decisive stages in the evolution of current philosophical categories are under consideration.

The progress of dialectics from Kant to Hegel is discussed, by Lukacs, in terms of a movement from "subjective idealism". Lukacs' criterion in his judgment that Hegel's position is the more progressive is methodological. Hegel's "objective idealism", by virtue of its more emphatic realism, is considered to be better adapted to the study of history and society. Lukacs contrasts the

realisms of these philosophers in the following manner. In the one case, he says: "Kant had investigated moral problems from the standpoint of the individual. In his view conscience was the fundamental moral fact.... In Kant social problems are secondary, deriving from the subsequent interactions of the primary reality, namely the individual subjects." ⁶ For Hegel, on the other hand: "the antithesis between Is and Ought does not reside within the individual psyche as a contrast between the empirical and the intelligible self, as in Kant. It is an antithesis between progressive and reactionary tendencies in politics and society itself." ⁷ Hegel, unlike Kant and the Neo-Kantians, discusses moral-existential problems in social and political terms.

In spite of the limitations of his "subjective idealism," however, Lukacs acknowledges that Kant's work is the necessary point of departure for a study of dialectics. This, in fact, is the crux of his alternative account of Kant's place in the history of philosophy.

The Appearance of the Dialectic

Georg Lukacs' analysis of the evolution of the philosophical categories essential to dialectics ⁸ begins, then, in Kant. His interpretation of Kant stresses that it is in his work that the dialectical philosophy associated with the names of Hegel and Marx is first encountered in its modern form. Lukacs insists that although Kant's

entire system culminates on the threshold of dialectics, although the logic of that system tended, inexorably, in that direction, its author was denied, by historical circumstance, an insight into the vigour of the possibility he had established.

The clear implication of Lukacs' interpretation (in which Kant's philosophy is a tentative step in the right direction and not the last word) is this: that if Kant, himself, did not resolve but merely posed a problem of decisive importance, then to restrict philosophy to a Kantian essence, to recognize only the Kantian variants as valid, is misguided and suspect theoretically and ideologically. Furthermore, to the extent that Kant's system produces a batch of pseudo-solutions and is, at the same time, a powerful orthodoxy, a major critical exercise is called for. It is, very much, as the representative figure in this critical exercise that Lukacs is considered here.

Kant's contribution to the development of dialectical philosophy is recognized in three theoretical domains. Analytically, Lukacs argues that in logic, epistemology and ontology, dialectics was anticipated in the Kantian system. On the level of ontology, it is fundamental, says Lukacs, to any appreciation of Kant to recognize the importance of the antinomies of theoretical reason and their implications for the status of the category of contradiction. Kant's

philosophy is also contrued as precursor of the Hegelian dialectics by virtue of its "activism": i.e., in that it advanced, what is referred to in Marxist epistemology as, the "active" side of the theory of knowledge. The practical conceptions developed by way of Hegel and Marx are seen to originate, in effect, in Kant's 'Copernican Revolution'. Finally, Lukacs observes, that in his discussion of the "archetypal intellect" (his notion of the free and rational Mind), Kant anticipates dialectical logic in the value which he places upon the category of totality, as thought's ultimate organizational principle.

Lukacs' elucidation of the dialectical content in Kant, may thus be seen to focus, substantively, upon the history of the categories of contradiction, practice and totality. At present only the ontological level of Lukacs' critique is discussed: only the place of the antinomies of theoretical reason, in their dialectical aspect, is considered.

The Antinomies of Theoretical Reason

Lukacs, himself, provides no introduction to the antinomies. He assumes that his reader is familiar with Kant (or that all that is important in Kant will be salvaged in his dialectical studies). A detour is necessitated here, however, in order to make some preliminary definitions. Brief consideration of an orthodox, undoubtedly positivistic, interpretation of the significance of the

Kantian antinomies can however serve a double function: the basic ideas can be introduced in an apparently pure, analytical form; and subsequently, Lukacs' critical exposition can be seen in its proper light, as an unmasking of apparently innocent theory, as, therefore, integral to the critique of ideology, inaugurated in Marx's analyses of the categories of political economy.

From the outset, it should be appreciated that Kant came to define and resolve the antinomies in the course of his "critical" philosophy; which was an attack upon metaphysics in the sense of unwarranted speculation and dogmatics. It was Kant's intention to found a scientific metaphysics. In this regard, Kant looked to the science of his day, to Newtonian physics for his model. That science, employing Theoretical Reason, the Understanding, was shown by Kant to investigate objective reality by means of its use of a specific, uniquely valid (or so it was presumed), matrix of a priori concepts. Metaphysics, in its post-dogmatic phase, was to be identified, similarly, by its use of a particular categorial schema. However, it was in his task of explicating the categorial structure of theoretical reason that Kant enunciated the antinomies, as marking the limits of the Understanding.

In explanation, it is useful to turn to Lewis White Beck, who says: "An antinomy is a pair of contradictory statements each of which is validly proved and each of

which expresses an inescapable interest of reason. There are four in the first Critique (The Critique of Pure Reason). The antinomies strictly limit theoretical reason to the world of space and time, nullifying all speculative flights from the results of science and all attempts to use scientific hypotheses in speculations beyond the limits of sense." ¹² As well as defining the meaning of the antinomies of theoretical reason, White Beck explains the significance of Kant's claim to have knowledge of their solution. He says: "their resolution permits an altogether different use of reason; their occurrence and resolution indicate reason's broader competence as a faculty not exclusively devoted to cognition." ¹³ In other words, since it is claimed that the antinomies can be resolved by reason, that the limits of the Understanding can be transcended, Reason, itself, is ascribed a sovereign position in its relation to theoretical reason, the Understanding. This distinction between Reason and Understanding, or between Practical Reason and Theoretical Reason, is fundamental to Kant.

S. Korner writes: "By an antinomy is understood a pair of propositions, apparently contradictory, which follow from the same set of assumptions. An antinomy is resolved either (a) by showing that the apparently contradictory propositions are in fact contradictories and follow from a certain internally inconsistent assumption, or (b) by showing that the apparently contradictory propositions are not in fact contradictory but mutually compatible." ¹⁴ In the

one case, there is no antinomy; in the other, there is no contradiction.

The first antinomy of theoretical reason has for its thesis, this proposition: "The world has a beginning in time and is also limited in space"; and for its antithesis: "The world has no temporal beginning and no limits in space; with respect to both time and place it is infinite." The second antinomy has as its thesis: "In the world every composite substance is composed of simple parts; nothing exists anywhere except it either is simple or is composed of simple parts": and as its antithesis. "In the world no composite thing consists of simple parts and there exists nowhere in the world anything simple." The thesis of the third antinomy is this: "Causality according to the laws of nature is not the only kind of causality from which the phenomena of the world can be derived. It is necessary in order to explain them to assume a causality through freedom." Here the antithesis is: "There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature." Lastly, the fourth thesis: "There belongs to the world as a part of it or as its cause something which exists as an absolutely necessary being." The fourth antithesis is this: "There exists nowhere an absolutely necessary being as the world's cause, either in it or out of it."¹⁵

For a preliminary, orthodox account of Kant's employment of

practical reason in his resolution of the antinomies it is
convenient to return to White Beck. The basis of his
account is that: firstly, theoretically reason, operating
in the empirical world, inevitably encounters the
antinomies described, but cannot resolve them; secondly,
practical reason, a larger competence of reason, can
encompass and more importantly, transcend those antinomies,
which mark the limits of theoretical reason, in thought.
How, precisely, this resolution is envisaged is best
recounted in connection with the third antinomy: that which
expresses a conflict in the idea of causality, such that in
order to maintain that idea it is necessary, if the problem
of infinite regress is to be obviated, to posit a first
cause, i.e., an uncaused cause. As White Beck explains in
this case, and similarly in the others, thesis and
antithesis "may each be true if their respective scopes are
distinguished."¹⁷

The conclusion compelled by this analysis, a conclusion
whose full significance will be explored subsequently,
is that Kant's solution invokes an ontological distinction
between noumenal and phenomenal domains in reality. In
short, it becomes clear that, at least in its relevance for
positivist theory, Kant's ontology is the key to his
system. What is deemed to be decisive is a judgment that:
existence in the realm of phenomena is governed by the rule
of causality; while in the noumenal realm, things-in-
themselves are determined by their own principle, or are

free. Now Lukacs' dialectical explication of the antinomical nature of Kant's thought runs parallel to this orthodox one, but it is, simultaneously, a rebuttal.

Lukacs on the Antinomies

For Lukacs, Kant's formulation of the antinomies of theoretical reason is an achievement whose philosophical importance must be recognized in historical terms, as well as in strictly theoretical terms; which is to say that the complementarity of analytic and dialectical logic, or of immanent and ideological critique, must not be denied. In Lukacs' interpretation, then, what Kant had done was to bring before consciousness the fact of the radically antinomical nature of existence in the modern world. Of the classical philosophy whose foremost spokesman Kant was, Lukacs says that it took "all the antinomies of its life basis to the furthest extreme it was capable of in thought." ¹⁸ To put this another way: for Lukacs, Kant's ultimate significance is that within his system the category of contradiction became the undeniable and authentic problematic within which philosophy had to evolve. Essentially, from a philosophical viewpoint, it is argued that immediately the Kantian antinomies are enunciated a formidable dilemma arises: either the antinomies are accepted as marking the farthest limits of thought in the empirical realm; or, thereafter, thought takes as its primary concern the question of the possibility of extending the scope of reason through a

continuing confrontation with the category of contradiction. The second alternative involves a quest for the real basis of the experience of contradiction. For Kant, the appearance of the antinomies in theory, is finally explained ontologically, in terms of the dual nature of human experience. The second alternative, if adopted, entails a transition to dialectics with its promise of a practical solution to the problems of contemplative philosophy.

Now Lukacs, as others have done, recognizes both responses to the dilemma in Kant. The possibility of dialectical philosophy is scotched, however, almost at the moment it is imagined. The preponderant tendency in Kant is resignation: a resignation based, Lukacs admits, upon a realistic assessment of the magnitude of the problem raised by the antinomies; a problem beyond the power of thought in Kant's day, and, therefore, irresolvable in the context of Kant's system. The logic of Kant's philosophy, says Lukacs, as a philosophy of consciousness, in the sense that it is the exemplar of "subjective idealism," leads overwhelmingly to resignation in the face of history. At the same time, Kant's quiescence is understood by Lukacs to have produced pseudo-solutions to elementary philosophical problems; and, unfortunately, these have become axiomatic in a great deal of contemporary theory.

To summarize Lukacs' position, then: He regards Kant as

having brought philosophy to the threshold of dialectics in his critical rationalism. On the ontological level this is evident in his treatment of the antinomies, in that they intimate something of the radically contradictory nature of human experience. In view of its formal (a-historical) method, however, Kant's philosophy is adjudged to be incapable of making the transition to dialectics. In Lukac's own words "the attempt at a solution (signalled) by the turn taken by critical philosophy towards the practical does not succeed in resolving the antinomies we have noted. On the contrary, it fixes them for eternity."¹⁹ That is, instead of offering any remotely practical solution, Kant presents an implacable ontology.

The History of Rationalism

Lukacs' historical method involves tracing theoretical problems, like that denoted by the antinomies, back to their point of origin. In the present case, Lukacs turns to the philosophy of Kant as the point where the rationalist tradition is confronted, directly and for the first time, with a choice between a formal, analytical philosophy and dialectics. In Kant, so it is maintained, philosophy in its pre-dialectical form became aware of its logical limitations and a crisis was precipitated, whose momentous significance is still not widely or fully appreciated in either its methodological or ideological aspects.

In "History and Class Consciousness," Lukacs employs an idea that is well established in the Marxist literature to the effect that rationalism is the philosophical expression of the social practice and material interests of the rising bourgeoisie. It is an idea that is essential to "History and Class Consciousness," though it is not treated expansively there. Moving from that assumption, nevertheless, in his essay on "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in the section entitled "The Antinomies of Bourgeois Thought," Lukacs provides a sketch of the emergence of rationalism as the philosophical-historical movement and its development to a stage of overt crisis in Kant.

From a purely theoretical standpoint, the original distinctiveness of rationalism is discerned in what Kant had termed his 'Copernican Revolution' in the theory of knowledge. This revolution, involved, in Kant's own estimation, a radical shift in perspective, he said: "Hitherto, it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects..... Therefore, let us for once attempt to see whether we cannot reach a solution to the task of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our knowledge." As Lukacs renders this rationalist axiom not peculiar to Kant's philosophy but expressive of that entire movement in thought, rationalism: "refuses to accept the world as something that has arisen (or, e.g., has been created by God) independently of the

knowing subject and prefers to conceive of it instead as its own (i.e., the knowing subject's) product."²² More expansively, and with greater regard for its historical significance, Lukacs says that rationalism exists: "in the sense of a formal system whose unity derives from its orientation towards that aspect of the phenomena that can be grasped by the understanding, that is created by the understanding and hence also subject to the control, the predictions and calculations of the understanding."²³ The historical ground of this movement is the imposition of a rational order in the face of a more natural order. The paradigmatic form of knowledge for such rationalist systems is mathematical knowledge which becomes the means of bringing into existence abstract forms (machinery, technology, money) that are highly amenable to rational control; much more amenable than natural phenomena (e.g. insects, the weather, or men in their natural aspect).

Rationalism, Lukacs insists, did not in any sense originate with Kant. "From the systematic doubt and the cogito ergo sum of Descartes, to Hobbes, Spinoza and Leibniz," Lukacs explains, "there is a direct line of development whose centralized strand, rich in variations, is the idea that the object of cognition can be known by us for the reason that, and to the degree in which, it has been created by ourselves."²⁴ It is undoubtedly in Kant, nevertheless, that the central difficulty of this mode of thought becomes explicit. Their common factor, according to Lukacs, is

that ultimately rationalism's systems seek to unify experience by breaking down, reconstructing and incorporating a rationalized irrationality: the goal of rationalism is always to bring experience, the world, to reason; and to do this along systematic lines. As Lukacs puts it: "In such systems, the 'ultimate' problems of human existence persist in an irrationality incommensurable with human understanding."²⁵ Continuing in this vein, Lukacs identifies the fundamental deficiency of such philosophy as follows. He says, in general: "The closer the system comes to those 'ultimate' questions the more strikingly its partial, auxiliary nature and its inability to grasp the 'essentials' are revealed."²⁶

The gist of the matter is, again in Lukacs' phrase, "the inevitability with which every rational system will strike a frontier or barrier of irrationality."²⁷ Inevitably, this encounter only becomes decisive for rationalism where it deliberately or self-consciously attempts to impose its system uniformly and universally. The antinomic structure of such thought only becomes visible, in other words, as it presents itself as the valid and viable philosophic method: "as the universal method by which to obtain knowledge of the whole of existence."²⁸ It is no coincidence, then, that the antinomies emerge as the clearest expression of a particular philosophical crisis precisely where the concrete limits of the rationality of capitalist social relations are being established in historical practice;

where these are beginning to make themselves felt in all strata of society; and where these limits are beginning to be interpreted as natural barriers to human development. The crisis of rationalist "systematics", that manifests itself in philosophy as a choice between formalism and dialectics is, effectively, shown by Lukacs to be intimately related to the parallel problem of the consolidation of capitalist social relations: which, increasingly, demands from bourgeois thought not, primarily criticism of the old feudal order, but defence of and promulgation of the new system and its ideology.

The Thing-in-itself

The crisis of rationalist philosophy, signalled most dramatically by the theorization of the antinomies of theoretical reason, is explained by Lukacs as, at root, an historical phenomenon. He identifies those philosophical presuppositions which preclude the possibility of a logical transition to dialectics in Kant; and he relates these presuppositions to the larger socio-historical context in which rationalism developed. (These are the mediations to which Lukacs alludes.) In fairly bold terms, it is by means of the philosophy of history that Lukacs approaches the task of textual exposition. The methodological crisis of rationalist "systematics" is located in a historical context in which the bourgeoisie was becoming aware, by degrees, of the futility of attempting to universalize its social ideal; and in which the consolidation of new social

relations came to take precedence over the subversion of feudal relations. It seems that just as this general social trend was accompanied on the ideological level by a clamour for order, rather than by continued support for the revolutionary ideals of freedom and equality; so, on the level of pure theory, confidence in the efficacy of the mathematical model of knowledge began to wane and the limits of theoretical reason were defined.

With Kant, then, rationalism is understood to have entered a new phase, close to the termination of the monopoly of the philosophy of consciousness. In his preoccupation with the problem of the "thing-in-itself," Kant is seen to confront, admittedly at some remove and entirely in the context of his formalism, the pressing, existential problems of his time. These problems manifest themselves in that thorny question concerning the significance, in theory, of the category of contradiction; and Kant gives the paradigmatic response by a philosophy of consciousness, founded upon "subjective idealist" premisses. In Lukacs' words: "The dilemma can be seen most clearly in the strange significance for Kant's system of his concept of the "thing-in-itself," with its many iridescent connotations."²⁹

Lukacs introduces his discussion of Kant's response to the problem of the "thing-in-itself" by observing that: "The attempt has often been made to prove that the thing-in-itself has a number of quite disparate functions within

Kant's system. What they all have in common is the fact that they each represent a limit, a barrier to the abstract, formal, rationalistic "human" faculty of cognition.....

.....To put it briefly," he continues, "these problems can be reduced to two great, seemingly unconnected and even opposed complexes. There is, firstly, the problem of matter (in the logical, technical sense), the problem of the content of those forms with the aid of which 'we' know and are able to know the world because we have created it ourselves. And secondly, there is the problem of the whole and of the ultimate substance of knowledge which is needed to round off the partial systems into a totality, a system of the perfectly understood world."³⁰

Three layers of Lukacs' argument are somewhat compressed here. Firstly, two problem complexes are specified, as definitive of the Kantian response to the problem of the "thing-in-itself": which is the problem of the object of knowledge as it exists independently of consciousness. On the one hand, Kant maintains that the "thing-in-itself" cannot be known as an objective totality; on the other hand, it cannot be known in its objective essence. We are forced on Kant's judgment to rest content with knowledge of a plurality of partial, formal systems. (Even the possibility of a unified formal totality is denied in Lukacs' reading of the matter). We are also forced to rest

content with a knowledge of appearances.

The second layer of Lukacs' argument, here, characterizes these judgments as the methodological imponderables bequeathed by Kant to bourgeois social science. Taken together they amount to a prohibition on sociology: a science which proposes to explain the social totality; and which, to this end, promises to do more than merely describe appearances. Thirdly, in the present phase of his argument, Lukacs relates Kant's agnostic judgments to, and accounts for their apparent "unconnectedness," in terms of their common source in a "subjective idealist" ontology. Characteristically, as Lukacs is aware, Kant's ontological difficulties appear very much in an epistemological guise. Thus it is, primarily, in his search for the subjective grounds of the possibility of knowledge that Kant encounters the problem of the "thing-in-itself." However, as Lukacs also properly observes, it is the presumed existence of the "thing-in-itself," independently of consciousness, that evokes the obstructive judgments. In this sense, therefore, Kant's ontology is in question.

The Ontology of Subjective Idealism

Before proceeding to discuss the determinate effect of his ontology, it is necessary to distinguish appearance from reality on the ontological level of Kant's discourse. This is so because, as Lukacs clearly recognizes, the direct or immediate result of Kant's appraisal of the problem of the

"thing-in-itself" is a principled rejection of ontology.³¹ His unconditional recognition of the danger of dogmatism, says Lukacs, leads to a deliberate, calculated retreat from the sphere of ontology. There is in Kant, as a consequence, no overt commitment to any metaphysical vision of the structure of the universe, or of Being in general (as it exists independently of consciousness). In this respect, Kant is in complete accord with the sceptical empiricism of Hume, in particular, and with Enlightenment thought in general. Similarly, Kant is at one in this matter with the philosophy of science of today.

Unfortunately, the Kantian system cannot be said, in the final analysis, to have successfully distanced itself from ontology; on the contrary, and despite appearances, Kantian rationalism arrives at its epistemological conclusions and produces methodologically significant judgments within the confines of the ontology of "subjective idealism." In other words, the effect of "subjective idealism," in Kant's own system and upon subsequent epistemology and methodology, cannot be fully appreciated without considering the role of an underlying ontology: whose ontological function is that of conferring an apparently eternal validity, a finality, upon its pronouncements.

As subjectivism, Kant's philosophy reflects a current of thought that, at least since Descartes' formulation, has

recognized the individual human subject as the only indubitable reality. As idealism, Kant's philosophy, also in the tenor of the dominant rationalist tradition, conceives of the individual subject in purely abstract terms, as consciousness. The essential "subjective idealism," in this sense, is defined in Kant's moral philosophy, where subjectivity is equated with reason and depicted as the power of the individual to renounce mere natural existence. However, at the same time that this theory of subjectivity is the basis of Kant's humanism - calling as it does for a humanization of man's condition - it presupposes an immutable, objective reality, an ontology. In Adorno's estimation, what is at issue here is "Kant's subjective reconstruction of objectively binding ideas;"³² or, the way in which Kant, in spite of a formal repudiation of ontology, reinstates the scholastic ontology: substituting for an absolute distinction between supernatural and natural orders an equally absolute, and completely parallel, distinction between noumenal and³³ phenomenal regions of subjective experience.

In his moral, practical philosophy this ontology, which defines an irreducible dualism in the nature and mind of man, obtrudes to prevent the possibility of articulating a moral code that could subvert, deflect or countermand the laws of necessity, the causality, operating in the phenomenal world. Practical reason can achieve an abstract unification of experience, accounting for the antinomical

nature of experience, by relating to a transcendent (ontological) principle. Practical reason can also accomplish an abstract negation of empirical reality, in living in accordance with the ethical principle given in the Categorical Imperative; i.e., reason can withdraw into the noumenal sphere. However, no unification of experience in mundane existence is possible: the possibility of a resolution of the antinomical structure of reality is not envisaged; rather, it is in the nature of human experience that it is contradictory.³⁴

At last, then, Lukacs' evaluation of the philosophical significance of Kant's theorization of the antinomies of theoretical reason can be set out, comprehensively. Above all, for Lukacs, their appearance in theory marks an historical juncture for philosophy: the emergence of an existential problem, completely resistant to solution in the context of the philosophy of consciousness. More than this, however, Kant's attempt to resolve the problem of the antinomical nature of experience is seen to depend upon a dualistic ontology; and this, itself, is adjudged to have several important corollaries. Not least of these is the fact that, precisely because Kant invokes a theory of Being in general, to resolve the problem, he eternalizes it and removes it from the domain of history. The fact that this system, from first principles, does not recognize the existential basis of its central problem is also held, by Lukacs, to have enduring epistemological and methodological

repercussions.

These last mentioned matters deserve a more careful treatment. Most generally, Lukacs indicts bourgeois thought for its commitment to the regressive, backward-looking element in Kant; for its neglect of the developmental, dialectical insights contained in that system. More specifically, Lukacs is at pains to point out that adherence to "subjective idealism" and to the ontology behind it, has certain easily specified and decidedly problematic implications for the methodology of social science. Firstly, in this respect, the strategic position of the dualistic ontology means that such systems are riddled by antinomies: such as those between idealism and materialism, fact and value, public and private, science and philosophy, and so on. None of these can be closed; but they serve to foreclose myriad theoretical problems. Next, retention of Kant's agnosticism, in the face of the "thing-in-itself", means that the sciences are not distinguishable on the basis of subject-matter. Lukacs writes: "the fact that these sciences (the special sciences with their complete independence of one another) are 'exact' is due precisely to this circumstance. Their underlying material base is permitted to dwell inviolate and undisturbed in its irrationality (non-createdness, givenness) so that it becomes possible to operate with unproblematic, rational categories in the resulting, methodically purified world. These categories are then

applied not to the real material sub-stratum (even that of the particular science) but to an 'intelligible' subject matter." ³⁵ These sciences, then, impose form systematically and are dangerously indifferent to the demands of objective reality.

Also, Kant's agnosticism forecloses the question of the accessibility of objective reality. For Lukacs, the important, unanswered, question, is this: "are the empirical facts..... to be taken as 'given' or can this 'givenness' be dissolved further into rational forms i.e. can it be conceived as a product of 'our' reason." ³⁶ Silence on this question is tantamount to a rejection of the theme of the social-practical determination of historical conditions; it means that questions concerning the structure of social reality, of the social totality, have no material referent.

Again, in a similar way, the other major theme of the philosophy of history is missed: that is the question of the social determination of the categories of the understanding. As Lukacs properly maintains: "By confining itself to the study of the 'possible conditions' of the validity of the forms in which its underlying existence is manifested, modern bourgeois thought bars its own way to a clear view of the problems bearing on the birth and death of these forms and on their real essence and substratum." ³⁷

Finally, for the present, Lukacs deplores the demise of criticism; of philosophy as social criticism, which is implied in the restriction of philosophy to the formal, analytical method, apparently legitimated by Kant's critical rationalism. Lukacs is ironic in his judgment of philosophical criticism that culminates in the reiteration of an ontology. He says of this "subjective idealism": "Its perspicacity finds itself increasingly in the situation of that legendary "critic" in India who was confronted with the ancient story according to which the world rests upon an elephant. He unleashed the critical question: upon what does the elephant rest ? On receiving the answer that the elephant stands on a tortoise 'criticism' declared itself satisfied." ³⁸ Lukacs continues: "It is obvious that even if he had continued to press apparently 'critical' questions he could only have elicited a third miraculous animal. He would not have been able to discover the solution to the real question." ³⁹ Here, if explanation is not superfluous, Lukacs observes that such philosophy is capable neither of recognizing the real origin of its problems in social practice, nor consequently of formulating an answer with a practical intention in response to the need which stimulates it. This, incidentally, is not to be taken, primarily, as an indictment of Kant, who was genuinely constrained by historical circumstance; but it implies that to regard antinomical thought otherwise than in a socio-historical light is to abandon, in present historical conditions, Kant's own critical line of enquiry.

Conclusion

In general terms, Lukacs surveys the philosophy of consciousness from the perspective of the philosophy of history. From that vantage point, Kant's philosophy is assessed theoretically and historically. Lukacs' immanent critique, which presupposes his ideological critique, considers Kant's philosophy: firstly, as marking the farthest limit of the philosophy of consciousness and, secondly, as the precursor of the philosophy of history. These matters are treated analytically. The ideological critique, itself, relates Kantian rationalism to its socio-historical roots. Finally, Lukacs' survey comprises a precise interpretation of the development of social thought from Kant to Marx.

The Immanent Critique

On the one hand, then, Lukacs views Kant's philosophy as "a unique transitional stage" in human development towards "gaining intellectual control of society as a whole."⁴⁰ More specifically, in theoretical terms Kant's elaboration of the antinomies of theoretical reason is taken for an advance in the direction of self-awareness of the contradictory nature of social existence in the modern world. The fundamental problems of contemporary society, says Lukacs, are first raised to the level of consciousness in classical German philosophy. However, he warns: "this takes place in a milieu where the problems can only appear on an intellectual and philosophical plane. This has the

draw-back that the concrete problems of society and the concrete solutions to them cannot be seen." Nevertheless, in an abstract, rarified form the question of the historical transformation of society is already being posed.

As a progressive mode of thought, rationalism in its Kantian variant broached the problem of contradiction and, consequently, of the limits of the philosophy of consciousness; of individual subjectivity conceived as consciousness. As a philosophy trapped in its own time and floundering in its socio-historical conditions, however, Kant's system is profoundly ambiguous. Lukacs puts it like this: "classical philosophy mercilessly tore to shreds all the metaphysical illusions of the preceding era, but was forced to be as uncritical and as dogmatically metaphysical with regard to some of its own premisses as its predecessors had been towards theirs." In particular, Lukacs alludes to this dogma: "that the rational and formalistic mode of cognition is the only possible way of apprehending reality." His target is the a priori, idealist mode of thought that moves from an initial affirmation of the absolute validity of its primary categories. In these terms, Lukacs depicts Kant's system as, at once, an anticipation of dialectics (in elevating the category of contradiction to a central position in thought) and as a formidable barrier to philosophical progress (in insisting upon the radically antinomical

nature of the understanding, in literally rejecting the category of totality, and the possibility of knowledge of the social totality).

Subsequently, Lukacs' immanent critique of Kantian rationalism isolates those analytical elements that characterize it; and which stifle the dialectical possibility in Kant. These elements are given as integral to "subjective idealism." Prominent among these components is subjective individualism: a principle that in the manner of Cartesian philosophy (or of political economy with its homo oeconomicus) posits the individual as the fundamental reality. As idealism this theory posits the individual entirely as an abstraction: as consciousness he is an abstraction from the concrete individual; and as a theoretical entity he is an abstraction from history. These correlates of subjective individualism tend to issue logically in epistemological, psychological and natural anthropological reductions of philosophy. (Not all of these tendencies are realized in Kant; they exist potentially in Kant and have been realized since.) There is also a sceptical empiricism in Kant, hostile to all metaphysics. This, however, can easily be misappropriated to absolutize the dichotomy between science and philosophy. Other elements identified by Lukacs are: an agnosticism that seems, completely, to deny empirical science access to the material world as "thing-in-itself": i.e., ultimately, it declares its object to be unknowable; a related

nominalism that purports to know only the appearance of things; and a phenomenism, that seems to insist that appearances are all of reality. As an immanent critique, Lukacs' analysis points to the intrinsic contradictions of Kant's system and to their collective incommensurability with any scientific ideal.

The Ideological Critique

From the point of view of the philosophy of history the main fault in Kant's thought is that it is a-historical (it lacks a sense of history). Lukacs' analysis, as essentially historical on the other hand, purports to demonstrate the historical basis of each of the analytical components of the philosophy of consciousness. Thus, Kant's agnosticism and scepticism are related to the bourgeoisie's struggle against feudal relations of domination. Agnosticism is originally a philosophical turn of mind opposed to theology; and scepticism is a negative critical mode of reflection turned against dogmatism. Nominalism that claims to know only the appearance of things is accounted for, subjectively, by the fact that the German philosophers, given the backwardness of the German economy, were bourgeois only in ideology. Objectively, nominalism reflects the predominance of exchange over production relations and of monetary value over use value. Phenomenism, the equation of appearance with reality is, for Lukacs, the problem of the reification of consciousness.

The dominance of exchange relations is understood to lead to a loss of insight into the dynamic, historical dimension of reality.

Above all, Lukacs' ideological critique purports to explicate the social origins of Kant's philosophy with respect to its fundamentally antinomical nature. This is accomplished by means of his analysis of subjective individualism and subjective idealism. Consideration of "the life that forms the true basis" of Kant's philosophy, says Lukacs, reveals that the primary and characteristic contradiction experienced by the bourgeoisie is that exemplified by the predicament of the individual producer who, despite the apparent autonomy and determinacy of his activity, was, equally, undeniably dependent upon objective market conditions, to whose vagaries he had to adapt. On the one hand, Lukacs remarks, "man in capitalist society confronts a reality made by himself (as a class)". On the other hand, he continues: "he is wholly at the mercy of its 'laws', his activity is confined to the exploitation of the inexorable fulfilment of certain individual laws for his own (egoistic) interests. But even while 'acting' he remains, in the nature of the case, the object and not the subject of events. The field of his activity becomes wholly internalized, it consists on the one hand of the awareness of the laws which he uses and on the other, of his awareness of his inner reactions to the course taken by events."

The historical phenomenon to which Lukacs alludes is alienation: the condition of the isolated individual to whom knowledge of the social basis of his social existence is closed and who faces an apparently natural order, adapting rationally to its laws: on a material level by pragmatic marketing strategy; and on a spiritual level by the cultivation of a private cultural sphere. The life of this individual is then the existential ground of antinomical thought.⁴⁷ The essence of Lukacs' theory of reification of consciousness is that rationalism, in the context of this alienated social reality, reproduces its historical effects minutely in theory. Constructing theory on the basis of an abstract subjectivity, presupposing a man whose essence is a (transcendental) consciousness, Lukacs argues, rationalism inevitably transposes the problem of contradiction and the general problem of the origin of the categories, from the empirical on to the noumenal level; and rationalism finalizes the problem, in the sense that it invokes, in quasi-ontological tones, an immutable contradiction in the nature of man, by way of a solution.

Continuity from Kant to Marx

Lukacs' main purpose in his dialectical studies has already been identified as that of demonstrating the authenticity of Marx's philosophy. To this end, much of Lukacs' work points up a remarkable, thematic continuity from Kant through Hegel to Marx. Essentially, from the vantage point

of the philosophy of history, Kant is understood to have expressed with dramatic philosophical clarity the problem whose solution was subsequently shown by Marx to require recognition of its nature as an historical problem.

Thus Kant in his radically antinomical philosophy, and in its specific contradictions, is alleged to have confronted the fundamental socio-existential problem of bourgeois man: the antagonism of individual interest and the structure of the collectivity. Lukacs relates the Kantian antinomies, the ultimate expression of the philosophy of consciousness, to the phenomenon of alienation, the corresponding theoretical expression of the problem in the philosophy of history. The elegance of this equation is evident when the decisive, unifying role of Kant's third antinomy (the one which raises the question of causality) is recognised. In fact, the question of the contradiction between freedom and necessity inscribed in the third antinomy, that to which the others can be reduced as variations on a theme, is understood by Lukacs to be raised to consciousness as an anxiety, historically produced by the conflict between the appearance of subjective autonomy and the reality of objective (market) dependency.

Hegel's philosophy is interpreted as a stage in the reduction of this problem to human terms.⁴⁸ The intractability of the dualistic structure of Kantian thought, the problem of contradiction, was poised as an existential

problem by Hegel. For him, what was at issue was the self-alienation of consciousness. A solution would emerge, progressively, as Mind or the World Spirit advanced from consciousness to self-consciousness. In brief, the alienation of subject and object (the ultimate philosophical representation of the category of contradiction) was, for Hegel, the effect of a blind practice that failed to recognise the work of its own hand in the structure of objective reality. Alienation was itself overcome in practice that brought to the subject, knowledge that the object-world was its own product or objectification.⁴⁹ Whereas Kant's philosophy is designated as "subjective idealism", by Lukacs, Hegel's is defined as "objective idealism." Where Kant claimed to know reality only as it is mediated (to the individual consciousness) by the structure of the mind; Hegel claimed to know all reality (in principle) because it existed only as an actualization of reason.⁵⁰

It has been presumed, from start to finish, that Marx was engaged in exploring the same problematic. It is appropriate, therefore, to conclude by substantiating that claim. The following quotations are from the German Ideology, where Marx's emergence from the problematic of German Idealism is documented; where a continuity is, consequently, quite apparent. There Marx says: "The division of labour implies the contradiction between the interest of the separate individual or the individual

family and the communal interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another..... And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community the latter takes an independent form as the state, divorced from the real interests of individual and community." ⁵¹ Finally in the same vein: "The social power, i.e. the multiplied productive force, which arises through the cooperation of different individuals as it is determined within the division of labour, appears to these individuals, since their cooperation is not voluntary (i.e. free) but natural, not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and end of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary, passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the action of men, nay even being the prime governor of these." ⁵² Surely, philosophy from Kant to Marx was embroiled with growing self-assurance in the sociological problem.

Notes

1. Other interpretations are characterized by their emphasis on one or more, principal points.

(a) Relying upon Lukacs' self-criticism in the Preface to the 1967 Edition of History and Class Consciousness, they stress Lukacs' misguided or excessive idealism. The exemplar is Gareth Stedman Jones', "The Marxism of the early Lukacs: An Evaluation", New Left Review, No. 70, Nov-Dec 1971. Also representative are: George Lichtheim, Lukacs, London, Fontana/Collins, 1970; and Lucio Colletti, Marxism and Hegel, London, New Left Books, 1973. However, a curious attitude to Lukacs' self-criticism is required to support this interpretation. While Lukacs' condemnation of his early idealism is accepted at face value, his attempt to salvage a methodologically important content from History and Class Consciousness is overlooked.

(b) Lukacs is closely identified with Max Weber, to whom he is supposed to be indebted, especially in connection with the themes of relativism and rationalization. Conspicuous here are: Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, The Young Lukacs and the Origins of Western Marxism, London, Pluto Press, 1979; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Adventures of the Dialectic, London, Heinemann, 1974. For a rejoinder, see: Georg Lukacs, 'Max Weber and German Sociology,' Economy and Society, Vol 1, No. 2, May 1972.

(c) Lukacs is assessed as the author of a theory of class consciousness, according to which a class-conscious proletariat would become the identical subject-object of history. Most of the works cited give a central position to this theory. Others that fasten onto Lukacs at this point are: Richard Kilminster, Praxis and Method, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979; Paul Connerton, 'The Collective Historical Subject: Reflections on Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness,' British Journal of Sociology, Vol XXV, No. 2, 1974; and Morris Wattnick, 'Relativism and Class Consciousness: Georg Lukacs', in Leopold Labedz (Ed.), Revisionism: Essays in the History of Marxist Ideas, London, Allen & Unwin, 1962. The least that can be said against the conventional focus on this theory is that if its immediate strangeness is to be overcome it must be reconciled with Lukacs' work as a whole. It is therefore the wrong place to begin with Lukacs'. A comparable misplaced emphasis is that which identifies Marx as, primarily, the author of an "immiseration thesis."

(d) Interest in Lukacs is, in general, restricted to his History and Class Consciousness. Noteworthy exceptions are: Jean Hyppolite, Studies on Marx and

Hegel, London, Heinemann, 1969; and G.H.R. Parkinson, Georg Lukacs, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977. Particularly unfortunate for sociological theory is the correlated neglect of Lukacs' later work, The Young Hegel.

2. Much of Lukacs' work is a polemic directed against "the followers of Kant who wished to freeze philosophy at the point it had reached in Kant himself." Georg Lukacs, The Young Hegel, London, The Merlin Press, 1975, p. 249.
3. Ibid., p. xvii.
4. A characteristic judgment is: "subjective idealism arose out of the deepest problems of the age but it has no solutions." Ibid., p. 261.
5. Ibid., p. xiv.
6. Ibid., p. 7.
7. Ibid., p. 12.
8. An exercise modelled upon Marx's analysis of the evolution of economic categories as described in the Introduction to the Grundrisse. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973, pp. 100-108.
9. See especially, Ibid., p. 163-4.
10. Ibid., p. 322, p 350.
11. Ibid., p. 393.
12. Beck, Lewis White, A commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, Univ. of Chicago, Phoenix Books, 1960, p. 25.
13. Ibid., p. 25.
14. Korner, S., Kant, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1955, p. 113-14.
15. Ibid., p. 115.
16. Beck, Lewis White, op. cit., pp. 25-6.
17. Ibid., p. 26.
18. Lukacs, Georg, History and Class Consciousness, The Merlin Press, London, 1971, p. 148.
19. Ibid., p. 133.
20. See, for example: Lucien Goldmann, Immanuel Kant, New

Left Books, London, 1971, p. 33 ff.: and Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, pp. 3-16.

21. As quoted in History and Class Consciousness, p. 111.
22. Ibid., p. 111.
23. Ibid., p. 113.
24. Ibid., p. 112.
25. Ibid., p. 113.
26. Ibid., pp. 113-14.
27. Ibid., p. 114.
28. Ibid., p. 114.
29. Ibid., p. 114.
30. Ibid., pp. 114-15.
31. Lukacs recognizes that: "It leads to the rejection of every 'metaphysics' (in the sense of ontology)". Ibid., p. 120.
32. Adorno, Theodor, Minima Moralia, London, New Left Books 1974, p. 36.
33. This emphasis is more pronounced in The Young Hegel, than in History and Class Consciousness. See, for example, Lukacs' estimation of the role of Kant's ontology, where he says "Kant had greatly advanced the 'active side' of philosophy, but the price he had paid was to tear philosophy into two parts, a theoretical and a practical philosophy which were only tenuously connected." (The Young Hegel, p. 322.).
34. According to Lukacs: "Kant's thought about contradiction had not progressed beyond the discovery of necessary antinomies." (Ibid., p. 245) In explanation Lukacs points to a practical philosophy constrained by the ontological dualism posited, initially, in the context of Kant's ethics. For instance, Lukacs remarks, "Kantian ethics allows human aspirations only such scope as is compatible with the moral law" (Ibid., p. 294). Similarly, he says, "subjective idealism necessarily held a far too constricted and abstract view of human praxis. In subjective idealism all interest is concentrated on that aspect of human praxis that can be included under the heading of morality." (Ibid., p. 320.) Coequally, in Lukacs' view, with regard "to the actual concrete realm of human activity," the philosophers of

subjective idealism "are blind to it and treat it as contingent, external and secondary." (Ibid., p. 295.) No unification of experience is possible because Lukacs observes, from first principles, "Kantian and Fichtean morality are not equipped to transform the empirical, but to escape from it." (Ibid., p. 286.)

35. History and Class Consciousness, p. 120.
36. Ibid., p. 116.
37. Ibid., p. 110.
38. Ibid., p. 110.
39. Ibid., p. 110.
40. Ibid., p. 121.
41. Ibid., p. 121.
42. Ibid., p. 121.
43. Ibid., p. 121.
44. Ibid., p. 135.
45. Ibid., p. 135.
46. Ibid., p. 135.
47. This contradiction is equally fundamental to the life of the 'free' labourer, who 'owns' labour-power, and who is compelled to sell this 'commodity' under capitalist relations of production. (Ibid., p. 92.)
48. Lukacs endorses Engels' judgment that "Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity." In Lukacs' own words: "Hegel is first to pose the problem of the relationship between freedom and necessity in correct, concrete terms in the context of the dynamic totality of man's life in history and society." (The Young Hegel, p. 354.) With regard to another aspect of this question, Lukacs again portrays Hegel as a rationalist thinker intent on humanising metaphysical problems. He says: "In Hegel's view, modern individuality is no natural product, it is nothing organic as the Romantics imagined when they rigidly contrasted the 'organic' individual with the fragmenting and destructive effects of capitalism. On the contrary, it is for him the necessary result of the development of society, or, in philosophical terms, it is the inevitable result of the progressive 'self-externalization' of man." (Ibid., p. 402.)
49. See Lukacs' discussion of "The Structure of the

Phenomenology", Ibid., p. 466 ff. There, for example, Lukacs explains: "In Hegel's view the individual consciousness stands opposed to an unknown, objective reality. This appears to be fixed and alien because the determinations and mediations which are what make objective social reality and the role of individual consciousness in it what they are, have not yet crossed the threshold of consciousness." (Ibid., p. 472-3.) Similarly, Lukacs presents Hegel's conception that: "The theoretical and practical activity of individual consciousness consists in the acquisition of these (objective) determinations. In a long, strife-torn, historical process the individual advances from consciousness to self-consciousness and from there to reason, transforming substance to subject as he goes." (Ibid., p. 473.)

50. At a minimum, Lukacs envisages Hegel's advance beyond Kant in these terms: "Hegel," he writes, "is no Kantian and so, unlike Kant, he does not equate the form of subjective consciousness with the forms and laws of objective reality (which for Kant was the only cognizable phenomenal world)." (Ibid., p. 475.)
51. Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick, The German Ideology, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, p. 44.
52. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

CHAPTER TWO

LUCIEN GOLDMANN AND THE PRIMACY OF KANT'S
PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

The arguments that follow stem from a state of apprehension engendered by the positivist philosophy of science. This sense of uneasiness can be conceptualized in a paradox which gives notice: that positivism both allots to philosophy a specialist role and almost completely incapacitates it elsewhere. Thus the powers conceded to philosophy in methodological matters - its acknowledged competence to pronounce on the plausibility of fundamental suppositions, or to adjudicate upon the transparency of meaning or upon the credibility and consistency of argumentative procedures and chains of inference - these are annulled where larger socio-existential questions are broached. To put it another way: in the context of the more recondite conceptual difficulties encountered by the natural sciences, the authority of philosophical criticism is recognized as ultimate; whereas, in the supposedly nebulous domain beyond the empirical concerns of science, beyond the realm of brute facts, where questions of moral evaluation allegedly arise, philosophical criticism is condemned as metaphysical speculation, and as such, as irretrievably abstract thought.

Two rather similar formulations of this uneasiness about the tendency for the positivist philosophy of science to cripple philosophy merit consideration at this introductory

stage. They both add something. And, taken together, they make the case for a thorough re-appraisal of the contemporary relevance of philosophy. Firstly, it is worthwhile to draw attention to the Humean standpoint adopted by Peter Winch, when he remarks: "the conception which recognizes the authority of philosophy only within the confines of the philosophy of science, actually reduces philosophy to the status of an "under-labourer" for the sciences."¹ This under-labourer conception, Winch explains, characterizes philosophy, as compared with other intellectual disciplines, exclusively in terms of its method and insulates it from any concrete subject-matter. This leaves philosophy, he concludes, quite incapable, on the one hand, of making any independent and positive contribution to our stock of knowledge: "it has the purely negative role of removing impediments to the advance of our understanding."² On the other hand, philosophy without any substantive substratum becomes "parasitic upon other disciplines."³ Which, Winch means to suggest, raises the question of the autonomy of philosophy, since its subject-matter, its investigative priorities, as well as its self-conception and function are imposed upon it from without.

Perhaps, too, the positivist orthodoxy puts the very existence of philosophy in jeopardy. At least, in Theodor Adorno's estimation: to equate science with empirical observation and a sceptical frame of mind and to combine this with a vision of philosophy as dogmatic metaphysics,

is to require the liquidation of philosophy.⁴ Subversion of philosophy's competence, except in the sphere defined for it by natural science, advances the paralysis of critical thought. For if philosophy is forced beyond the realm of experience to find its autonomy, and yet cannot operate with any effect in that domain, the doubt arises whether philosophy can answer any of the questions traditionally put to it. So, Adorno asks whether "there exists an adequacy between the philosophic questions and the possibility of their being considered at all?"⁵

Against this kind of presuppositional background, with its intimations of the eclipse of reason, Lucien Goldmann's treatment attempts to rescue Kant's contribution from an orthodoxy that systematically prunes it back to the point where it becomes a primitive example of positivism. Goldmann's study exposes the ideological significance of accredited positivistic interpretations of Kant in a retrogressive reductionism that obliterates the pre-history of critical social theory.⁶

Kant's Estimation of the Value of Critical Philosophy

In order to approach the theme of the "primacy of practical reason" it is essential to resuscitate the original antagonisms of Kant's system, and to emphasize his equivocation over the significance of metaphysical questions. The depth to which the influence of this equivocation runs can be gauged by turning to the Preface

of the Second Edition of The Critique of Pure Reason where, reviewing the purpose of that work, which was to establish a science of metaphysics, Kant asks: "What is the real value of this system of metaphysics, purified by criticism and, thereby, reduced to a permanent condition?"⁷ The answer is given as follows: "A cursory view of the present work will lead to the supposition that its use is merely negative, that it only serves to warn us against venturing, with speculative reason, beyond the limits of experience. This is, in fact, its primary use. But this at once assumes a positive value, when we observe that the principles with which speculative reason endeavours to transcend its limits lead inevitably not to the extension but to the contraction of the use of reason, inasmuch as they threaten to extend the limit of sensibility, which is their proper sphere, over the entire realm of thought and, thus to supplant the (pure) practical use of reason. So far then as this criticism is occupied in confining speculative reason within its proper bounds, it is only negative; but inasmuch as it thereby, at the same time, removes an obstacle which impedes and even threatens to destroy the use of practical reason, it possesses a positive and very important value."⁸

In this statement, Kant not only equivocates about the real value of his "critical philosophy", recognizing in its primary use only a "negative value", for example. Actually, with a characteristic measure of qualification,

Kant confers a formal priority upon the problems of practical philosophy. In the meantime, however, all that is important is to underline Kant's double emphasis: so that it is understood that while his critical philosophy, in accord with Enlightenment thought in its sceptical, secularizing intention, endeavoured to de-mystify metaphysics; Kant was equally concerned to point to a positive value in his criticism, to the extent that it released Reason, (practical reason employed in a moral domain), from the constrictive authority of science.

It is in this sense, in view of the evident and irreducible tension between a methodological principle that accedes to science and an ethical-philosophical principle that denies the ultimate authority of science, that the philosophy of science, in general, is held here to have preserved only a half-truth in its assimilation of Kant. More than this, it is alleged that the whole effort of the philosophy of science in relation to Kant is expended to extricate and preserve this half-truth. Eventually, the end-in-view, for this positivist theoretical project is to situate Kant in his opposition to metaphysics as gatekeeper to modern thought. At any rate, as Lewis White Beck says of the critical philosophy, from that orthodox position: "this aspect of Kant's philosophy makes him one of the most important antecedents of modern positivism."⁹

Theory that attempts to appropriate a one-sided Kant,

however, is continuously faced with the fundamental irreparable duality of Kant's system.¹⁰ Even where the macro-logical distinction is rigidly maintained between The Critique of Pure Reason and The Critique of Practical Reason, between the analytic philosophy and the moral philosophy; even where the philosophy of science restricts its enquiries to The Critique of Pure Reason; still the cardinal theoretical task becomes that of eliminating disturbances arising from the effects of Kant's practical postulates. Representing Kant's work as a final judgment upon metaphysics and as a philosophical capitulation to science, requires that interference emanating from moral and practical postulates must be jammed. There exists, accordingly, in relation to this positivist mode of thought and its conception of Kantian studies, a body of theory that may be described as a protectionist system designed and deployed to save Analytic Philosophy, the Positivist Philosophy of Science, from Contradiction and Criticism.

Eliminating the Practical Philosophy

In his essay, "The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions",¹¹ S. Korner gives a classic exposition of the approach to Kant just discussed: whose main theoretical objective is to prune from analytic theory traces of its dependence upon a dialectical (moral and practical) factor. Viewing Kant from the system of relevances specific to the philosophy of science, Korner is concerned, very typically: firstly, to endorse Kant's critical

attitude to metaphysics as evinced in his attempt to formalize it and bring it to a "permanent condition;" and subsequently, Korner is concerned to maintain this critical attitude to metaphysics, even where Kant himself relented. Korner's interpretation implies that Kant did not pursue his own analytic logic with sufficient rigour: had he done so, the argument seems to run, Kant's methodological position would have been entirely congruent with that of positivist theory today.

Korner begins his demonstration of the impossibility of transcendental deductions by re-iterating Kant's rationalist objection to naive empiricist epistemology: he explains that any statement about an objective reality, about the world as it exists independently of consciousness, is the result not only of immediate experience but also, and more decisively, of a cognitive operation that structures experience. In other words, the possibility of knowledge requires, in Kantian terms, the mediation of a categorial schema: of an interpretative grid that differentiates experience, and delimits a field of relevance, prior to and as a condition of the production of knowledge. The definition of an exhaustive system of categorial schemata, encompassing the total human potential to know the world, could be construed as the ultimate aim of Kantian epistemology.

Advancing his argument, Korner defines the notion of

transcendental deduction. He states: "A transcendental deduction can now be defined quite generally as a logically sound demonstration of the reasons why a particular categorial schema is not only, in fact, but also necessarily employed in differentiating a region of experience." ¹² What a deduction of this kind purports to establish, then, is the uniqueness, the sufficiency and necessity in the interpretation of experienced reality, of a specific categorial schema. Korner's contention that transcendental deduction is impossible is supported by his demonstration that the uniqueness of any schema can never be proven.

The demonstration proceeds as follows: Once a schema has been identified analytically in terms of a number of a priori concepts employed by a science, like Newtonian physics for example, the task for Kant's critical epistemology is to show that any investigation of reality in the domain in question must rely upon the a priori system defined. But, says Korner, none of the three logical possibilities, here, can be adopted to yield a satisfactory solution. The uniqueness of a schema cannot be shown by comparing the validity of experience provided by a preferred schema against any other experience. On the one hand, unorganized experience does not lend itself to comparison and, on the other hand, the possibility of comparison itself, contradictorily implies the existence of another body of propositional knowledge and hence of other

schemata. Thirdly, investigation of the internal structure of a schema for which uniqueness is claimed could only establish its sufficiency as a means of deriving knowledge from experience: it could not establish necessity or uniqueness.

Korner concludes his demonstration, which until this point is quite unobjectionable, by suggesting that: "(Kant) conflates uniquely a priori with non-uniquely a priori statements. This conflation not only pervades his whole philosophy, but even determines its structure, especially the division of all his principal arguments into metaphysical expositions and transcendental deductions."¹³ Here Korner introduces a distinction exactly parallel to the distinction between analytic and dialectic or between pure speculative and pure practical reason.

Korner explains this crucial dichotomy thus: "A metaphysical exposition which exhibits a concept as, or exhibits it insofar as it is, a priori is always the result of enquiry into an actually employed method of differentiation. It can thus, at best, establish the schema, if any, to which the method belongs. A transcendental deduction, aimed at showing that and how a priori concepts are applicable or possible, examines only the schema which has been established by the metaphysical exposition of this particular schema. It thus does not examine a schema the uniqueness of which has been

demonstrated." In the one direction, therefore, Korner argues that a metaphysical exposition reveals the minimal legitimate metaphysical element in theory: its a priori concepts. In the other direction, the transcendental deduction strives, illegitimately, to confer a unique authority upon this metaphysical content.¹⁵

Having thus discovered the source of mischief in Kant's argumentation, having traced the problem to an improper use of metaphysics, Korner recommends elimination of what he calls the "spurious distinction between metaphysical exposition and transcendental deduction."¹⁶ It soon becomes clear, however, that the distinction is made, and that Kant's dualism is reproduced, only so that it can be completely overridden. The casualty when the transcendental deduction is eliminated is Kant's practical philosophy: what is preserved is analytic logic.

The revised notion of metaphysical exposition (which is what philosophical argument is to become), Korner continues, must accept that the uniqueness of categorial schemata and of their a priori concepts cannot be established. Accordingly, metaphysical exposition in its revised form is employed to scrutinize synthetic and non uniquely a priori statements, rather than a priori judgments in the strict Kantian sense (where the uniqueness of schemata is presumed). Korner also invokes a Kantian distinction between synthetic judgments and regulative principles, here,

and maintains, in that light, that analytic logic will characteristically concern itself with regulative principles (as well as non-uniquely a priori statements) rather than with synthetic a priori judgments. "Regulative principles" the reader is informed "differ from synthetic and non-uniquely a priori statements by having no truth value."¹⁷ He adds: "Epistemologically, of greatest interest are those regulative principles which regulate the construction of theories and those which express preferences for some schemata over others."¹⁸

Korner's last word on the matter is this: "The Kantian question as to how synthetic and uniquely a priori judgments are possible does not arise. In its place, however, there arises another question: "How are synthetic and non-uniquely a priori statements possible?"¹⁹ ".....To answer this question" he goes on "is, as we have learned from Kant, to examine the function of such statements, that is to say their relation to each other, to analytic and to empirical statements."²⁰

Progressively, the function of philosophy is reduced to that of monitoring the internal coherence of the hypothetico-deductive systems and hypotheses of science, or of the separate exact sciences. The "truth value" of the judgments and principles that come under review, their "truth-value," in any extra-scientific sense, is left out of account as imponderable. What philosophy cannot explain

in absolute terms is to be left to one side. Where Kant's critical philosophy expanded the purview of sceptical rationalism, Korner wants to retreat within a closed circle of certainties.

The Limits of One-Dimensional Philosophy

The positivist position exemplified in S. Korner's one-dimensional reading of Kant colludes in the disintegration of "critical philosophy." It enforces a contraction of reason. Where Kant recommends restriction of speculative reason to its own sphere of competence (the phenomenal) as a condition of enabling an extension of the power of practical reason, the scientific frame-of-mind appears to require a curtailment of reason, to the extent of urging abandonment of the question of truth. The contraction is urged in the sense that regulative principles, the criteria governing preferences in the employment of categorial schemata (which regulative principles are decisive evaluative, moral or amoral factors) are considered to have no truth content. The question of validation is formalized (reified as a semantic problem) and is conceived in terms of the principle of non-contradiction applied within well-made propositional frameworks.

In any case, Korner's attempt to improve on Kant by increasing the distance between analytic logic and metaphysics, fails. The despairing gesture that betrays this failure is the command only to conduct metaphysical

expositions, not transcendental deductions, in the service of science. With this effort to legitimate science by advertising its minimal, irreducible (in fact, necessary) a priori or metaphysical element, metaphysics becomes, surreptitiously, the ultimate resource of the positivist philosophy of science, and of the activity it explains and supervises. In a nice piece of skullduggery, Kant's criticism of metaphysics is invoked to suppress philosophical criticism of a residual metaphysical element in science. Kant's stand against dogmatism becomes the pivot of a new dogmatism: dogmatism not in the old sense of monolithic doctrine, but in the sense of systematic denial of the grounds of criticism. With the elimination of metaphysics, of philosophy, except in that residual scientific factor, there is no extraneous position that can serve as a platform for criticism.

Clearly, too, the positivist orthodoxy misrepresents Kant: for example, by concentrating upon his sceptical empiricism and by minimizing various aspects of his rationalism (e.g. his conceptualism, his agnosticism and nominalism, the nascent psychologism of the Kantian position). Principally, though, Kant's work is subordinated to the prejudices and practical interests of the philosophy of science. One consequence is the devaluation of Kant's theory of subjectivity. For positive science, concerned as it is to settle the problem of objective knowledge, the subject is constantly reduced to the status of a passive

receptor of empirical experience. Epistemologically, the question of Understanding takes precedence (over the problems of Reason) by virtue of a prior practical commitment. Kant's thoughts on the nature of subjectivity, in contrast, prioritize Reason and descry the presumption of the Understanding. So, by reducing subjectivity to Understanding, to the categories of cognition that organize experience, the philosophy of science, from a Kantian point of view, impoverishes philosophy by confusing philosophy with one function of philosophy.

The Concept of Freedom

Thus far, Kant's ambivalent attitude to metaphysics has been contrasted with the one-sided concentration of the philosophy of science upon Kant's analytic method. It has been pointed out that Kant himself laboured to promote two apparently contradictory principles: a methodological one in whose terms the logic of science is adjudged to be the valid mode of thought; and a critical philosophical principle that refuses to subordinate practical considerations to the expansionist presumption of the Understanding (or to submit practical reason to speculative reason). Analysis of this Kantian dualism will proceed, heeding Kant's critical dictum, to the effect that: "if a science is to be advanced all difficulties must be exposed, and those which lie hidden in its way must even be sought out."²¹ With this in mind, the notion of the primacy of practical reason is considered as the often unacknowledged

or under-represented complement to Kant's Enlightenment critique of metaphysics.

To introduce the idea, Kant's definition of primacy will be adduced and, thereafter, two salient features of his commitment to "the primacy of practical reason" will be considered. To begin with, then, Kant says: "By primacy between two or more things connected by reason I understand the prerogative by virtue of which one is the prime ground of determination of the combination with the others."²² Next, considering the nature of the faculties of speculative and practical reason and assuming that reason, in the wider sense, cannot exist in contradiction with itself, Kant expresses his conviction that the practical is the true ground of speculative reason in these terms. He writes: "in the combination of pure speculative with pure practical reason in one cognition, the latter has the primacy provided that this combination is..... based on reason itself and thus necessary. Without this subordination", he continues, "a conflict of reason with itself would arise, since if the speculative and the practical were arranged merely side by side (co-ordinated), the first would close its borders and admit into its domain nothing from the latter, while the latter would extend its boundaries over everything and, when its needs required would seek to comprehend the former within them. Nor could we reverse the order and require practical reason to submit to speculative reason, because every interest is

ultimately practical, even that of speculative reason being only conditional and reaching perfection only in practical use."²³

Having thus established, at least, that Kant did, in fact, ascribe a formal priority to practical reason, it remains to examine how, in his own estimation, Kant's philosophy is, above all, a practical philosophy. Probably the most salient factor here is that as a practical philosophy Kant's thought has as its ultimate concept, the concept of freedom. In Kant's words again: "The concept of freedom is the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason. All other concepts..... attach themselves to the concept of freedom and gain with it and through it, stability and objective reality."²⁴

Kant's philosophic endeavours were expended in the construction of a unified deductive system at whose apex he installed the concept of freedom: a concept apodeictically valid and completely a priori: "without any admixture of any kind of empirical ground of determination."²⁵ The privileged position thus ascribed to the concept of freedom has, at least, two important corollaries. Firstly, in connection with his estimation of the relation of science and philosophy it must be borne in mind that Kant insisted that the availability of a concept devoid of empirical determination is the ground upon which the possibility of

science is established. For Kant, attainment of knowledge of the empirical world depends upon a priori constructs whose determination is entirely rational. For Kant, in other words, practical reason or pure practical reason and its definitive concept are the basis of the whole of science and he insists that science or speculative reason cannot produce its own "original data" (i.e. its own first principles or the grounds of its possibility through empirical research).²⁶ Alternatively, it may be said that science cannot subsume but must recognize the sovereignty of philosophy.

Secondly, since Kant's thought is consistently and in principle deductive and since his arguments, in general, can be held to be valid only within the context of his deductive system; and since all his arguments presuppose the concept of freedom (directly or indirectly): consequently, his arguments are all transcendental deductions based upon a presupposition of the pure rationality of the concept of freedom. Thus with all due respect to Korner, transcendental deductions, not metaphysical expositions, are the characteristic Kantian form of argument. Moreover, critical philosophy can only advance by scrutinizing more closely the practical postulates that make transcendental deductions possible.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

While the most conspicuous feature of Kant's philosophy as

a practical philosophy is the place it affords to the concept of freedom; a second circumstance of the greatest importance is the impact made by Kant's practical postulates upon received notions of objectivity. In effect, in his investigation of the philosophical basis of a distinctly rationalist theory of knowledge, Kant rejected the naive empiricist notion and considerably extended and complicated philosophy's concept of objectivity.

In order to grasp the significance of Kant's critique of empiricism in this respect it is more than useful to adopt Hegel's retrospective standpoint.²⁷ From whence it is possible to distinguish the meaning of the term objectivity: "First," says Hegel, "it (objectivity) means what has external existence, in distinction from which the subjective is what is only supposed, dreamed, etc."²⁸ "Objectivity" is in this sense the general property of that which exists, substantially, beyond consciousness. "Secondly," says Hegel "it has the meaning attached to it by Kant, of the universal and necessary, as distinguished from the particular, subjective and occasional element which belongs to our sensations."²⁹ This dimension of the concept, with which we are immediately concerned, and which will be discussed subsequently, designates a property of subjective knowledge that elevates it above the accidental, cognitive reaction to experiential stimulation. "Thirdly," says Hegel, "it means the thought-apprehended essence of the existing thing, in contradiction from what is merely

our thought....." At which point, Hegel makes a distinction between what is in-itself and what exists for man and he conceives of objectivity in terms of that distinction and the ability to perceive it.

An inkling of the direction in which Kant pushed the general epistemological question is conveyed by his statement that: "practical reason is concerned not with objects in order to know them but with its own capacity to make them real."³¹ Summarily, this quotation is a pointer in the right direction in that it exhibits characteristically subjectivist and volitional emphases: which means Kant's preoccupation with the subject of knowledge and his characterization of subjectivity as primarily the operation of will-power.

His practical subjectivism consists in this: that the object of knowledge is deliberated upon strictly in the sense that it is accessible to subjectivity; and moreover, in that subjectivity is, itself, viewed objectively. In other words, unlike the empiricists whom he opposed, Kant does not claim to confront the object in its immediate material existence. Instead, he examines the structure of subjectivity to discover the basis of the possibility of objective knowledge. At his hands, as Hegel remarks "subjectivity comes to embrace the ensemble of experience.. and nothing remains on the other side but the "thing-in-itself."³² Subsequently, having identified the

grounds of knowledge in subjectivity, Kant brings forward his main problem: he asks how the operation of subjective criteria can produce objective knowledge. The renowned answer is that it is the categories of the Understanding that confer an objective validity upon experience. In Hegel's phrase, again: "The name of objectivity is here given to the element of universality and necessity, i.e. to the categories themselves, or what is called the a priori constituent."³³ This means, as Hegel saw, that "Kant gave the title objective to the intellectual factor, to the universal and necessary."³⁴ It may be said, equally, that Kant gave that title to an objectified de-personalized, or reified, subjective factor. The mind, consciousness, assumes the form of a transcendental subject. And it is this transcendental subjectivity that is the source of objective knowledge that originates on the side of the subject. Of great moment here, too, is the fact that Kant proposes two criteria of objectivity: that he defines the transcendental subject, the transcendental consciousness, in terms of two properties. More fascinating still is the way in which he separates these, in spite of their tendency to coalesce. An example of how Kant strove to disentangle these concepts of universality and necessity is given where he says: "I need not mention the fact that universality of assent does not prove the objective validity of a judgment, i.e. its validity as knowledge, but only calls attention to the fact that, even if sometimes that which is universally assented to is correct, this is no proof of its agreement

with the object; it is rather the case that only objective validity affords the ground of a necessary universal agreement." ³⁵ Here, at a minimum, Kant affirms the complementarity of a criterion of necessity that alludes to some absolute limitation on reason imposed from an objective, natural direction; and of a criterion of universality or universal assent: of consensus. Insight into the fact that Kant saw his own contribution to epistemology as being made particularly in relation to the emergence of a criterion of universality is provided where he casts himself, in his confrontation with the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge, as the successor of Hume. Kant writes: "Among philosophers, David Hume came the nearest of all to this problem; yet it never acquired in his mind sufficient precision, nor did he regard the question of its universality." ³⁶

The volitional aspect of Kant's epistemology, the role it attributes to constitutive subjectivity, is also due to the obtrusion of the practical movement of his thought. In the first place, this subjectivity is the unifying principle of his entire system. Thus, on the one hand, the understanding (empirical consciousness), synthesizes, in discrete cognitive acts, an intuition and a perception, a sensation and its concept. Moreover, experience as a whole, that which it is beyond the power of finite understanding, empirical consciousness, to fuse and consolidate; experience as a whole, is given coherence within the more imposing

structure of transcendental subjectivity, the custodian of universal and necessary truths.

The primacy of Kant's practical postulate also means that the transcendental subject, the fulcrum of his system, is fundamentally a product of his moral philosophy. So, firstly, before its appearance in The Critique of Pure Reason as deus ex machina, the transcendental subject of consciousness is a moral entity: it originates in the supposed power of the individual in the context of extra-logical, existential problems to exercise rational control over adverse circumstances. As Kant puts it: "The will is a kind of causality belonging to living beings - so far as they are rational."³⁷ He also says: "Autonomy of the will is that property of it by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)."³⁸ And considering this same essence of subjectivity negatively he says: "If the will seeks the law which is to determine it anywhere else than in the fitness of its maxims to be universal laws of its own direction, consequently, if it goes out of itself and seeks this law in the character of any of its objects, there always results heteronomy."³⁹

Finally, in this phase of the argument it is necessary to stress that Kant's new concept of objectivity, his reformulation of the problem of the adequacy of subjective and objective dimensions of knowledge, recognized the

possibility of an extension of knowledge as a potentiality exclusive to practical reason. The possibility of effecting an extension of knowledge beyond the empirically conditioned, immediately intelligible reality, (the possibility of increasing our knowledge of the supersensible or the unconditioned, in Kant's terminology) is contingent upon effective containment of speculative reason (mathematical science) and upon an emancipation of practical reason. In this respect, Kant says: "Even in The Critique of Pure Reason, it was emphasized that the supersensible was not mere fancy and that its concepts were not empty."⁴⁰ Speculative reason cannot provide knowledge of this supersensible domain, however, since: "the unconditioned does not lie in things as we know them, or as they are given to us, but in things as they are in themselves,⁴¹ beyond the range of our cognition."

Not to reflect upon the unconditioned is for Kant, however, to restrict the power of reason to cognition; to countenance a constriction of reason. It is to deny the wider competence of reason. Recognizing this larger competence, Kant defines the possibility of an advance of knowledge in the realm of the supersensible by saying: "after we have denied the power of speculative reason to make any progress in the sphere of the supersensible, it still remains for our consideration whether data do not exist in practical (reason) which may enable us to determine the transcendent conception of the unconditioned,

to rise beyond the limits of all possible experience from a practical point of view and thus to satisfy the great ends of metaphysics." ⁴² Kant's account of the potential of practical reason has numerous connotations. At a minimum, it may be said to express an interest in the possible rational determination rather than in the immediately empirical determination of reality. It may be interpreted as a response to rationally constructed objective constraints on action rather than to merely necessitarian parameters to human development. So, too, it may be argued that Kant moved beyond the question of natural necessity towards the problematic of historical determination.

Kant and the Philosophy of History

By now, it should be apparent that, analytically, Kant's thought can be reduced to a stable state in two opposite directions (not without doing violence in each case to a fundamental component of his thought). Reflection on the logic of these reductions was calculated: not just to expose a radical conflict of principle but to give some indication of the depth to which this conflict runs; and to emphasize that the possibility of finally overcoming Kant's dualism does not materialize in Kant's own thought. In effect, it has been maintained that an immanent critique of Kant's philosophy - an analytic consideration of its systemic character - cannot eradicate the deep-seated equivocation about the function and competence of philosophy that it finds there.

Recognizing that analytic logic arrives at an impasse, at this point, the present argument changes course and invokes the philosophy of history, which preserves the contradictions of Kant's system and makes their persistence central to the development of modern thought. The point of departure for a review of Kant's historical contribution is Hegel's characterization of the Kantian philosophy as "subjective idealism,": "his (Kant's) philosophy may be styled subjective idealism" says Hegel "for he holds that both the form and the matter of knowledge are supplied by the Ego - or knowing subject - the form by our intellectual, the matter by our sentient ego."⁴³

Thus, Hegel supplies the key to an understanding of Kant's place in the development of modern rationalism when he indicates that the latter's philosophy begins and ends as an exploration of transcendental consciousness. Interpreted in this light, moreover, Kant's 'Copernican Revolution' (his decision to follow the lead given in astronomy and to insist that in epistemology too the role of the spectator must be considered decisive for the production of truth) anticipates and prepares the way for later, irreversible, anthropological and historical turns taken by philosophical argument. When, in other words, Kant examines the role of rational subjectivity, characterized by its possession of free-will, of a kind of causal power, his work has been said to foreshadow the practical intention of the philosophy of history that

proposes to explain objective conditions as an actualization or concretion of reason; and which promises to provide self-consciousness with knowledge of its part in the historical process that can be regarded as the self-creation of man.

Viewed historically, then, as a stage in the development of Western thought, Kant's philosophy may reasonably be interpreted as the point of departure for critical philosophy or dialectical philosophy, especially in its frustrated attempt to move out of a moral ontology and into anthropological and historical stages. Georg Lukacs, for example, has argued that in his enunciation of the antinomies of theoretical reason, in so bestowing on the category of contradiction a pre-eminent epistemological and ontological significance, Kant introduced dialectics into modern theory. In a similar manner, Lucien Goldmann has maintained that Kant's employment and expectation of the category of totality prefigured its decisive importance for later, critical social theory. In the course of his exposition, Goldmann also furnishes a convincing demonstration of the profitability of pursuing the implications of the essential antagonisms of Kant's system, without over-riding or cancelling them.

Enlarging this interpretative option, Goldmann begins by acknowledging that in Kant's judgment "man cannot realize the totality": ("a fact easily explained," in Goldmann's

view, "by the social situation of eighteenth century Germany"⁴⁵). At first glance, so it transpires, Kant utterly repudiates the possibility postulated by dialectical philosophy, namely that man can aspire to a knowledge of the complex determinations that reproduce his socio-historical environment. Quite explicitly, Kant equates the dialectical and the illusory. To accept the formal pronouncement at face value, however, Goldmann maintains, is to lose sight of the importance, in motivational terms, that the problem represented for Kant, and to forget how much effort he expended in formulating his, eventually, pessimistic conclusion. To sweep through the argument to the conclusion, Goldmann remarks, is to neglect: "the equally important fact that the absolute necessity of attaining and realizing the totality forms the point of departure and centre of Kant's thought."⁴⁶

Rescuing and explicating this dialectical undercurrent, Goldmann points initially to the strategic role of the Kantian category of totality, in a number of guises. He states: "In the work of Kant, the category of totality finds several forms of expression, the most important being, time, space, the Universe, the human community and God, ideas whose connections must always be kept in mind."⁴⁷ Next, Goldmann divulges the emphatically practical attitude adopted by Kant towards the possibility of knowledge of the 'unconditioned,' the other-than-empirically conditioned totality; which practical attitude, in the economically and

politically under-developed condition of eighteenth century Germany, made "realization of the totality" seem a mirage, a perennial possibility or an impossibility. Firstly, Goldmann observes, in Kant's philosophy, the totality is not, in any sense, immediately given to subjectivity. Rather, we are told, it exists as a practical goal for the individual subject in its noumenal/ spiritual and phenomenal/empirical modes of experience. Faced at the outset then with a fragmented experience and situated in an amoral condition, the individual is compelled by practical reason, in Kant's judgment, to transcend this negative immediacy: "he must create the maximum he is able to achieve, that is to say, theoretically, coherent experience, and practically, a life in conformity with the categorical imperative."⁴⁸

Of course, Goldmann is aware, with regard to the question of totality, as elsewhere, of the passivity of the practical aspect of Kant's thought and of the neutralizing effect of his formal logic. He remarks in this respect upon the enduring sociological significance of the fact that Kant could not envisage a moving changing totality. "That is why" Goldmann explains "he adopted an intermediate position recognizing only the formal and immutable aspects of totality - space , God (and later time) - whilst with regard to content, the empirical given, he resorted to the atomistic monadology of Leibniz."⁴⁹ Consequently, society in the Kantian conception is a secondary reality, determined

unilaterally by the interaction of a plurality of autonomous individuals. Equally, the possibility of transcending a conditioned phenomenal existence, is sketched in a stoical ethics, as the potentiality, exclusively, of the monad or individual subject.

However, although Kant's concept of society seems archaic, his critical philosophy is still seen to comprise, in embryo, the origins of the philosophy of history. This is so, firstly, in Goldmann's account, by virtue of the fact that the only potential unifying agency recognized by Kant is a practical intention: i.e. Goldmann insists that Kant is the forerunner of dialectical social theory in his estimation of the importance of the Will; in his recognition that the sole circumstance in which the category of totality can be given a logical priority is in the service of a unifying moral practice. Secondly, and to develop this connection, Goldmann, like Herbert Marcuse,⁵⁰ stresses that Kant in his essay on logic urges philosophy to turn its attention in an anthropological direction. The force of an anthropological moment in Kant's construction of the transcendental subject is seen to be decisive and is taken for an anticipation of the emphasis characteristic of the philosophy of history. For Goldmann the essence of Kant's anthropology consists in this: "The idea that man's authentic destiny is to strive towards the absolute, that is, towards something completely different from the empirical given, in the theoretical sphere towards

knowledge of the universitas, of things in themselves, of noumena, or in the practical sphere towards the higher good, the Kingdom of God etc."⁵¹

Most importantly, Goldmann argues, the inextinguishable conflict of principle at the centre of Kant's systematics, where it manifests itself at the level of an anthropological analysis; this conflict of principle is one that has been preserved, exacerbated and more fully rationalized in the subsequent history of dialectical theory. By way of explanation, Goldmann returns to Kant's ambivalent response to the category of totality and to his estimation of the possibility of knowledge of the undetermined, and hence of the future of metaphysics. On the one hand, Goldmann observes, Kant's minimal anthropology maintains that: "Present-day man (for Kant, man in general) is limited and cannot attain this unconditioned."⁵² Equally, for Kant, on the other hand: "There is in man a principle which impels him to aspire ceaselessly towards a higher state, qualitatively different from the present one, and it is only through this that he can accomplish his true destiny."⁵³ Goldmann appends to his articulation of this antinomy the judgment that: "In developing these two ideas, Kant lays the philosophical foundations for the most profound and radical critique ever made of bourgeois man."⁵⁴ Here, Kant is seen to establish in theory the basis of the critique of ideology developed by Marx: to the extent that its starting point is an indictment of existing social

practice as a travesty of human potential; and also to the extent that the possibility of transcendence is stated immanently in anthropological and historical terms as a practical interest and goal of man and as a human capacity and responsibility.

The Character of Synthetic Knowledge

Finally, Goldmann contends that only a grasp of the historical connotations of Kant's practical philosophy enables proper appreciation of the meaning of the question: "how are synthetic a priori judgments possible?" At a minimum here, it must be understood that Kant's critical rationalism explains, against Hume's empiricism, the part played by the a priori categories of the Understanding in the production of objective knowledge. It is these a priori categories that are held to supply a necessary and universal validity to knowledge. But the question arises: in what sense, given the declared indispensability of the categories and of the criteria of universality and necessity implied in their use, is the concept of a free rational subjectivity preserved? Conversely: in what sense is the notion of free subjectivity compromised and how, in particular, is a lapse into natural necessity, into an empirically conditioned state of mind, to be avoided in any employment of a priori categories?

Pursuing this line of thought, Goldmann submits that the

pitfall of naturalistic reduction is not circumvented where the categories are presented as a common genetic-biological or psychological endowment. However, as Goldmann maintains, Kant himself consistently affirmed: "that the categories of the Understanding along with everything a priori are human and intellectual factors, not biological ones." ⁵⁵ Nor is the concept of freedom protected, Goldmann continues, where the categories assume the form of an objectified or reified subjectivity; where they are ascribed a transcendental validity, beyond the sphere of influence of social practice. And it is here, in the negotiation of this difficulty that Kant's practical philosophy is stretched to its limit, because, in fact, Kant's "transcendental subject" does acknowledge the complete contingency of empirical consciousness, and therefore includes a fundamental tendency to elevate the principle of rational control of experience above the possibility of free thought; which means that the existential threat of totalitarianism is foreshadowed as an abstract metaphysical problem in Kant.

Nevertheless, Goldmann maintains, it is imperative that the humanist dimension of Kant's philosophy should be defended: so that it is realized that: "In synthetic a priori judgments the community is postulated from the outset. The categories are, in spite of their reification, the theoretical expression of the human spirit and the human community." ⁵⁶ Only in this interpretation, Goldmann is most

anxious to explain, is the idea of a free rational subjectivity defensible: i.e. only where the categories of consciousness and the horizons of thought and discussion are organised democratically, and held as common property. Moreover, Goldmann continues, only in that frame of reference can the criteria of necessity and universality be successfully separated and clearly differentiated: with the criterion of necessity being tied clearly to physical causation and implying the influence of Nature; and with the criterion of universality being purged of naturalistic overtones so that it alludes to the question of consensus raised by the production of socially determinate forms of knowledge.

It has been suggested that Kant's contribution to epistemology is to be found mainly in his deliberation upon the criterion of universality. (Reactionary interpretations reduce his thought in the direction of the criterion of necessity). Goldmann's analysis is worthy of attention because it penetrates the Kantian grounds of universality to find the rudiments of a social-practical perspective on the constitution of knowledge and truth. As Goldmann draws his lesson for the Kantian philosophy he says: "In freeing the a priori from reification, in relating it to the real human community, we know that this community can only be based upon human activity, upon the common action of men." Freed of naturalistic overtones and when it is cured of a tendency to reify the transcendental

subject, Goldmann argues, the Kantian philosophy teaches that the limits defined for thought are social, so that freedom must begin in democratic control over the formation and dissemination of determinate forms of knowledge.

Conclusion

Perhaps, now, it is easier to say that the dominance of the positivist philosophy of science appears to require an immobilization of philosophical criticism. Perhaps it now seems less extravagant, than at the outset, to accuse orthodox scholarship of labouring to obliterate the pre-history of dialectical social theory when it installs Kant as the founding father of positivism. At any rate, Lucien Goldmann's interpretation emphasizes Kant's practical principle and situates his thought historically in terms of its capacity to conceptualize the rationalist ideal of freedom. For Goldmann, Kant's philosophy affirms the axiom that freedom is a practical responsibility not a common inheritance; even if that Kantian philosophy proves incapable of conceiving freedom in terms of a projected transformation of oppressive social conditions. Where the positivist orthodoxy looks to Kant to supply the last word; in a dialectical-sociological perspective, Kant's significance lies in the fact that he made a beginning.

Notes

1. Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977, p 3 ff.
2. Ibid., p 4.
3. Ibid., p 4.
4. Theodor, W. Adorno, 'The Actuality of Philosophy,' Telos, No 31, (1977), p 124.
5. Ibid., p 124.
6. Goldmann does not begin in the philosophy of science nor does he attack it at any point. This is why there is a long preamble to his exposition here.
7. Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, published in Kant, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, p 9.
8. Ibid., p 9.
9. See Translators Introduction to The Critique of Practical Reason, op. cit., p XV.
10. Paul Connerton remarks on the 'famous ambiguity' in the title of Kant's work: the Critique of Pure Reason in The Tragedy of Enlightenment, CUP, 1980, p 22. In the present context what is at issue is the tendency for the positivist philosophy of science to deny that ambiguity.
11. S. Korner, 'The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions,' in Kant Studies Today, ed. Lewis W. Beck, La Salle, Illinois, 1969, pp 230-244.
12. Ibid., pps 231-32.
13. Ibid., p 236.
14. Ibid., p 236.
15. It is crucial not to miss the point that Korner and the philosophy of science defer to metaphysics, that epistemology, in this sense, capitulates unconditionally to the extraneous practical interest that in the guise of innocent looking "regulative principles" determine its every movement.
16. S. Korner, op. cit., p 240.

17. Ibid., p 242-44.
18. Ibid., p 244.
19. Ibid., p 244.
20. Ibid., p 244.
21. Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason, The Bobbs-Merrill Co Ltd., Indianapolis, p 107.
22. Ibid., p 124.
23. Ibid., p 126.
24. Ibid., P 3.
25. Ibid., p 94.
26. Ibid., p 95.
27. G.W.F. Hegel, The Logic (Part One of The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, 1930) Translated by William Wallace, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, pp 65-68.
28. Ibid., p 68.
29. Ibid., p 68.
30. Ibid., p 68.
31. I. Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason, p 92.
32. G.W.F. Hegel, op. cit., p 66.
33. Ibid., p 66.
34. Ibid., p 67.
35. I. Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason, p 13.
36. I Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, p 19.
37. I. Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals, published in Kant, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, p 279.
38. Ibid., p 277.
39. Ibid., p 277.
40. I. Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason, p 6.

41. I. Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, p 8.
42. Ibid., p 10.
43. G.W.F. Hegel, op. cit., p 70.
44. For the most concise version of Lukacs's understanding of the pre-history of dialectical materialism see: "Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics in: George Lukacs, Political Writings, 1919-1929, New Left Books, London, 1972.
45. Lucien Goldmann, Immanuel Kant, New Left Books, London, 1971, p 54, p 195.
46. Ibid., p 54.
47. Ibid., p 61.
48. Ibid., p 121.
49. Ibid., p 71.
50. Herbert Marcuse, Negations: Essays in Critical Theory, Allen Kane, London, 1968, p 146.
51. Lucien Goldmann, op. cit., p 110.
52. Ibid., p 131.
53. Ibid., p 131.
54. Ibid., p 131.
55. Ibid., p 154.
56. Ibid., p 154.
57. Ibid., p 155.

PART II: REHABILITATING HEGEL

CHAPTER ONE

Karl Löwith and the Eschatological View

In his panoramic survey of Hegelian philosophy, Karl Löwith's main emphasis with regard to Hegel himself is contained in the judgment that: "Hegel is the last Christian philosopher before the break between philosophy and Christianity."¹ With this, Löwith extrudes Hegel from the subsequently overwhelming tendency of secularized thought: to free itself absolutely and resolutely from any dependency upon theological justifications and to offer, instead, anthropological justifications. It may be said that Löwith's book, as a whole, charts the displacement in philosophy of claims to esoteric knowledge (to mysticism and the truth of revelation) by exoteric knowledge (by politics and by truth held to represent the 'general will' of a community of interests). In any case, Löwith contends that Hegel continued to employ theological arguments to prepare the way for rationalism's escape from the impasse it had arrived at in Kant. Essential to Löwith's interpretation of Hegel, is his submission that: "For an understanding of Hegel's system, his philosophy of religion is even more important than his philosophy of the state. It is not just one component of the whole system, but its spiritual centre of gravity."² Thus the philosophy of religion is invoked to explain Hegel's logico-epistemological contribution and his political philosophy.

Initially, Löwith locates Hegel by explaining the epistemological connection between Kant's philosophy of mind and Hegel's philosophy of the history of the Spirit. Principally, Hegel is understood to have taken up the challenge of the problem of mediation: a problem given clarity and substantiality in Kant's system but far from resolved. For Löwith, the necessary prelude to an appreciation of Hegel, and to any criticism of his extreme Idealism, is an understanding of the solution to the problem of mediation advanced by Hegel and a clear perception of the part his philosophy of religion played in that solution.

The problem of mediation is understood to have been intrinsic to rationalism from Descartes to Kant. Briefly, with regard to the development of Löwith's argument, what is entailed is the rationalist doctrine: that subject and object, noumenon and phenomenon, reason and experience are totally antithetical and ontologically distinct. This doctrine, while it guaranteed the absolute, undiminished authority of categorial truth, also contained a troublesome agnostic element; since as surely as it affirmed the authority of cognitive values not empirically determined, just as surely it granted to empirical data its complete independence of rational determination. The severance of thought and being simultaneously provided a nomenclature for the world of experience and admitted that that world itself remained unknowable. Or, the possibility of

phenomenal knowledge was obstructed by the problem of mediation. Which is the problem inherited by Hegel. "To discover and establish the mid-point between subject and object, between pro se and per se, between internal and external, was the motivating force behind Hegel's entire philosophy of mediation, from his first systematic fragment to the Logik and Encyklopadie. Through this philosophy substance was to become subject and the subject substantial."³

Hegel's philosophy is alleged to have filled the vacant "middle ground" between the great abstractions of subject and object with the concept of history. In addition, however, it is Löwith's purpose to explain that a theological model played a decisive part in Hegel's formulation. In Hegel's solution to the problem of mediation, we are told, it is important to notice, on the one hand, that "religion takes refuge in philosophy";⁴ while, from the opposite direction, it is to be observed how philosophy employs theological categories to comprehend the phenomenal world. Thus, throughout, Hegel is held to have regarded knowledge in quasi-religious terms as "an acknowledgement⁵ of and a reconciliation with 'that which is'."

In effect, Löwith construes the philosophy of history as a new departure in the theory of knowledge. And he discovers the distinctiveness of that new departure in Hegel's philosophy of religion. History is said, in Hegel's

usage, to denote the sojourn of the estranged spiritual essence of Man, such that: "When upon this path of progress the spirit ultimately achieves its full being and knowledge, or its self-consciousness, the history of the spirit is completed."⁶ History, conceived as the phenomenology of Spirit, attempts a 'recollection' of all the diverse, dissipated projections of the spirit; in a manner that discovers the philosophical truth of the Christian doctrine of salvation. As Christianity would unite the human and the divine, so Hegel's theory of mediation envisages the reconciliation of human reason and its estranged, externalized representations.

In accentuating the problem of mediation, Löwith no doubt focusses upon a central aspect of Hegel's philosophy. He manages to convey the emancipatory impact of Hegel's philosophy of history for rationalist epistemology, paralyzed between antinomical abstractions. Löwith explains Hegel to the extent that he insists: that Hegel pointed confidently to the middle ground, to the phenomenal interpenetration of subject and object, as the terrain upon which philosophy would develop. It is less certain that Löwith is correct to perceive the essence of the philosophy of history in the philosophy of religion. In fact, Löwith's procedure tends to enforce an epistemological reduction of the philosophy of history. This is done to the extent that the philosophy of history is presented as a solution in the theory of knowledge, as an initiative in

the history of ideas; but without any further consideration being given to the methodological pretext or implications of that initiative. More precisely, no stock is taken of the fact that Hegel successfully specified, in his phenomenology, a method whereby theory could conceptualize socio-historical relations, as politically constituted, as revisable and controllable.

Moreover, Löwith's formalism, his epistemological reduction of the Hegelian problematic, is indispensable for the superficial success of his argument that Hegel's philosophy of religion is the centre of gravity of his system. On closer inspection, the theological or eschatological model, as Löwith prefers to call it, cannot be said to do more than provide an insight into Hegel's thought; by means of an analogy that is easily overworked and which fails to illuminate Hegel's phenomenological method. In Löwith's interpretation, the "principle of consummation dominates the nature of the three absolute forms of the spirit: art, religion and philosophy." This means that in each medium through which it expresses itself, to itself, human existence is a problem of consummation for phenomenology as it was for theology. The philosophy of history is held to be animated by the possibility of effecting a final reconciliation of spirit and matter. According to Löwith: "Hegel completes the history of the spirit in the sense of its ultimate fulfilment, in which everything which has taken place hitherto or has been conceived is comprehended

in a unity; but he completes it also in the sense of an eschatological end, in which the history of the spirit is finally realized."⁸ Developing his point, Löwith insists that: "Hegel displaces the Christian expectation of the end of the world of time into the course of the world process..... in recollection, he understands all history 'up to this time and from this time' as fulfilment of all ages."⁹

All of which is still valid as instructive analogy. Quite possibly, quite probably, the analogy is precisely the one which lay behind Hegel's conception of alienation. Löwith is clearly wrong, however, to maintain that the philosophy of religion is the dominant strand of Hegel's philosophy, when it is apparent that it provides only an imagery. On the contrary, it seems obvious that Hegel's secularization of theological themes, his focus upon the strictly phenomenological aspect of the spirit's activity, involves subordination of theology to the imperatives of a more practical interest, temporarily obstructed in its determination to comprehend and dominate the phenomenal world. Hegel's preoccupation with re-conceptualizing the empirical nature of human experience clearly had a methodological-scientific motivation rather than a moral-theological one. In his recourse to religion, it is as if Hegel affords it "refuge in philosophy" only when it has paid its way by acceding to the secularization of its imagery of alienation and reconciliation.

At which point, the ideological significance of Karl Löwith's interpretation emerges into view. That is to say: it becomes apparent that in emphasizing the Hegelian philosophy of religion, Löwith both devalues Hegel's political philosophy and cuts Hegel adrift from the history of the philosophy of practice. In casting Hegel's thought in a theological mould, in subsuming the philosophy of history in that frame, Löwith diverts attention away from the particular way in which Hegel defines the middle ground: which is as the problematic region, not where the question of salvation intrudes, but where human reason contends with Nature. In other words, the Hegelian phenomenology defines the problem of mediation as a political problem: the problem of pitting human powers against objective forces, natural and social. In fact, Löwith's book is generously appreciative of the fact that many of his followers and critics distilled the political significance of the master's thought. But Löwith does not credit Hegel himself with any particular political acuity.

This is the burden of Löwith's concise account of Marx's response to Hegel. For Marx, Löwith writes: "Hegel's reconciliation with reality was not within reality but only with it, in the element of comprehension. Now philosophy must itself 'turn outward' and engage the world." Clearly, Hegel is understood by Marx, in this interpretation, to have stipulated that reality must be measured and brought to book by reason. But it is left to Marx and to the Young

Hegelians, generally, to derive the political implications and to give Hegel's thought a political colour. Löwith appears to overstate the extent to which the rational kernel had to be extracted from the mystical shell of Hegel's philosophy of history.

Consistently, too, Löwith submits a poor estimate of the worth of Hegel's political philosophy. The Philosophy of Right is construed as the product of a logical-theological formula rather than as an exercise in practical philosophy. Says Löwith: "He saw the existing Prussian State of 1821 as a reality in the sense defined by the Logik: an immediate union of internal being and external existence, a reality in the 'emphatic' sense of the word."¹¹ Coterminously, Hegel's theory of the State is presented as romantically anachronistic, as looking back in nostalgia to a Greek ideal rather than as a circumspect and judicious evaluation of objectively realizable possibilities. According to Löwith: "This idea of the state which is the critical criterion for Hegel's analysis of bourgeois society, is only apparently the result of a dialectical development of modern society. In reality it springs from quite a different source: the polis of classical antiquity."¹²

There are other interpretations of Hegel. For Lukacs, for example, it is ridiculous to portray Hegel as a sentimental antiquarian: "his important contribution from the time of the Frankfurt crises" says Lukacs, "was to insist that

antiquity had gone forever, that it had ceased to be a model for modern man."¹³ For Marcuse, meantime, Hegel's theory of the State represented a considered, farsighted calculation of the balance of power in Germany. Thus, Marcuse writes: "Hegel wrote his Philosophy of Right as a defence of the state against this pseudo-democratic ideology, in which he saw a more serious threat to freedom than in the continued rule of the vested authorities."¹⁴ It is pointless, however, to dismiss Löwith's construction peremptorily as a grotesque caricature. It is better to let it serve as an introduction to those other interpretations for which Hegel's thought was in every sense a political philosophy.

Herbert Marcuse and the Anthropological Problematic

The problem of mediation is subordinated in Herbert Marcuse's study of Hegel to themes of importance for a methodological investigation of the antecedents of the critique of ideology: in particular, to the concept of labour, the relation of theory and practice and the transition from idealist to materialist dialectics. Moreover, for Marcuse, Hegel transformed the problem of mediation: he did not solve it. Admittedly, Marcuse begins, Hegel recognized that the limitation of the Kantian philosophy represented the great intellectual challenge of his day. "The Kantian philosophy," Marcuse writes, "left a gulf between thought and being or between subject and object, which the Hegelian philosophy sought to bridge."¹⁵

Equally, however, Marcuse insists that: "This separation was not primarily an epistemological problem for Hegel. Time and again he stressed that the relation between subject and object, their opposition, denoted a concrete conflict in existence; and that its solution, the union of opposites, was a matter of practice as well as of theory."¹⁶ To put it another way, in Marcuse's interpretation, Hegel responded to the Kantian challenge by transforming the problem of mediation from a strictly epistemological difficulty into a political-historical one.

In short, Marcuse's view is expressed concisely in Habermas's suggestion that Hegel's rejoinder to Kant effected "a radicalization or abolition of the theory of knowledge."¹⁷ In this interpretation, the butt of Hegel's criticism is epistemology itself, the authoritative theoretical practice employed in producing 'transcendental' legitimations of science. For Hegel, we are told, Kant's 'critical philosophy' ceased to be critical where it resolved the problem of knowledge by installing a re-furbished 'immediate truth' centred upon the "unity of consciousness." Hegel's critique of epistemology bears down upon the "transcendental" (and therefore incomprehensible, inexplicable and ultimate presupposition) "unity of consciousness" postulated by Kant to discover its limitation. As Habermas puts it: "Kant reconstructs the organization of the cognitive faculty, as the essential unity of the transcendental conditions under which

knowledge is possible, by starting with a priori valid propositions and with an ego for which the validity of (these) propositions exists." ¹⁸ Hegel's critique makes this Kantian fundament problematic. In particular, Hegel's dialectical logic is said to begin in its perception that with Kant neither the genesis of the ego, nor the genesis of the categories of consciousness is brought in question. The 'critical philosophy' in fact stands in Hegel's view not so much upon the "immediate certainty" as upon the impenetrable mystery of the identity of the ego and its categorial content.

In Marcuse's interpretation and in the interpretation clarified further by Habermas, Hegel's theorization of the "middle ground", excluded by the epistemological prejudice of the philosophy of consciousness, originated in the dialectic of the ego and its categories. Regarded somewhat schematically, in this light, Hegel's philosophy of history is understood to comprise: an account of the genesis of the Ego indispensable to the rationalist tradition, initially and principally set out in the Phenomenology of Spirit (which transcribes the genesis of the Ego as "the pathway ¹⁹ of doubt, or more precisely as the way of despair"); and, a survey of the genesis of, and a sequential analysis of, the categorial systems of philosophy, elaborated in the Logic (which traces the evolution of "the different forms of ascertaining the truth;" and which presents all the systems of philosophy as "one philosophy at different degrees of

maturity; and which always regards the later philosophy as the result of all the systems that have preceded and (which) must include their principles....")²⁰

Schematically, the Phenomenology and the Logic comprise the subjective and objective dimensions of the philosophy of history. Together, these works explode the 'unity of consciousness' presupposed by epistemology - which remains in perpetuity a creature of the philosophy of mind - and of the possibility of truth conceivable in that framework.

Hegel's Radicalization of Epistemology

The schematism that represents the Phenomenology of Spirit and the Logic as the subjective and objective moments, respectively, of Hegel's thought is discernible in Marcuse's study. Moreover, Marcuse finds the rudiments of this construction in Marx. At least, it is quite apparent that Marcuse echoes Marx's assessments of the significance of Hegel's principal theoretical works; and that these in turn accord with the perspective being opened out here. So, in Reason and Revolution, Marcuse develops the implications of Marx's observation that: "The importance of Hegel's Phenomenology and its final result - the dialectic of negativity as the moving and producing principle - lies in the fact that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process..... that he, therefore, grasps the nature of labour and conceives objective man - true, because real man - as the result of his own labour."²¹ Unquestionably,

too, Reason and Revolution extrapolates from Marx's pronouncement that: "the whole of the Logic is proof of the fact that abstract thought is nothing for itself, that the absolute idea is nothing for itself and that only nature is something."²² In other words, Marcuse, following Marx, emphasizes that Hegel saw the Ego, consciousness, as a process and as an anthropological phenomenon. Equally, Marcuse, like Marx, stresses that for Hegelian Logic the substantiality of categorial frameworks is primary. Both urge that their existence, as networks of concrete determinations, is what concerned Hegel and what enabled him to chart the evolution of philosophical systems.

Interestingly, Marcuse's exposition of the Phenomenology begins with a warning that, although it was originally conceived as an introductory work, that book became in execution a substantial contribution to the Hegelian system. Hegel, says Marcuse, 'incorporated large parts' of his system into the Phenomenology. And he adds: "The extreme difficulties that the book offers are, to a great extent, due to this procedure."²³ With this qualification Marcuse acknowledges that the Phenomenology incorporates a larger and more complex purpose than is suggested by concentrating upon the theme of the historicity of consciousness. In fact, Marcuse maintains, the Phenomenology anticipates the subsequent system as a whole in all its aspects. Nevertheless, the predominant theme of the Phenomenology is the dialectic of historical

consciousness from a natural, pre-theoretical state into philosophical reflection. The intention of the Phenomenology, says Marcuse, was to: "lead human understanding from the realm of daily experience to that of real philosophical knowledge, to absolute truth."²⁴ Beginning with pre-theoretical consciousness and its everyday experience, Marcuse explains, Hegel "shows that this mode of experience, like any other, contains elements that undermine its confidence in its ability to 'perceive the 'real', and force the search to proceed to ever higher modes of understanding."²⁵ Every deficient basis for knowledge will be exposed by overwhelming objective conditions which will necessitate reflection and reorientation. In Marcuse's account: "If man pays strict attention to the results of his experience, he will abandon one type of knowledge and proceed to another, from perception to understanding, to self-certainty, until he reaches the truth of reason."²⁶

For Hegelian logic, Marcuse continues, the determinate epistemological factor is the "changing relation between consciousness and its objects."²⁷ At greater length, he writes: "When experience begins, the object seems a stable entity, independent of consciousness; subject and object appear to be alien to one another. The progress of knowledge, however, reveals that the two do not subsist in isolation. It becomes clear that the object gets its objectivity from the subject."²⁸ In Marx's application of

this principle, by way of amplification, it is made apparent that even the ostensibly primeval, natural relation of man to organic nature, the existential condition of the peasantry in subsistence agriculture, is an already historical relation that has to be constantly posited, maintained and reproduced in labour.²⁹ The point urged by Marcuse, is that, for Hegel: "the real object is constituted by the (intellectual) activity of the subject. The latter discovers that it itself stands 'behind' the objects, that the world becomes real only by force of the comprehending power of consciousness."³⁰

These are the terms in which Marcuse discusses Hegel's abrogation of epistemology and his dissolution of the rigidities of the Kantian system. The decisive factor, Marcuse maintains, is Hegel's much more practical approach to the problem of knowledge. So, the problem of knowledge is no longer construed as a matter of contemplation and disinterested reflection, instead it becomes a matter of projection and of engagement with objective determinations. For Hegel, Marcuse contends: "self-consciousness has yet to demonstrate that it is the true reality; it must make the world its free realization."³¹ Accordingly, Marcuse's explanation runs: "Referring to this task, Hegel declares the subject to be 'absolute negativity,' signifying that it has the power to negate every condition and to make it its own conscious work. This is not an epistemological activity and cannot be carried out solely within the

process of knowledge, for that process cannot be severed from the historical struggle that is itself a constitutive part of the way to truth and of the truth itself. The subject must make the world its own doing, if it is to recognize itself as the only reality. The process of knowledge becomes the process of history."³²

In effect, Marcuse explains that Hegel reconceptualized the problem of mediation as it confronted another subject than that recognized by Kant's transcendental idealism; as it affected a subject no longer confined to consciousness and to the dialectic of thought and its fixed categorial fundament. In Kant, we are told, "reason is limited to an inner realm of the mind and is made powerless over 'things-in-themselves'."³³ In its completely inward, private definition of the power of reason, Kantian rationalism renounces any proprietary claim on the phenomenal world. To put it another way, Marcuse remarks that: "it is not really reason but the understanding that holds sway in the Kantian philosophy";³⁴ which means that that philosophy offers no resistance to the objective determination of its categorial horizon, but is passively and quietistically content with introspective reflection. It merely acknowledges the antinomical structure of existence, the limitation of understanding and the entirely 'transcendental' or 'noumenal' capability of Reason.

Nevertheless, so Marcuse argues, Hegel considered his

position to be an extension and correction, or sublation rather than a destruction, of the Kantian construction. "Hegel makes special mention of the fact," says Marcuse,³⁵ "that Kant did overcome this limitation at many points." Particular importance is attached, in this respect, to the Kantian notion of an "original synthetic unity of apperception," the theory of mediating subjectivity enunciated by Kant, which conceives of subjectivity practically; which denotes, Marcuse observes: "an activity by which the antagonism between subject and object is produced and simultaneously overcome."³⁶ Attention is drawn also to the distinctiveness of Kant's ethical idealism; which in equating phenomenal subjectivity and volition, rather than noumenal subjectivity and consciousness, also prioritizes a practical consideration. In effect, it is recalled that Kant's ethical theory locates the possibility of freedom in the exercise of reason, not in understanding. In Kant's formulation, Marcuse, following Hegel, stresses that: "the autonomous individual gives himself the unconditional duty to obey universal laws that he imposes upon himself of his own free will."³⁷

In the interpretation advanced by Marcuse, Hegel retains and emancipates the practical thrust of Kant's critical philosophy. Hegel enlarges the scope of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of Kantian rationalism, he integrates these estranged epistemological and ethical aspects and he defines the whole, unified

purpose of reason in its obligation to impose universal significance on a meaningless reality. Hegel's historical conception of subjectivity comprehends the essence of reason anthropologically, in the predisposition and capacity of men to penetrate and structure objective conditions. In these terms, the task of philosophical reflection, Marcuse explains, is also transformed. On reflection, says Marcuse, it becomes obvious: "that behind the curtain of appearance is not an unknown thing-in-itself, but the knowing subject. Self-consciousness is the essence of things. We usually say this is the step from Kant to Hegel, that is, from critical to absolute idealism."³⁸ And the distinctiveness of absolute idealism lies in its dissolution of the ontological dualism fundamental to the Kantian philosophy. In absolute idealism, Marcuse explains: "all opposition between consciousness and its object is overcome; the subject possesses and knows the world as its own reality, as reason."³⁹

Having adduced the essential features of the Hegelian theory of the subject, in which the possibility of knowledge was reformulated, Marcuse proceeds to consider some methodological implications. In this, Marcuse acknowledges the fact that with the 'abolition' or 'radicalization' of epistemology (with the de-stabilization of the a priori unity of consciousness postulated by Kantian rationalism) effected by Hegel, the question of

the validation of knowledge which seemed to have been settled categorically by Kant, is blown wide open again. Since Hegel, in other words, exploded the mythology upon which scientific truth had been grounded, the difficulty was to specify, how, without the traditional criteria, knowledge could recover its former authority. In order to respond to this question, Marcuse is aware, it is necessary to ponder the ramifications of Hegel's affirmation of the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason.

Methodological Inferences

At a minimum, Marcuse is concerned to demonstrate that the Phenomenology contained an unanswerable refutation of the basic premisses of positivist theories of scientific knowledge. More particularly, he argues that Hegel repudiated the empiricism, on the epistemological side, and the implied reification, on the ontological side, constitutive of modern positivism. Epistemologically, Marcuse maintains, positivism has as its principle "the ultimate authority of the fact, and observing has been the ultimate method of verification."⁴⁰ This empiricist bias is maintained, however, against the devastating success of Hegel's critique. "To Hegel," Marcuse writes, "the facts in themselves possess no authority. They are 'posited' by the subject."⁴¹ For the Hegelian philosophy, objects represent the truth of a rational intention. They realize or substantiate human values and purposes. Validation must, therefore, extrapolate from an ascertainable

disposition of objects to the intention and activity of a determinate subjectivity. Says Marcuse: "Verification rests, in the last analysis, with the process to which all facts are related and which determines their content."⁴² More emphatically, Marcuse urges the point of the Hegelian philosophy, thus: "Everything that is given has to be justified before reason, which is but the totality of nature's and man's capacities."⁴³

In theoretical terms, positivism is dismissed as fatuous, from an Hegelian perspective, because it defines subjectivity, the capacity to commune with and know the world, in the restricted terms of sense-experience and perception; because it equips theoretical understanding only to reflect upon the brute, immutable facts, and denies it the power to attribute those facts to a determining rationality. As a severely limited practical philosophy (with not by any means insignificant ideological connotations), positivism is condemned by Marcuse because it binds thought to present certainties and denies the developmental potential of human reason. As Marcuse expresses this criticism: "Positivism, the philosophy of common sense, appeals to the certainty of facts, but, as Hegel shows, in a world where facts do not at all present what reality can and ought to be, positivism amounts to giving up the real potentialities of mankind for a false and alien world."⁴⁴

Looking to the ontological preconception of positivism, Marcuse contends that it implies a reification of empirical conditions. Reification, Marcuse explains, denotes, not only or primarily a state of consciousness but above all a practical orientation to the world which mistakes historically constituted conditions for a natural order: so that, paradigmatically, social relations appear as relations between things, governed by natural laws. This reification enters the premisses of thought in the form of naturalistic presuppositions: "Common sense and traditional scientific thought" we are told, "take the world as a totality of things, more or less existing per se, and seek the truth in objects that are taken to be independent of the knowing subject."⁴⁵ In the context of Hegel's reformulation of the problem of knowledge, and of his re-statement of the purpose of philosophy, however, so Marcuse continues, the positivistic preoccupation with facts, its fetishism, delivers men to conditions that dominate them. In Marcuse's words: "The world is an estranged and untrue world so long as man does not destroy its dead objectivity and recognize himself and his own life 'behind' the fixed form of things and laws."⁴⁶

Intrinsic to Marcuse's Hegelian critique of positivism are several points of more general methodological significance for the possibility of social theory. Firstly, Marcuse's reading of the Phenomenology suggests that in our present state of knowledge there can be no truthful (ideologically

neutral) regression behind Kant that does not make its way through a detailed critique of Hegel. Secondly, Marcuse stresses the point that Hegel's transformation of the problem of mediation involved a transition from an epistemological to an anthropological problematic. Or, to put it another way, Marcuse argues that Hegel's phenomenological focus upon the "middle ground" in which reason or the human spirit externalized and realized itself, marked a momentous turning point for the theory of society and history. From the Hegelian standpoint, the principal philosophical question became the historical one: what became, above all, problematic was the process of self-creation in which man posited and reproduced the conditions of his existence. Accordingly, or by implication, Marcuse suggests that where social science neglects to consider its debt to Hegel, it overlooks one of the decisive formative states in its development.

Thirdly, Marcuse draws attention to the ideological and methodological significance of Hegel's genetic approach to the theory of the subject. It becomes clear, in the light of the Phenomenology, that the determinate epistemological factor, that the ultimate brake imposed upon the possibility of knowledge by theories of science, is to be found in the concept of subjectivity that they propound or to which they subscribe, almost unconsciously. So, in the case of empiricist frameworks, where the subject of knowledge is defined in terms of the capacities of

sensation and perception; or, where in a more rationalistic positivism, when the subject of knowledge is defined also in terms of control of categorial schemata (the laws of mathematics, economics or computer science); so, in each case, the power of the subject to know is pre-determined and absolutely circumscribed.

The unique characteristic of the Hegelian philosophy of history and its theoretical progeny is that no a priori epistemological restriction is imposed. The subject of knowledge conceived by the Phenomenology is embarked on a path of doubt which implicates him progressively in the historicity of things and in the collective process of man's self-creation. In the Hegelian framework, the problems of social reproduction, in general, confront philosophy and they challenge the manifold and collective capacities of human beings. The philosophy of science, by comparison, has already bracketed out the problems of social practice, or pre-judged them as technical-administrative problems arising in a reified, quasi-natural order, before social science takes them up. This does not mean, incidentally, that the various non-Hegelian sociologies have failed to conceptualize social relations. In fact, they have theorized society in many ways, employing many models, with a variety of methods. In general, however, sociology tends to mirror society (to seek a naturalistic method that will enable it to offer simple, 'photographic' representations, or an 'objective

knowledge') without comprehending the limit imposed by its own methodological protocols, and without grasping the historicity of social conditions. Sociologism is nothing but the projection of every human capacity onto an abstract, social-subject. And sociologism is a theoretical predisposition that succumbs to prevalent authoritarian, even totalitarian, socio-historical trends.

With the irreversible intrusion of Hegel, philosophy becomes inextricably implicated in the historical "middle ground"; and social theory is obliged to pay the strictest attention to the manner in which it de-limits the social being, the practical capabilities of the subject of knowledge. This is to say that both a practical theory of society and a critique of ideology are embryonic tendencies of Hegel's thought.

Idealist and Materialist Dialectics

The more tendentious part of Marcuse's study of Hegel purports to explicate the Logic as the objective dimension of the philosophy of absolute idealism. Here it is more evident that Marcuse: "tried to go beyond mere re-statement and to elucidate those implications of Hegel's ideas that identify them closely with the later developments in European thought, particularly with the Marxian theory." Briefly, Marcuse attempts to describe the transition from idealist to materialist dialectics. The difficulties inherent in attempting to maintain the crude distinction

between idealism and materialism and to make it explain the relation between Hegel and Marx present themselves at this stage. The danger of toppling over into the kind of "dialectics of matter" propounded by Engels is averted but the predisposition to define Marxism, primarily, as materialism is not entirely satisfactory.

To begin with, however, Marcuse situates Hegel's Science of Logic in relation to Kant's transcendental logic. In the logic of transcendental idealism, we are told, concrete objects are not conceived of as objectifications of reason; nor are the categories of the understanding required to mediate objective conditions and movements to consciousness: their validity is not contingent upon their satisfactory performance of this function. Instead, the categories designated by Kant, the categories necessarily employed by science, announced a "transcendental correlation" between the grounds of possibility of knowledge and experience and the grounds of possibility of the objects of knowledge and experience. The connection between consciousness and being is apprehended in the modalities of necessity and immediacy. It is not apprehended dialectically, or genetically, as a practical relation.

Hegel is understood to have both exploited the success of transcendental idealism and to have eliminated its main weakness. Specifically, Marcuse lays great stress on

Hegel's appreciation that, as he says, transcendental logic already comprised formal logic and ontology; by which he alludes to the doctrine of the "transcendental correlation", which stipulates that the principles of thought are also the constitutive principles of Being. Marcuse explains that Kant's logic incorporated, "the categories of 48 substantiality, causality and community (reciprocity)", recognizing these as ontologically significant principles; while it retained "the theory of judgment" in its formalist logic. But, according to Marcuse, it was this formalism that Hegel had to break down.

For Hegel, Kant's system failed to capitalize on its integration of logical and ontological principle. Or it formalized and petrified the relation of thought and being. As, principally, a formal logic, it appeared to be burdened with its ontological content, whose extra-logical, referential adequacy it attributed to an irreducibly subjective source, namely: the structure of consciousness in general. Against this tendency, which evinced embarrassment in connection with its ontological credentials, Hegel is understood, by Marcuse, to have recommended a more critical attitude to the concrete properties of logical systems. In Marcuse's account: "Hegel announced in his criticism of the Kantian philosophy that the task of logic was 'to develop' the categories and not merely 'to assemble' them." ⁴⁹ Development, as advocated here, had a double emphasis. It meant enhancement of the

value of the categories as accurate conceptual representations of concrete realities; and it meant extending the power of the categories as objective representations or externalizations of subjective (human) intention. Development implied the increased capacity of logic to mediate objective conditions theoretically, and the greater ability of logic to control environmental conditions.

In these terms, Hegel's logic is described by Marcuse as a material logic. He says: "The striking difference between Hegel's logic and the traditional logic has often been emphasized in the statement that Hegel replaced the formal logic by a material logic, repudiating the usual separation of the categories and forms of thought from their content." In fact, it is reasonable to suggest that Marcuse understands Hegel's logic as, in the first instance, the result of an ontological subversion of the categories of formal logic; which process of subversion had begun in transcendental idealism. Marcuse writes: "one could say that he (Hegel) takes the principles of thought from the principles and forms of reality." By way of illustration, Hegel's treatment of the category of definition is set out. "Within the logical tradition," Marcuse explains, "the definition is the relation of thought that grasps the universal nature of an object in its essential distinction from other objects. According to Hegel," the explanation continues, "the definition can do this only because it reproduces (mirrors) the actual process in which the

object differentiates itself from other objects to which it is related. The definition must express, then, the movement in which a being maintains its identity through the negation of its conditions."⁵² This subversion of the logical by the ontological, however, is, in the context of Hegel's transformation of the aims of logic, only a prelude to his more important dissolution of the ontological in the historical. Thus, with regard to the Hegelian treatment of the category of definition, Marcuse concludes by remarking, that for Hegel: "a real definition cannot be given in one isolated proposition, but must elaborate the real history of the object, for its history alone explains its reality."⁵³

The most radical aspect of Hegel's thought, Marcuse maintains, is its historical sensibility. "Hegel's logic is but a reflection of the movement of being", Marcuse writes. Integral to this historical perception is his rationalism: "to Hegel, reason cannot govern reality unless reality has become rational in itself."⁵⁴ Hegel's rationalism is of a kind that makes the organization of existence in general a responsibility for man: "This rationality is made possible through the subject's entering the very content of nature and history. The objective reality is thus also the realization of the subject. It is this conception that Hegel summarizes in the most fundamental of his propositions, namely, that Being is, in its substance, a 'subject.'⁵⁵ Secondly, Hegel's historicism includes a

sociological component, since the reality that undergoes the process of rationalization has a kind of social objectivity. Thirdly, Hegel's historicism contains a dynamic practical moment which not only finds the essence of things in their characteristic movements but which discovers the essence of the historical in the changing relationship of man to the world. Thus, says Marcuse, in Hegel's Philosophy of History: "the historical development from the Oriental to the modern world is conceived as one in which man makes himself the actual subject of the historical process."⁵⁶

Nevertheless, while the historical principle, most unequivocally announced in the Phenomenology of Spirit, represents, in Marcuse's view, the most progressive aspect of Hegel's thought; the failure of the Hegelian system lies in the fact that in the mature theoretical work, the Science of Logic, the historical principle is subordinated to an ontological one. Ultimately, Marcuse argues, the dialectical, practical element is subordinated to and extinguished by a compulsion to propound a definitive categorical system, or an Absolute Knowledge. In the Hegelian system, Marcuse alleges: "its historical aspiration is constantly overwhelmed by the ontological conceptions of absolute idealism."⁵⁷ Hegel's thought culminates, we are told, in: "a final transformation of history into ontology."⁵⁸ To understand this judgment, it is necessary to recognize that, for Marcuse, Hegel's philosophy

is fundamentally a political philosophy. So that Marcuse interprets the Phenomenology as a philosophical critique that began in the perplexities of everyday consciousness and which discovered the basis of thought's heteronomy in the historically constituted political structures of the day and the rationality they imposed. Subsequently, perhaps already in the Phenomenology, and certainly in the Science of Logic and in the Philosophy of Right, Hegel is understood by Marcuse to have proclaimed the absolute rationality of actual socio-historical and political conditions. In other words, he is said to have transcribed the historicity of things in the form of an ontology.

For Marcuse, the failure of Hegel's Logic, its foreclosure of the historical dialectic, its collapse into ontology, is attributable to the socio-historical position of philosophy itself, to its social function, which Hegel could not abrogate. "From their origin," Marcuse explains, "the basic concepts of idealism reflect a social separation of the intellectual sphere from the sphere of material production. Their content and their validity had to do with the power and the faculties of a 'leisure class,' which became the guardian of the idea by virtue of the fact that it was not compelled to work for the material reproduction of society. For, its exceptional status freed this class from the inhumane relations that the material reproduction created, and made it capable of transcending them. The truth of philosophy thus became a function of

its remoteness from material practice." Ultimately, Marcuse suggests, in spite of his profound dissatisfaction with a quietistic philosophy of mind, Hegel was forced to settle for the Idea of truth. Which means that Hegel conceived freedom in terms of a retrospective, philosophic comprehension of the objective determinations of historical existence, but, interpreted those objective conditions as the unalterable real result of the collective effort of rationalization.

It is at this point, however, notwithstanding the plausibility of his sociological explanation of Hegel's involuntary collapse into ontology, that Marcuse encounters the problems inherent to the idealism-materialism dichotomy. For example, it is essential to Marcuse's argument that Marx should have somehow rescued the 'materialist logic' of absolute idealism. But this implies that the distinction between idealism and materialism was already transcended by Hegel. It suggests that Marx's logic has some essential affinity with Hegel's. Similarly, Marcuse locates the difference between Hegel and Marx in the greater concreteness of Marx's categories: "Marx focussed his theory on the labour process and by so doing held to and consummated the principle of the Hegelian dialectic that the structure of the content (reality),⁶⁰ determines the structure of the theory." The difference, in question, however, does not seem to lie in the way that logical categories are 'assembled' and 'developed' by

Marx, but to consist exclusively in the fact that he studied the categories peculiar to the labour process under capitalism. No difference in 'method' is indicated; while, substantively, concreteness is equated with economics. Yet again, in attempting to crystallize the distinctiveness of materialist dialectics, Marcuse maintains that Marx's contribution brought about the negation of philosophy itself. But, here, more than ever, Marcuse falls victim to the simplistic idealism/materialism dichotomy: having defined philosophy as idealism, he is compelled to define materialism as the negation of philosophy. In short, the relationship between Hegel and Marx requires greater finesse.

Nevertheless, although he places an excessive trust in a crude explanatory device, Marcuse does make the point that between Hegel and Marx some crucial change occurred in the logical significance of theories of society and history for the 'truth' value of philosophical representations. In other words, he suggests that if there was a logical difference between Hegel and Marx it was to be found in their relative positions with regard to the conceptualization of social and historical conditions. More precisely, Marcuse suggests that Hegel still looked to philosophy to fulfil a traditional obligation and to supply in knowledge, in an inspired representation of the limits of the human condition, the means of an intellectual-spiritual transcendence. It is in this sense that Hegel is

said to have elaborated an ontology, by virtue of the fact that transcendence remained a possibility of the contemplative life, of consciousness; and by default, in the sense that philosophy enjoined resignation to the existing configuration of things. For Marx, on the other hand, this philosophic attitude to existential circumstances presented itself as an obstacle to the theorization of the material conditions of social life. For Marx, Marcuse argues: "If there was to be any progress beyond this philosophy, it had to be an advance beyond philosophy itself and, at the same time, beyond the social and political order to which philosophy had tied its fate." ⁶¹ In short, Marcuse offers an exegesis of the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach. He contends that while Hegel characterized historical existence as the ensemble of practices through which the process of Man's self creation was accomplished; still, he did not ascribe a practical role to philosophy.

Conclusion

When Marcuse relies upon the distinction between idealism and materialism, to differentiate Marx and Hegel, his exposition falters. When, however, he discerns the logical difference between them in the area of their theories of society and history, when he appears to explicate the meaning of the last thesis on Feuerbach, Marcuse indicates a more subtle and plausible mutation. Marcuse succeeds, that is to say, where he contributes to an understanding of the way the philosophy of practice advanced between Hegel

and Marx.

Perhaps, like Feuerbach, Marcuse underestimates the importance of philosophical developments on the 'active side.' Somewhat against the logic of Marcuse's account, therefore, it is important to stress that the place to look for continuity from Hegel to Marx is on the side of the development of the theory of the subject. For Kant, Hegel and Marx, a practical postulate, an active subjective principle, is primary and determinate in epistemological and methodological terms. In each framework, knowledge is coextensive with what can be grasped of objective mediations. For Kant, the epistemological subject synthesizes sensation and perception in consciousness: the mediation of subject and object is entirely abstract. For Hegel, subject and object are mediated, initially, prior to any recollection, in a socio-political reality in which men humanize nature. For Marx, the immanent "middle ground" is properly construed as the sphere of material production. The 'objective dialectic' of History becomes the material context in which the subjective principle, the possibility of self-transcendence, is addressed.

Not unexpectedly, then, it is in this area that Marx, himself, differentiates his position from that of Hegel. In fact, Marx makes two criticisms of the Hegelian theory of the subject. Firstly, with Feuerbach, he repudiates Hegel's conception of the empirical subject (the ultimate

basis of philosophic reflection, the real ground of knowledge and experience) as an abstract inversion of any actual human being. Says Marx: "Real man and real nature become mere predicates, symbols of this hidden, unreal man and his unreal nature. Subject and predicate therefore stand in a relation of absolute inversion to one another."⁶² With which, Marx rejects Hegel's characterization of subjectivity in terms of an abstract, determinate consciousness. That consciousness, Marx argues, which is for Hegel's absolute idealism the essentially subjective principle, is in reality the predicate, the property of an entire embodied man, whose purposes it serves.

Next, going beyond Feuerbach, Marx criticizes Hegel's conception of the transcendental subject. Hegel is alleged to have misread the historical problem and to have conjured it away, rather than to have engaged it. Nevertheless, as Marx understands the matter, Hegel did define correctly the general philosophical terms in which a solution could be formulated: i.e. Hegel saw the historical problem as one of estrangement or alienation in which man in society did not recognize the effects of, and so became enslaved in and oppressed by, his own design and intention. At the same time, however, Marx maintains that Hegel continued to propound a purely philosophic resolution of the problem. Hegel is said to have restricted the possibility of transcendence of historical forms of domination to the realm of self-consciousness. In this abstract setting,

freedom consists in the state of self-recognition where substance in general is construed as an objective representation of subjectivity. For Hegel, Marx writes: "The appropriation of estranged objective being or the supersession of objectivity in the form of estrangement.... principally means for Hegel the supersession of objectivity, since it is not the particular character of the object but its objective character which constitutes the offence and the estrangement as far as self-consciousness is concerned." ⁶³ In effect, Hegel is accused of perpetrating an epistemological-philosophical reduction of the historical problem.

Combining his criticisms of the Hegelian subject in its empirical and socio-historical forms, Marx outlines his own perception of the locus of truly historical subjectivity. Thus, he writes: "When real, corporeal man, his feet firmly on the solid earth and breathing all the powers of nature, establishes his real essential powers as alien objects by externalization, it is not the establishing which is subject; it (i.e. what is subjective, or determinate) is the subjectivity of objective essential powers whose action ⁶⁴ must therefore be an objective one." Marx, as though testing the elasticity of Hegel's concept of history as actualized reason, insists that what is truly subjective, truly sovereign, is not private intentionality, not volition or the power of the individual to posit and annul its essence (desire or purpose) in reality; but what is

truly subjective is the objective social totality, the entire apparatus that expresses, in the first instance, the reality of the collective, human dominion over Nature. In Marx's view, estrangement or alienation is a problem posed and therefore resolvable only in the labour process, only in the ensemble of practices, that produces and reproduces the conditions of social existence. The real locus of the problem is progressively represented by Marx as the social relations of capitalist production. Consequently, the possibility of transcendence is re-interpreted, not with regard to the supersession of objectivity itself and the cultivation of a classical, philosophic indifference, but as an obligation that arises in specific socio-historical circumstances which do not realize a rational society. In these terms, it is clear that what has occurred between Hegel and Marx is that the problem of mediation and its practical resolution has been given a more concrete form: now, with Marx, it is the 'middle ground' itself that must be actively transformed.

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47. Ibid., p VII.
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CHAPTER TWO

The Prehistory of Hegel's Systematic Philosophy

The Logic and the Science of Logic are, above all, treatises on method. In these works, Hegel surveys the history of philosophic method and simultaneously reflects upon the antecedents and premisses of his own method. In his methodological introspection, Hegel announces the arrival of an historically enlightened method of philosophical analysis, in the form of an exhaustive critique of all earlier methods. It is correct to say, too, that Hegel's logical ruminations demonstrate the superior analytic force and the impeccable lineage of his own principal methodological category: the Notion. The Logic is not only a treatise on method, however. It is also the outstanding expression of Hegel's systematic philosophy. It is the theoretical vindication of Hegel's system. It is the ultimate theoretical representation of the ontology that defines the structure of Absolute Knowledge or Universal Reason.

As an exercise in systematics, Hegel's Logic belongs to the dominant tradition in Western thought, known as "first philosophy" or "the philosophy of origins": whose aim is to articulate as well as to proclaim (and so to assist strategically in the administration of) reality's ultimate principle.¹ Admittedly, the task has not always been

approached scientifically, but this role has never been undertaken in a vacuum, or in an ante-chamber of history. On the contrary, philosophy's quest for a universal principle has always assumed a pivotal position in the existential configuration in which men have reproduced their social conditions. The basic aim of enlightenment, as it has been sought by the 'philosophy of origins', has always been, Adorno remarks: "liberation from the context of nature."² And, moreover, in spite of the fact that it has only recently become scientific, the urge to transcend natural constraints has invariably been systematic and methodical: it has always combined a systematic categorical framework and a method which makes that system effective in practice. Philosophy has never operated in a vacuum: in the sense that it has always offered not only abstract logical principles but has also provided a method that truly organizes life on rational rather than natural grounds.

The history of the dominant philosophic tradition, Horkheimer and Adorno have argued, describes a "dialectic of enlightenment." "In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant."³ The generic problem, as read by Adorno and Horkheimer, is that 'first philosophy' repeatedly posits its ultimate principle as absolute, but

prematurely. Instead of ascertaining the limit and value of its conceptual systems on the basis of any humane, social criterion, 'first philosophy' and the social powers and interests it represents, have imposed reductive organizational principles upon the world. Thus, the emancipatory interest is continually transmitted into a principle of domination. To rephrase the matter: in idealism, principles advanced and commended for their power to widen the scope of man's power over natural conditions, invariably become, in systematic application, modes of closing down, reducing and containing reality. Adorno describes as "first philosophy's" original sin, the circumstance that: "in order to enforce continuity and completeness, it must eliminate everything that does not fit."⁴ Elsewhere, he discerns the totalitarian character of systematic thought, in the fact that: "It eliminates all heterogeneous being."⁵

Even before it became scientific, then, philosophy is understood to have been concerned to lead humanity out of mythology and submission to nature. It has elaborated conceptual systems and methods designed to subdue and exploit natural forces. Above all, Adorno argues, the history of "first philosophy" has accomplished a constant refinement of method: "without the act of violence of method," he maintains, "society and spirit, substructure and superstructure would have hardly been possible."⁶ With which observation, Adorno insists on the primacy of the

practical over the theoretical concerns of thought. Method⁷ is defined, by Adorno, as "a mode of procedure of spirit", which means that it is in the question of method that the intrinsically practical problem, that which raises the problem of the actualization of reason or spirit in the world, receives consideration. Its prototype, moreover, is not personal discipline that commands instinctual energy, but the historical circumstance in which social practice is organized for the conquest of nature. The prototypical scientific model is the systematic logic and method of mathematics: "the metaphysics of numbers", and its practical correlate.... the "mathematicization of the world."⁸ For Adorno, number is the paradigmatic form in which reified spirit establishes its dominion in nature. And what the paradigm of number reveals is that theoretical success presupposes the success of method in predisposing reality under the sign of social categories.

In Adorno's judgment, the "philosophy of origins took shape scientifically as epistemology."⁹ As the separate sciences encountered the problem of reconciling system and method (i.e. of stipulating the precise basis upon which the identity of concept and object was to be governed by knowledge) at this point, epistemology emerged as a specialism. More particularly, epistemology took up the problems of systematic logic on a scientific basis, but it tended to relinquish the problem of method to the sciences. In other words, epistemology assumed an absolute authority

on matters of formal propositional coherence and made the principle of non-contradiction, or identity, its own; but it made no prescription about the structure of reality. In this, it continued a tradition in which "first philosophy" took no direct, legislative part in the administration of society. As ever, however, says Adorno, the philosophers in their epistemological role as "middlemen": "only commend and sell to the master his means of lordship, spirit objectified as method."¹⁰ Thus, instead of precise instructions, epistemology formulates and endorses the general rule: that science imposes universal, rational significance upon the natural world. In its incarnation as epistemology, however, where its principle is explicated with the rigour of science, first philosophy, systematics, is understood to have approached the threshold of self-understanding. At which point, it finds itself in contradiction: just short of that state of self-recognition, epistemology both proclaims the political innocence of scientific theory and surreptitiously, in the fact that it defers from first principles to the authority of the sciences, affirms the priority of an effective method, ultimately responsible for the reification of the spirit and the stabilization of social relations.

Empiricist epistemology, of course, contrives to deduce the possibility of knowledge without an active subject. Consciousness and being are presumed to be immediately identical. Objective truth simply topples over into a

receptive consciousness where it can be transcribed by the scientist. The real significance of the empiricist position is only made apparent, however, in the Kantian critique, in whose light the mediating role of subjectivity becomes crucial to the generation of knowledge. The key factor in empiricism, from this viewpoint, is that the subject of knowledge is empowered, by virtue of its postulated passivity, to convey brute facts to consciousness. Or, it is precisely because it is defined as tabula rasa, as indeterminate, as devoid of any intrinsic interest or purpose (except the most disinterested intellectual curiosity) that the mind can be held to transmit an undistorted knowledge of reality. Empiricism, in short, depends in spite of its deliberate concern to reduce, rarify and incapacitate the subject of knowledge, upon a theory of mediating subjectivity. In fact, empiricism in the sense that it defines the possibility of knowledge in terms of a system of constraints imposed upon the empirical subject, formulates the archetypical epistemology.

Kant, in contrast, elaborating the basic rationalist position (and there are only two epistemological positions; they "fall roughly into the rationalist and empiricist sort").¹¹ straightforwardly ascribes the possibility of knowledge to the constitutive power of subjectivity. Which means that Kant acknowledged the primacy of practice, but in strictly nominalist terms, within the limits of

consciousness, as a truth that applies to the production of "pure theory." In the Kantian rationalism knowledge rests; on one side on the necessity, for subjectivity, of accepting reality as given; and on the other side, upon the obligation to employ a system of pre-formed, interpretative principles, the categories of the understanding, which are defined a priori, as valid-for-all. At which point, with the failure of systematic philosophy signalled by Kant's nominalism, with the legitimating purpose of epistemology unfulfilled, Hegel's treatises on method may be understood as a still more desperate attempt, by systematic logic, to supply reality's ultimate principle. The differences between Hegel's logic and Kant's transcendental logic may thus, in a preliminary way, be reduced to two: firstly, Hegel's logic does not accept the givenness of the phenomenal, but finds subjectivity already active in that domain; secondly, Hegel's logic does not accept the a priori validity of categorial systems, but introduces the criterion of "concrete universality."

Systematic and Dialectical Logic

Hegel's Logic, then, is an amalgam of dialectics and systematics. On one side, systematic logic had not accomplished its ultimately totalitarian purpose even in its most scientific form, as epistemology. As epistemology, logic had incorporated the rigour of science to supervise conceptual system-building; but epistemology offered only nominalist solutions, it made no prescription

about the practical value of categorial frameworks, so that, from a general philosophical standpoint, systematic success in reality remained haphazard. In the light of these considerations, Hegel's Logic attempts to rescue systematics from the nominalist doldrums into which it had drifted in epistemology. Simultaneously, however, as it were, in the opposite direction, Hegel's methodological category, the Notion, relentlessly divulges the secret, subjectivist conceit of every philosophic system prior to his own. In effect, Hegel's dialectical logic condemns categorial systems: firstly, because they rely upon unexplicated conceptual resources, or because they do not grasp their own 'notions'; and secondly, to the extent that their practical postulates have proved to be unsustainable, in the sense that they fail not as principles, but as methods devised to comprehend and subdue reality.

Hegel's systematic logic begins in a critique of systematics. He attacks the systems of idealist philosophy and the theories of science to which they give rise. At its climax, Hegel's critique takes up Kant's question about the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge (the problem of mediation) and it propounds an antinomialist solution. The Logic is a corrective to the nominalism of his predecessors. For Hegel: "philosophy should understand that its content is no other than actuality, that core of truth which, originally produced and producing itself within the precincts of the mental life, has become the

world, the inward and outward world of consciousness." In the Introduction to The Logic, theory is situated, emphatically, unambiguously, in a concrete, historical context: its object is a reality moulded by Reason, its subject is Reason with a practical commitment to substantiate itself. The Logic begins with the practical reality of synthetic knowledge. It reflects upon the real historical dissolution of the ontological divide between noumenon and phenomenon, spirit and matter.

Considering 'actuality', in its double aspect, Hegel defines philosophy's purpose as follows: "The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and, as the phrase is, to find ourselves at home in it: which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the notion - to our innermost self." ¹³ And, here, Hegel explains what, in his opinion, has been overlooked: that philosophy's task is to recover for reason the effects of human intervention in reality. In employing the Notion as a methodological category, Hegel intends to demonstrate that the various philosophical systems have done no more than this: that they have, retrospectively, represented in theory the actual level of the practical penetration of real conditions, achieved by men in the phenomenal world. As critique, Hegel's logic remorselessly exposes the limit of various conceptions of "objective knowledge" in a determinate subliminal theory of the subject and in a

practice or method that realizes the premisses of that theoretically dormant, subjective notion.

The first casualty of Hegel's dialectical critique of the history of systematic philosophy is The Doctrine of Being. Hegel begins with the doctrine of Being because that is where philosophy makes its beginning. At the outset, therefore, Hegel insists upon the historical nature of philosophy. "In the history of philosophy," he says, "the different stages of the logical Idea assume the shape of successive systems, each based upon a particular definition of the Absolute. As the logical Idea is seen to unfold itself in a process from the abstract to the concrete, so in the history of philosophy the earliest systems are the most abstract, and thus at the same time the poorest."¹⁵ The Doctrine of Being, is, therefore, adduced as the most primitive philosophical specimen. It is characterized as the most abstract and resolutely metaphysical, as presupposing 'pure consciousness' diametrically opposed to 'pure Being'. However, Hegel explains, from an historical standpoint, mere Being is "absolutely negative," it is "nothing," an "empty abstraction."¹⁶ It can be nothing else, where the purpose and activity of men is absolutely absent. At the same time, for the Doctrine of Being, what is recognized as irreducibly subjective is: "mere intention -¹⁷ or meaning." Of the categories of consciousness acknowledged by this metaphysics, says Hegel, number is the archetypical form and quantification is its corresponding

method. These are categories devoid of content. Their fundamental truth value inheres in their completely external and arbitrary relation to their material referents. Their underlying significance, meanwhile, lies in their naked instrumentality, in their capacity to transcribe real properties into abstract properties, not in their capacity to represent real properties.

The immediacy of Being and consciousness supposed by primitive philosophy is related by Hegel to the historical circumstances to which it is appropriate. He relates that 'notion' to an implicit theory of the subject appropriate to a definite stage of historical development. In fact, the hollowness of the subjective and objective categories of the doctrine of Being is traced to a virtual absence of historical mediation: to the fact that men have scarcely imposed their collective will upon nature. However, the historical character of Hegel's thought does not consist in preoccupation with the past. His logic adduces the immediate, contemporary significance of the philosophy of history. And so, Hegel says: "the history of philosophy in its true meaning, deals not with the past, but with an
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eternal and variable present." More precisely, with respect to his logical point of departure in the Doctrine of Being, Hegel maintains: "To speak of a beginning of philosophy has a meaning only in relation to a person who proposes to
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commence the study." Which is to say that Hegel's logical investigations situate the empirical subject or finite

individual in an historical anthropological context in which the nullity of the categories of the Doctrine of Being may be understood to represent appropriately the scant intellectual and practical experience of the ingenuous student of philosophy.

With the doctrine of Being, philosophy possessed, or was possessed by, a notion that grasped nothing of objective reality. With the Doctrine of Essence (which is the second metaphysical doctrine refuted by Hegel) philosophy is understood to have progressed beyond the dialectic of Being and Nothingness. Instead, reality at this more advanced stage, is comprehended in its contradictory nature, as both appearance and underlying essence. Where the Doctrine of Being propounds a knowledge that is utterly abstract and symbolic, the Doctrine of Essence aspires to a more concrete knowledge. In Hegel's words: "The point of view given by the Essence is in general the standpoint of 'Reflection.'²⁰ The aim of reflection is to "know the object, not in its immediacy, but as derivative or mediated."²¹ In reflection, immediate certainties, the innocent appearance of things "must be shown to be mediated by or based upon something else."²² In another account of the significance of philosophy's graduation to the essentialist perspective, Hegel says: "Instead of Being and Nought we now have the forms of Positive and Negative."²³

In effect, Hegel discovers in the Doctrine of Essence a robust critical impulse combined with a sharply focussed concern with concrete problems. Hegel discerns an antinomial thought that recognizes the contradictory nature of reality in every immediate manifestation. Methodologically, the Doctrine of Essence designates a philosophy that aims, on reflection, to explain the chaotic appearance of reality as an ordered pattern of determinate properties and forces, discernible by reason and useful for man. Typically, existence in general is explained as a network of causal forces. Ethically, or in its moral philosophy, meanwhile, this same doctrine of essence comprehends the heteronomy of man, the necessitarian structure of his existence, as an apparent reality that conceals his essential nature which is Freedom (Free-Will).

But, says Hegel, "the reflective understanding, while it observes and professes to record only what it observes is rather creating a metaphysic, bristling with contradictions of which it is unconscious."²⁴ Although the Doctrine of Essence has taken philosophy out of a primitive stage it has not brought philosophy to its culmination. It is only another stage through which Absolute Knowledge must advance. Principally, the limitation of the essentialist perspective is discovered in its materialism. As a materialist metaphysic it catalogues the munificence of nature and it proceeds systematically to make the powers of

nature amenable. At the same time, however, Hegel explains, this philosophy fails to reflect upon the fertility of the mind that can conceive of such abundant possibilities in nature. Simultaneously, as an abstract idealistic ethic, this Doctrine of Essence locates the principle and possibility of man's freedom entirely beyond the realm of necessity. Tied to the Doctrine of Essence, in short, philosophy cannot come to appreciate the practical, constitutive role of human reason underlying the structure of concrete existence.

Nevertheless, while the Doctrine of Essence cannot perceive the determinate effect of Reason, still, Hegel's critique suggests, the fundamental presupposition, the real precondition of that Doctrine, is the actual efficacy of Reason. This is a doctrine which contains and rests upon a notion that belongs to an historical stage at which abstract thought has been actualized in social practice (in mathematics, in medicine, in monetary values, for example); but also where determinacy is still sought in substance, or in Nature, rather than in the rational purpose of men. So, Hegel's critique refutes a notion that depends upon a practical postulate that it cannot articulate but which ascribes a determinate function instead to mysterious, elemental powers. In terms of Hegel's critique, the fundamental properties discovered and designated by materialist metaphysics are, essentially, the satellites of human intention.

Beyond the Doctrines of Being and Essence is the Doctrine of the Notion. Explaining what is his own Doctrine, Hegel says, for example: "the notion is the truth of Being and Essence."²⁵ Equally forcefully, he claims: "The notion, in short, is what contains all the earlier categories of thought merged in it."²⁶ Structurally, the basic feature of the notion is that it is historically self-conscious. In other words, it is both concrete ("concrete out and out")²⁷ and abstract ("the medium in which the notion exists is thought in general and not the sensible thing in its empirical concreteness").²⁸ The notion designates a formal category, a principle of reason, and the actualization of that category as an aspect of the phenomenal world. This is the nature of the identity that makes possible the claim to historical knowledge formulated by Hegel.

In explicating the Doctrine of the Notion, Hegel attempts to subvert all the categories of a more formal logic and to demonstrate their historical significance and basis. Essentially, the categories of genuinely subjective philosophies, which precede his own, are construed as mere anticipations of Hegel's historical position. For example, those forms of logic that have centred upon the judgment and the structure of the syllogism, Hegel observes, are commendable in that they explicitly relate the possibility of knowledge to the capacities of a rational subject. Excessive, rigid formalism, however, is inseparable from a misconception about the nature of subjectivity. The

possibility of an identity or correspondence of subject and predicate, or universal and particular, is not grasped as an historical phenomenon. As Hegel explains: "The Judgment is usually taken in a subjective sense as an operation and a form, occurring merely in self-conscious thought."²⁹ But, Hegel continues, this prevalent misconception misses the logical crux of the matter, which is that: "when we proceed to a criticism or judgment of the object, we are not performing a subjective act, and merely ascribing this or that predicate to the object. We are, on the contrary, observing the object in the specific character imposed by its notion."³⁰ This means that judgment presupposes the operation of universal reason which it recovers in the concrete identity realized by the object it addresses. We must relinquish the delusion that the judgment is essentially a mental occurrence. We must, Hegel suggests, relate the act of judgment to its concrete end. This done, he further argues, it becomes obvious that: "The Judgment is an expression of finitude."³¹ The Judgment becomes intelligible as a pronouncement on the extent to which an object realizes a universal principle. "To pronounce a work of art to be beautiful", Hegel submits, by way of illustration, "or an action to be good, requires..... a comparison of the objects with what they ought to be, i.e. with their notion."³² To put it another way: judgment, in Hegel's conception, presupposes that the possible identity of concept and object (i.e. the possibility of concrete truth) is problematic without the intervention of a

practical intention concerned to actualize the categories of universal reason.

Hegel's assault on formalist prejudices eventually fastens onto the supposition that Absolute Truth has the form of a Syllogism. In proceeding to distil the historical truth of this formula, Hegel begins by recognizing that "The Syllogism..... is the process of proving the judgment."³³ "Here," he says, "we see the particular becoming the mediating mean between the individual and the universal."³⁴ (E.g. All men are mortal (U), Caesar is a man (I), Therefore Caesar is mortal (P).). However, says Hegel, the full significance of the assertion, "Everything is a Syllogism"³⁵ goes unrecognized if "we suppose syllogizing to be only an act of consciousness."³⁶ Actually, the formal correctness of the syllogism is understood by Hegel merely to mimic the movement of the practical realization of the universal, through which man makes history. The truth of the syllogism, in other words, inheres in its capacity to represent or reproduce, theoretically; "the transition from the Subject, the notion in general.... to the object."³⁷ In fact, Hegel goes on to stress that for Absolute Idealism, the object in its concrete truthfulness is the End, the realization of some human purpose.³⁸ His conception of freedom envisages men empowered to subsume Nature under the rule of rational categories.

As clearly as the Doctrine of Being belongs to the Age of

Stoicism, which taught forbearance in the face of overwhelming natural forces; and as surely as the Doctrine of Essence belongs to the Age of Scepticism, in which criticism explored the fallibility of every metaphysical construction; just as surely, does the Doctrine of the Notion belong to the Age of Rationalism, in which man himself is taken as the measure of all things. Hegel's own ultimate philosophical intention was to bring rationalism, with its profoundly anthropological premiss, to a stage of historical self-understanding, to make rationalism a philosophy of history. His critique of rationalism endeavoured to bring a minimal attenuated perception of the anthropological basis of the problem of knowledge (suppressed in a tentative, formal notion of subjectivity) to its logical, historical conclusion.

The Limits of Kant's Critical Philosophy

Hegel's resolve to reconstitute systematic philosophy in its ultimate historical form approaches fulfilment in his critique of Kant's nominalism. The nominalism that presents itself, in Kant's transcendental logic, as the insurmountable methodological limit is traced by Hegel to Kant's anthropological presupposition. For Kant, Hegel declares: "Man is essentially a thinker.... Thought and thought alone has eyes for the essence, substance, universal power, and ultimate design of the world..... The rise of thought beyond the world of sense, its passage from the finite to the infinite, the leap to the supersensible

which it takes when it snaps asunder the chain of sense,³⁹
all this transition is thought and nothing but thought."
In effect, while Kant is commended for attributing such a
high value to the power of thought, he is criticized for
conceiving of man, abstractly, as the capacity to think.

In Hegel's account, Kant's nominalist criterion of truth,
which confined its epistemological interest to the formal
validity of scientific judgments and frameworks, had to be
understood as the logical precipitate of his unnecessarily
restrictive, a priori, definition of Man. According to
Hegel, Kant needlessly curtailed the power of subjectivity
to "out and out abstract thinking."⁴⁰ Consequently, because
he supposed the essence of subjectivity to be completely
interior and mental, because he first made a radical
distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal, he was
bound to be condemned to nominalism, on epistemological and
methodological matters. To put it another way: Kant's
subjective idealism, his metaphysical notion of the subject
of knowledge, relinquishes any claim over the phenomenal
world, and so his transcendental logic and epistemology can
make no claim to know the phenomenal world, as such or in
itself. But, says Hegel: "the great error is to restrict
our notions of the nature of thought to its form in
understanding alone."⁴¹ And, he continues: "To think the
phenomenal world rather means to recast its form, and
transmute it into a universal. And thus the action of
thought has also a negative effect upon its basis, and the

matter of sensation, when it receives the stamp of universality, at once loses its first and phenomenal shape." ⁴² Hegel presupposes the complete interdependence of subjective and objective moments of the concrete particular. He insists that thought acts determinately upon its object and that, in its practical effect, thought transforms the phenomenal world.

Kant's renunciation of any claim over the phenomenal is also understood by Hegel to rob philosophy of its purpose. In Hegel's words: "Kant undoubtedly held reason to be the faculty of the unconditioned; but if reason be reduced to abstract identity only, it by implication renounces its unconditionality and is in reality no better than empty understanding. For Reason is unconditioned only insofar as it is self-characterizing and thus, in point of content, is its own master." ⁴³ Kant's position is contradictory: since it postulates the determinacy of reason, since it postulates the will as a kind of causality and thought as unconditioned by brute empirical conditions; and yet it leaves all phenomenal reality undetermined by reason, as well as making phenomenal knowledge contingent upon mere reflection, or, complete submission to the structure of the concrete circumstances of existence.

While Hegel discovers the limit of Kant's rationalism in his theoretical philosophy, in the nominalism of his transcendental logic and epistemology, he detects the

dialectical promise of the Kantian system in the Practical Philosophy. In particular, Hegel draws attention to the fact that Kant affirms the primacy of practical reason and defines practical reason as involving "a thinking Will, i.e. a Will that determines itself on universal principles."⁴⁴ More precisely, Hegel wholeheartedly endorses Kant's view that reason denotes "an activity which makes itself felt objectively."⁴⁵ Hegel's censure, on the other hand, is reserved in this instance for the eventual failure of Kant's moral philosophy to provide for the possibility of reason's actualization. In this regard, Kant's moral philosophy is shown to have more in common with stoicism than with rationalism: in that it urges the individual to deny nature and to cultivate an interior, noumenal/spiritual tranquility rather than to transform nature and to establish the authority of universal reason concretely.

Instead, Hegel argues, of supplying a principle that can guide practice in its engagement with natural conditions, Kant offers the same abstract identity principle that dominates his theoretical philosophy. Kant's practical philosophy applies in that already abstract interiority where the possibility of truth is confined and where "there must be no contradiction in the act of self-determination. Hence the Practical Reason never shakes off the formalism which is represented as the climax of the Theoretical Reason."⁴⁶ Considering further the extreme abstractness of Kant's position, Hegel remarks: "to say

that a man must make the good the content of his will raises the question, what that content is, and what are the means of ascertaining what good is. Nor does one get over the difficulty by the principle that the will must be consistent with itself, or by the precept to do duty for the sake of duty."⁴⁷ The difficulty, from Hegel's more thoroughly practical or historical standpoint, is that Kant, having recognized that the purpose of reason is to actualize itself or to be effective in the context of a complex conjuncture of determinations, cannot say with any conviction what can be done with assurance beyond the realm of a privately controlled, intellectual sphere. Practice is as abstract and irreducibly personal, for Kant, as thought. Moral action is confined to the noumenal world. It evacuates the phenomenal world in order to be effective.

Finally, in his appraisal of Kant, Hegel maintains that:⁴⁸ "the Kantian philosophy rises to the speculative height" in the Critique of Judgment. Here, in construing intuitive understanding as the essence of the pre-eminently subjective faculty of judgment, Kant is said to come closest to an historical construction. Although, characteristically, the possibility of judgment receives a strictly individualistic treatment, still, says Hegel, the logic of an historical practice is represented in Kant's theory of judgment. In explanation, Hegel writes: "whereas the particulars had hitherto appeared, so far as the universal or abstract identity was concerned,

adventitious and incapable of being deduced from it, the Intuitive Understanding apprehends the particulars as moulded and formed by the universal itself." ⁴⁹ In the Kantian aesthetic, Hegel stresses, "the products of Art and of organic nature" appear as representatives of universal reason. The substance of aesthetic experience is nothing other than "universalized particulars." ⁵⁰ And, in this aesthetic theory, Hegel maintains, Kant captured the essential intention of the philosophical Idea, without recognizing that he had stumbled upon its radically historical character. For Hegel, Kant's aesthetic contained the involuntary admission that the philosophical ideal exists not as an abstract potential of consciousness, but that it exists properly as a "concrete universal," as an objective representation of reason. The Idea is, as Kant was able to discover but not to appreciate, a concrete union of the universal and the particular. ⁵¹ At which point, Hegel concludes by emphasizing the need to escape the limitations of Kant's intransigent nominalism. He says: "it was only formally that the Kantian system established the principle that thought is spontaneous and self-determining. Into details of the manner and the extent of this self-determination of thought Kant never went." ⁵²

Conclusion

As a treatise on method, Hegel's Logic chronicles the history of philosophy's advance to scientific status. Hegel's purpose is to trace the inexorable movement out of

abstract, metaphysical thought to the point at which philosophy actually embraces reality and offers a comprehensive, concrete knowledge. The successive failures of the major pre-Hegelian schools of thought are explained as necessary stages in the advance of systematic logic to its ultimate goal of Absolute Knowledge. Every fallen system is construed by Hegel as a premature foreclosure of the philosophic enterprise. Reading Hegel's critique of the obsolete doctrines, Walter Kaufmann remarks: "we shall see that they are all one-sided abstractions from a concreteness of which they are merely partial aspects."⁵³ The postulated identities that he surveys turn out to be underdeveloped conceptually, both in the sense that their own premisses are not fully explicated and in the sense that they have relatively little purchase on reality. Theoretically, these metaphysical systems omitted to supply Reason with a self-conscious understanding of the constitutive role of historical man in the production of objective conditions. Practically, these systems failed to establish the possibility of freedom or to realize the aim of systematic logic, which was to provide an Absolute Knowledge of concrete determinations as the substantiated truth of universal reason.

On one side, as an exercise in dialectics, the Logic regresses into the recesses of unexplicated premisses of systematic philosophy. On the other side, as an exercise in positive systematics, the Logic appraises knowledge as

the instrument of a practical interest for which freedom is synonymous with the progress of universal history and the authority of Absolute Knowledge. Theory is tied both to the concept of freedom as enlightenment and to the concept of freedom as domination. In the end, however, it is the systematic tendency that triumphs in the Hegelian philosophy. In fact, it is ironic that the ultimate presupposition of Hegel's philosophy of history is the completion of the historical process of self-creation and transformation. The Logic proceeds on its retrospective survey of the categorical representations of the Spirit, on the basis of the truth, supposedly established inductively in the Phenomenology, namely, that Spirit had indeed attained the summit of Absolute Knowledge. The eclipse of Hegel's dialectical logic by his systematics is explained metaphorically by Habermas when he observes that Hegel kicked away the ladder (the Phenomenology) by whose means he had risen to the standpoint from which the Logic could be written. ⁵⁴ Undoubtedly, however, the 'logic' of the Phenomenology, which is abstracted and systematized in the Logic, already postulated the foreclosure of the historical, the prior subjugation of all concrete particulars under the rule of Universal Reason.

To grasp the distinctiveness of Hegel's contribution to dialectical philosophy, while recognizing that it is contained by an overarching systematic predisposition, it is imperative to compare it with Kant's. Thus, firstly, it

is apparent that Hegel's theoretical intervention takes philosophy beyond formalism, beyond the parameters of consciousness, beyond an abstract, attenuated anthropological premiss. Secondly, it is apparent that going beyond Kant's obdurate nominalism, Hegel compels philosophy to assume responsibility for the structure of phenomenal reality. Above all, when compared with the Kantian system, Hegel's is the 'philosophy of the "concrete universal." Or, to put it another way, where Kant's philosophy is consummately a moral philosophy, concerned with the responsibilities of the self-determined individual will, confined to a circumscribed noumenal domain; Hegel's philosophy is fundamentally a political philosophy which assumes responsibility for the organization of collective existence in a public, social reality. The methodological innovations introduced and necessitated by the Hegelian revolution (the emphasis upon the theory of the subject, the theory of ideology) all derive from the fact that Hegel's is a political philosophy.

Notes

1. The argument rehearsed here, in introduction, condenses what is to be found in Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment, London, Verso, 1979. See e.g. "Enlightenment has always taken the basic principle of myth to be anthropomorphism, the projection onto nature of the subjective. In this view, the supernatural, spirits and demons, are minor images of men who allow themselves to be frightened by natural phenomena. Consequently, the many mythic figures can all be brought to a common denominator, and reduced to the human subject." Ibid., pps. 6-7. See also, for an account of the more systematic trend: "In advance, the Enlightenment recognizes as being and occurrence only what can be apprehended in unity: its ideal is the system from which all and everything follows." Ibid., p 7.
2. See: Adorno, T.W. Against Epistemology, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982: "First philosophy has in no sense been pure lordship. Its initial goal is liberation from the context of nature..." Ibid., p 21.
3. Adorno, T.W. and Horkheimer, M., op. cit., p 3.
4. Adorno, T.W., Against Epistemology, p 10.
5. Adorno, T.W., Negative Dialectics, London, R.K.P., 1973, p 26.
6. Adorno, T.W. Against Epistemology, p 12.
7. Ibid., p 11.
8. Ibid., p 9.
9. Ibid., p 22.
10. Ibid., p 15.
11. Ibid., p 23.
12. Hegel, The Logic (Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, 1830), Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1975, p 8.
13. Ibid., p 261.
14. Ibid., p 124.
15. Ibid., p 125.
16. Ibid., p 127.

17. Ibid., p 127.
18. Ibid., p 126.
19. Ibid., p 23.
20. Ibid., p 163.
21. Ibid., p 163.
22. Ibid., p 163.
23. Ibid., p 165.
24. Ibid., p 186.
25. Ibid., p 221.
26. Ibid., p 223.
27. Ibid., p 228.
28. Ibid., p 29.
29. Ibid., p 232.
30. Ibid., p 232.
31. Ibid., p 233.
32. Ibid., p 236.
33. Ibid., p 245.
34. Ibid., p 244.
35. Ibid., p 244.
36. Ibid., p 256.
37. Ibid., p 256.
38. Ibid., p 267 ff.
39. Ibid., pps. 80-81.
40. Ibid., p 86.
41. Ibid., p 81.
42. Ibid., p 81.
43. Ibid., p 86.

44. Ibid., p 86.
45. Ibid., p 86.
46. Ibid., p 87.
47. Ibid., pps. 87-88.
48. Ibid., p 88.
49. Ibid., p 88.
50. Ibid., p 88.
51. Ibid., p 88, p 292.
52. Ibid., p 94.
53. Kaufmann, Walter, Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966, 194.
54. Habermas, Jürgen, Knowledge and Human Interests, London, Heinemann, 1973, p 23. (At which point incidentally, Habermas acknowledges Lukacs.)

CHAPTER THREE

HEGEL'S POLITICAL REALISM

The Positivity of Social Forms

Hegel's intrinsically political (rather than moral) philosophy provides the context in which the increasingly undeniable methodological importance of the criterion of universality is publicized. With Hegel, the notion of universality becomes quite explicitly the theoretical cipher that represents the ideal of a rational society. The "concrete universal", as it appears in Hegel's expressly political theory, alludes to the actuality of harmonized theory and practice as the social essence. Methodologically, this advance beyond nominalism has enormous significance: it registers an irreversible move beyond naturalism and naturalistic forms of legitimation; and, instead, it brings the theory-practice nexus to the fore, making that relation the basis of a political science responsible for the administration of the "concrete universal." This new methodological orientation, in which the notion of universality predominates, is, fundamentally, a response to more complex and antagonistic social relations, so that Hegel's logic and his substantive political theory respond to extra-philosophical, historically-induced pressures. It appears, nevertheless, that the revolutionary overtones of Hegelian method (the fact that it responded to the political problems of a divided society, not to the moral dilemmas entailed by

the human condition) were obscured by Hegel himself. This leads to interpretative difficulties. In the end, however, the central contradiction of Hegel's thought is that which occurs between a logic for which the criterion of universality is paramount and whose aim is concreteness and a substantive politics that sacrifices the 'universal' to the exigencies of concrete conditions.

In Kant, whose fundamental premisses are those of a moral philosophy, the search for a universal principle falls short of a demand for a rational social order. Kant, of course, brought the criterion of universality to prominence. In his discourse, universality supplants necessity as the primary epistemological consideration. However, the rationality that the 'universal' embodies for Kant has no inherent socio-historical quality. As Habermas has remarked, in the Kantian framework, the idea of universality is bound on strictly a priori grounds to the desideratum of general agreement. Habermas observes that the relation of validity in theory (the epistemological question) and consensus in society (the political question) is pre-emptively resolved by Kant in the realm of abstract consciousness before it can become a sociological problem. Habermas puts it like this: "The moral laws are abstractly universal in the sense that, as they are valid as universal for me, eo ipso, they must also be considered as 'valid' for all rational beings.... (Under such laws interaction is dissolved into the actions of solitary and

self-sufficient subjects, each of which must act as though it were the sole existing consciousness, at the same time, each subject can still have the certainty that all its actions under moral laws will necessarily and from the outset be in harmony with the moral actions of all possible other subjects."¹

With a formal, a prioristic solution to the problem of universality, Kant avoided its socio-political implications. The solution propounded in his moral philosophy conceives of harmonious social relations, even presumes the reality of a moral commonwealth: the result of a general projection in the noumenal (spiritual) sphere of every individual's ethical judgment for universal reason and against nature. Kant's formula, however, leaves intact an incorrigible phenomenal reality of social relations, whose natural facticity takes the form of an irrational, competitive association of individual proprietors. Walter Benjamin observes, in this connection, that 'conscience' is the fundamental concept of the bourgeoisie's moral philosophy, and he suggests that: "Conscience advises the proprietor to act according to concepts which are immediately fruitful to his co-proprietors."² At best, in this light, Kant's criterion of universality enunciated a critical ethic, which enjoined a more resolute renunciation of the phenomenal world and its false morality; but whose stoic posture, in any case tolerated and capitulated to the irrationality of an

atomistic society. For Kant, the society of individual proprietors assumed the authority of a natural order.

Hegel's philosophy, in marked contrast, extirpates all naturalistic residues. No doubt, renunciation and transcendence of naturalism in the theory and history of society are the most valuable part of Hegel's achievement. This is what Habermas believes. Though somewhat surprisingly, the worthiest legatee of Hegel's rationalized position (of the revolutionized epistemology in which sociological issues are admitted into the philosophical arena) is Freud.³ Freud is understood by Habermas to have encapsulated the Hegelian achievement in his representation of the essential theoretical axis as that which problematizes the relation of individual potential and the total social apparatus of repression. This construction is said, with Hegel, to replace the absolute philosophical framework in which the individual and/or the collectivity confronts a natural objectivity. (Interestingly, Habermas considers that Marx's formula, in which forces and relations of production clash, is a malformation, perhaps a malignant strain of the Hegelian philosophy of history).⁴

In any case, the argument has been forcefully advanced that Hegel's political theory had as its unifying purpose a determination to specify the organizational principle appropriate to a rational society. What have been described as Hegel's theological writings, his earliest

writings, are in the estimation of Shlomo Avineri (and of Lukacs) a quest in the socio-political institutions of the Greek polis and of primitive Christianity. "for a paradigm for a kind of universality that was lacking in the political system of the modern state."⁵ These early studies are understood to have had two results. First: Hegel's investigations soon persuaded him to abandon any hope of revitalizing the past. The contrast between the spontaneity of an early Christian community and the authoritarian institutional structure of religious life in the nineteenth century, and between the democratic republicanism of antiquity and the autocratic feudalism of nineteenth century Germany, became philosophical absolutes for Hegel.

The first result of Hegel's theological studies was an emphatic renunciation of the antiquarian preferences of historians and a heightened concern with the historical determinacy of the present. The second result of these earliest studies was a pronounced uncertainty about the philosophical prejudice that confined reason within the subjective dialectic of consciousness. Among the first expressions of his doubts about the radical individualism of the philosophy of mind is his conclusion that the inadequacy of primitive Christianity as a paradigm for present conditions lay in the fact: "that Jesus always and as a matter of principle addressed himself to the individual and equally, as a matter of principle, ignored the problems of society as such."⁶ Which means that the

theological writings anticipated the need for a philosophy of history that would elaborate the objective dialectic, whose structure was determinate for the modern phenomenon of individualism. The same anticipatory factor was evident in Hegel's appraisal of the democratic republicanism of the Greek poets: since what was absent from the political circumstances that produced the Greek state was, in Hegel's view, the individualism of modern society. The significance of this absence is explained by Lukacs like this: "His (Hegel's) entire philosophy of culture rests on the idea that to modern civil society goes the credit of producing that individuality in which the superiority of modern man over classical man in every sphere of culture can be said to consist."⁷ Thus, before he came to write a philosophy of history, Hegel's scepticism combined doubt about the advisability of looking either to the past or to the interior subjective dialectic of knowledge and experience, for explanation or salvation.

At the same time, it is true to say that Hegel began by repudiating the social relations that engulfed him. Against the oppressive effect of those forces he clung to the ideal of free individuality. The key concept of Hegel's early criticism, in other words, is that of "positivity", which issues from an ethical-methodological principle that finds the basis of self-determination in the power of thought to register the negativity of experience, as that experience is fatefully pre-determined by the one-

sided 'positivity' or effectiveness of objective relations. The concept of 'positivity' is also decisive for Hegel's subsequent thinking on the historicity of 'things-in-themselves,' says Lukacs, in the sense that: "It contains the idea that the entire development of society together with all the ideological formations which it creates in the course of history is the product of human activity itself, a manifestation of the self-production and reproduction of society."⁸ Not only does Hegel progress beyond naturalism that construes the evolution of social relations as an inevitable fate, but he maintains in a construction that is indispensable to the emergence of a viable political science: "that the actual objectivity, the independent existence of objects apart from human reason, could be conceived as the product of the development and activity of that very same reason."⁹ Hegel makes a new demand on philosophy, even in his earliest writings: "He requires philosophy to provide a theory that will expose and destroy the (other-worldly) objectivity of positivity and will reconvert all objectivity into self-activating subjectivity."¹⁰

In these terms, Lukacs interprets Hegel's early theological reflections as the ruminations of a disturbed religious consciousness, whose inclination was to recognize "positivity" as principally an emanation of institutionalized religion. According to Lukacs: "despite all Hegel's efforts to provide social and economic explanations,

religion remains in his view the ultimate cause of a state of society and of a relationship between man and his environment which is unworthy of man himself."¹¹ Thus the earliest solution to the problem of 'positivity' envisaged by Hegel proposed liberation from "a religion whose objects are transcendental."¹² By degrees, Lukacs contends, Hegel conceived the positivity of 'things-in-themselves' more concretely. In his essay on The German Constitution he called for "the modernization of the German political system." And both there and subsequently he undertook to enunciate a realistic appraisal of the possibility of ameliorating the worst "positive" effects of the social relations of production through the mediation of the state. Says Lukacs: "He does indeed cherish the belief that the state and the government have it in their power to reduce the glaring contrast of wealth and poverty, and above all the notion that bourgeois society as a whole can be kept in a state of 'health' despite the gulf between rich and poor."¹³ In his increasing concern with this problem, we are told, Hegel became a student of Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith.

Beyond the period of his exploratory "theological" writings, then, Hegel was preoccupied with his attempt to improve the concrete relevance of his notion of positivity. In the efforts at systematic philosophy that preceded the Phenomenology of Spirit (in the Jenenser Real Philosophie and in the System of Ethics), Hegel continued to

counter-pose the negativity of political theory (and its capacity to articulate the organizational principle of a rational society) to the 'positivity' of political conditions. In Lukacs' estimation, Hegel's philosophy in his 'middle period' consisted in an "amalgam of profound insight into the contradictions of capitalism and naive illusions about the possible panaceas to be applied by the state."¹⁴ And Lukacs adds: "In The Philosophy of Right, Hegel formulates his view in essentially the same terms but on a higher level of abstraction."¹⁵

The Critique of Natural Law Theories of the State

For Lukacs and for Avineri, Hegel's philosophy of history is substantially informed by the emerging science of political economy. Lukacs argues that Hegel discovered in the political economists' concept of labour a means of reformulating and enhancing the theoretical power of his notion of "positivity." In effect, Lukacs maintains that it was in the light of his encounter with political economy that Hegel was able to construe the "positivity" of social relations as the outcome of activity that externalized reason. In this interpretation the Phenomenology proposes a solution (i.e. the recovery of the objects of externalized reason) to a problem that arises in the domain of social production; and the Logic reflects, retrospectively, upon the structure and efficacy of those rational systems that labour has externalized.

Quite consistently, Lukacs proceeds to relate the limitation of Hegel's critical philosophy to the fact that: "socially, Hegel cannot see beyond the horizon of capitalism."¹⁶ Lukacs suggests that, not unexpectedly, there is no expectation on Hegel's part that the transformative power of labour will dissolve the existing structure of civil society and carry humanity beyond the economic relations of capitalism. Accordingly, the irrationalism and barbarism that he found documented in the researches of the political economists are approached from the standpoint of traditional, philosophical premisses, as problems susceptible to purely intellectual solutions. The perennial, material problems of labour and reproduction are thus converted into metaphysical difficulties proper to the contemplative life; they are construed as aspects of alienation or estrangement, as spiritual disorder. For Lukacs, too, however, Hegel's recourse to metaphysics was made in the period of capitalism's economic and political consolidation, when capitalism itself, and the productive power it generated and controlled, appeared as the agent of historical transcendence. In other words, in Lukacs interpretation, for the society in which Hegel lived, while capitalism dissolved the institutions of feudal absolutism, the problems of labour subordinated to the rule of capital remained perforce metaphysical matters.

Nevertheless, although the Hegelian theory of the state ultimately, if tacitly, affirmed the authority of the

structure of civil society (i.e. of the relations of production of capital); still, as political theory, it contained a trenchant critique of the 'Natural Law' framework in which his predecessors had theorized the state; and simultaneously it attached philosophical importance, as never before, to the problem of poverty. According to Avineri, the Hegelian revolution in political theory turned on the fact that "while political philosophy before Hegel was preoccupied with legitimacy, Hegel introduced the dimension of change and historicity which has become central to modern political thought."¹⁷ Which is to say, that before Hegel the state was accorded its place in a supposedly natural order. It allegedly arose as a necessity linked to the brute facts of property ownership in land and the need to regulate and stipulate rights and obligations attendant upon a natural (given) distribution of resources and powers. With Hegel, however, as well as subsequently, the state was required to justify its existence in more rationalist terms. Hegel's contribution marks the beginning of the modern era in which political theory accounts for the existence of the state in terms of its judicious use of a representative authority over collective wealth.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of this change of emphasis. Among its most general theoretical implications is the inevitability with which it transforms every naturalistic argument into an

insufficiently rational or ideological form. Equally importantly, though on a substantive rather than on a general methodological level, this rationalist reorientation means that: whereas before Hegel the Natural Law theorists saw freedom in opposition to the State and sought therefore to minimize its role; for Hegel the possibility of freedom in society begins with the modern state and its representative power. For Hegel: "The rationality which permeates the world of man becomes apparent for the first time in the state"¹⁸ ... Whereas in given, natural forms of human experience reason (and freedom) are suffocated: "In the family, it is still hidden behind feeling and sentiment; in civil society it appears as an instrumentality of individual self-interest..."¹⁹ Undoubtedly, too, it is in Hegel's political theory that the modernity and the rationality of the state are unequivocally imputed to its representative function. Thus the Hegelian conception stresses that: "While in the ancient polis subjectivity was subsumed under the unmediated universality of the political, in feudalism the particular will managed to subsume the universal, the state; only the modern state succeeds in synthesizing these two moments within its differentiated structure."²⁰

Lastly, in this respect, Avineri insists that Hegel's political theory is not authoritarian; but that, on the contrary, when it is appreciated in its historical context, the Philosophy of Right sets out a judicious renunciation

of feudal conceptions of sovereignty. "The kind of monarchy Hegel has in mind," Avineri suggests, "is one that is moving away from the absolutist and authoritarian tradition towards that of a limited form of constitutional monarchy."²¹ So, while Hegel rejects the romantic, Rousseauesque notion that citizenship is a contract revocable at will;²² at the same time, his concern that the state should be organized rationally expresses his opposition to naturalistic conceptions of the state (that ground it in the absolute right of monarchic power), and prompts him to hedge the sovereign in with constitutional restraints.

The Natural Law theory criticized by Hegel had already undergone a major transformation, so that the political science of bourgeois society already contained a partial critique of the notion of natural law. Marx explains the underlying economic conditions of the bourgeois theories of property and the state, in the Grundrisse. There, Marx explains that with the gathering momentum of capitalist accumulation, the laws of property, those laws for which the state acts as custodian, are subjected to a 'dialectical inversion.' He refers to a legalistic somersault, whereby law - which had originally recognized the right of ownership and the possibility of wealth exclusively in the immediate appropriation of nature and direct objectification of labour power, performed by the producer - later equates property

with the right of possession over labour-in-the-abstract, over the labour of others. In its truly bourgeois form, Marx writes: "Property now appears as the right to alien labour, and as the impossibility of labour appropriating its own product."²³

Habermas traces the evolution of Natural Law theory as it aspires to the status of political science in capitalist society and, to that end, develops the theory of the state and the theory of property relations.²⁴ Habermas describes how the notion of natural right, the doubly indispensable premise that specifies the precondition of individual property and the basis of the state's legitimacy, arises, initially, in a theoretical frame that presupposes a mode of production characterized by the coexistence of numerous independent producers, but shifts subsequently to presuppose productive interdependence, the exigencies of universal exchange, the benefits of a social division of labour and the necessity of wage-labour. The analysis conducted by Habermas recounts how social changes, reflected in theoretical premisses (which at a minimum ousted the polarity of nature and society and prioritized the relation of society and the state), made new demands on political philosophy. Thus, in the primitive case which conceived of society as an association of individual producers, the State was represented as no more than a social contract which codified mutual recognition of the rights of individual owners and producers. And so, in the more

complex case, the state was required to act as guarantor of the laws of capitalist production and exchange, which were understood to operate spontaneously and organically, in civil society. In these terms, political theory mediated new demands made upon the state.

In amplification, Habermas presents Locke's position as a sophisticated variant of the basic natural law format. He says: "Locke's derivation of human rights is simple. In the state of nature personal labour for individual use alone provides the rightful title to private property. This natural right, which together with property also secures life and freedom, each man can exercise directly and maintain against all others, for in each case it is measured by his physical powers and skill. Insecurity and therewith the need for state authority..... only arise with a mode of production determined by the market; for this requires the security of private property beyond those goods produced personally and for one's own consumption - the state of nature becomes untenable. Men associate under a government which is capable of protecting private property to an extent beyond the immediate physical powers and dispositions of the individual. Thus government must guarantee a legal order, which in its substance had always been based on private property: even prior to the state, but which now, in view of the increasing collisions arising from property expanded to the possession of capital, has to be explicitly sanctioned."

The second, critical and developed, form of natural law theory is that which purports to enunciate the naturally occurring laws of economic life. Its foremost spokesman, says Habermas, was Thomas Paine. "Paine" Habermas maintains, "identifies the natural rights of men with the natural laws of commodity exchange and social labour."²⁶ In this construction, however: "Every social state is full of blessings, but even under its best constitution government remains a necessary evil."²⁷ Which brings us to the crux of the matter; which advertizes an essential unity in the two forms of natural law theory and which highlights the tendency, inherent in the more complex theory that initially, reluctantly, confers a positive significance upon the state, to regress to naturalistic apologetics. That is to say: this theory of the state imagines an institutional apparatus whose very existence it abhors, except on the flimsiest naturalistic, necessitarian grounds. It perpetually adopts a minimalist posture. But this political theory does not adopt, at the same time, a critical attitude to the performance of government itself. There is no in-built rational limit to what may be regretted and installed as 'necessary evil', essential to the protection of private property.

Hegel's intervention is salutary and progressive, precisely in the sense that his political philosophy discerns the community's necessary evils in the realm of 'civil society' and expects the state to justify its existence in

alleviating the predatory excesses of economic life. To repeat what has been emphasized already: Hegel takes political theory beyond naturalism. Methodologically, Habermas observes, political analysis moves beyond the stage at which the "relationship of theory and praxis is defined in accordance with the model of classical mechanics." ²⁸ Instead, with Hegel, the relation of theory and practice affirms the primacy of the criterion of universality. And in this rationalist attitude, Hegel rejects Rousseau's concept of the "general will" which demands that natural society should be elevated to the rank of statehood. Rousseau's ideal is to control government from below: to subordinate it to the will of a necessarily divided civil society; to make it consolidate an elemental play of social forces and material interests. Hegel's ideal is to empower the state to organize a transcendence of brute economic existence.

With Hegel, political science is required to meet a new expectation. Political theory is required to account for the structure of "positivity" as it manifests itself in civil society. Also, the way in which it is expected to do so is quite new, reflecting the priority of the criterion of universality. From a letter, written before the introduction in Prussia and other German principalities of political reforms enthusiastically anticipated by Hegel, Avineri offers startling evidence of the thoroughness of Hegel's political rationalism. In the letter in question,

Hegel declares: "Daily do I get more and more convinced that theoretical work achieves more in the world than practical. Once the realm of ideas is revolutionized, actuality does not hold out."²⁹ Hegel supposes that reality achieves its fullest potential only if and when it is infused with rational meaning and purpose. Clarification of the principles upon which all objectifying social practice is based, therefore, is considered by Hegel to be the first requirement for an effective political science. Methodologically, Hegel leaves naive empiricism behind and begins with a critical appraisal of the 'theory of the subject' upon which practice, more or less self-consciously, proceeds. In his increasing concern with the concrete, however, Hegel's mature philosophy does not neglect to take stock of empirical conditions. His methodological priority becomes, as in the Philosophy of Right, a solemn investigation of what 'is': by which is meant an analysis of the relationship of the actual and the rational, as it is sustained in the world beyond consciousness. For Hegel, the state exists not to ensure the continued, unavoidably violent natural history of the species, but to embody and realize the transcendent power of reason. As Avineri says: "The antinomy to classical Natural Law could not be more explicit: under no condition should the state be conceived as an instrument for the preservation and defence of property."³⁰ Hegel envisages and exhorts philosophy to promote the possibility of a rational society not a natural society. The state is conceived as

the administrative apparatus that mediates between the Abstract Right of Constitutional Law and the practical life of civil society. And so, in the Philosophy of Right, the highest accolade that Hegel could bestow on the reformed Prussian constitution was contained in his statement that in the modern state the 'rational is actual and the actual is rational.'

The Nature of Hegel's Political Conservatism

So far, it has been maintained that Hegel gave the criterion of universality a rational, social content. As surely as Kant registered the eclipse of necessitarian preferences, so it has been argued, Hegel made the connection between the emergence of new criteria and the urgency of social questions. In this, it has been alleged that Hegel was the opponent of naturalism in political theory, and that his political philosophy advanced on the basis of a critique of 'natural law' theory. However, the relationship between Hegel's methodological contribution and his substantive political judgments is not a simple one. Inevitably, in fact, any attempt to explicate the revolutionary nature of Hegel's methodological protocols encounters a formidable problem in the prevalent characterization of Hegel as a staunch political conservative. The interpretative problem in question emerges in the context of the Philosophy of Right, read as an encomium for the Prussian State. In that context, it seems that the critical nature of Hegel's unprecedented method of political

analysis proves no obstacle to its cogency as an instrument of legitimation. It seems that the Hegelian method is pressed into the service of the established order after all. And so the question arises: in what sense can Hegel's political philosophy offer a genuinely critical method, where this method has been deployed in defence of a conservative constitutional system? This, roughly, is how the problem confronts a left-wing Hegelian interpretation. To put it more abstractly, the question is this: is not the postulated contradiction between revolutionary, critical method and conservative political sentiment an absurdity? (As ever, of course, the way forward is through re-appraisal of the terms of the question).

Surprisingly, perhaps, in view of his regard for Hegel as a prime mover in the endeavour that established social philosophy as critique, Habermas, in his response, does not seriously review the terms of the question. He proceeds on the assumption that Hegel was an arch-conservative and attempts to explain that circumstance. In Habermas's explanation, Hegel is understood to have progressively disavowed the role of philosophy as critique. In effect, Habermas contends that after demonstrating that the interface between political practice (the total condition of the political subject in civil society) and political theory (the aspiration of the political subject to a rational society centred upon a concept of statehood) is the primary area of concern, Hegel moves to suppress that insight and

couches his discovery, retrogressively, in necessitarian terms. Habermas presents two accounts of Hegel's conservatism. What they convey, however, is a sense of the need for a fuller historical explanation of what is meant by 'Hegel's conservatism.'

Habermas's first explanation is psychologistic in form. It smacks of psychological reductionism. This account discerns the secret of Hegel's researches into the relationships of the actual and rational, in his horrified reaction to the transparent historicity of things, signalled by the French Revolution. It is suggested that Hegel welcomed the Revolution but was appalled by its philosophical implication. More precisely, so Habermas argues, it seemed to Hegel that the Revolution confirmed philosophy in a critical-revolutionary role: it demonstrated the sovereignty of reason, the fact that theory propelled practice to reorganize reality as the habitat of mankind. For Habermas, Hegel applauded the success of the Revolution, but wished to see the dialectic of practical substantiation and critical dissolution arrested. Thus, according to Habermas, Hegel eulogized Napoleon as champion of the new bourgeois legal code, but he reacted nervously to the responsibility that the new conditions delegated to philosophy. Says Habermas: "Hegel conceives the French Revolution as the world- historical event that for the first time had conferred real existence and validity on abstract right." At the same

time, we are told, Hegel sought desperately to confer an absolute value on "abstract right." The gist of Habermas's psychologistic interpretation is given in his statement: "Only after he had fastened the revolution firmly to the beating heart of the world spirit did he feel secure from it."³² There may be a little more than psychology, here, but in essence, the argument is advanced that Hegel approached his work mainly in terms of its therapeutic value, and that he was motivated by an anxiety about the philosophical implications of the Revolution, which he found it comforting to regard as an historical climax and consummation.

To begin with, Habermas maintains, the young Hegel was a critical thinker. The young Hegel's notion of critical theory is given in the formula: "Philosophy cannot compel by external force, but it can attack what is limited with the latter's own truth."³³ It is stressed that Hegel required from theory that it should illuminate the gap between the actual form of existence and the concept to which it appealed in justification, as well as that it should explicate the distinction between the concept as universal and the concrete particular it purported to represent. Moreover, Habermas suggests, Hegel was convinced of the radical force of criticism. For the young Hegel, he says, "theory which criticizes what exists by showing that the pretended universality of its own concept is untenable, forces..... sacrifice from the particular

interest."³⁴ In Hegel's estimation, Habermas contends, to demonstrate the hollowness of a claim to universality was to compel particularistic, sectional interests to bow to the authority of reason.

No less forcefully, however, Habermas goes on to maintain that the Philosophy of Right was written by a disillusioned Hegel whose method expects nothing from mere criticism. In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel is said to have "relinquish-³⁵ed the dialectical relation" between theory and practice. As Habermas explains the matter: whereas the early writings prioritized the subjective dialectic of theory and practice, the later writings systematically projected the dialectic of theory and practice onto the historical plane, where it described the objective phenomenology of the human spirit. In this construction, Habermas suggests, Hegel appeased his anxiety about the historical vocation of philosophy. In other words, in this formulation, Hegel was able to indicate the historical process itself, as it had culminated in the French Revolution, as the realization of Reason or of the sovereignty of Abstract Right; while, at the same time, he was able to minimize the role of philosophy, which he construed as valid only retrospectively, as metacritique, not as a causal agency. The Philosophy of Right, we are told, resolved Hegel's difficulty which was to "legitimize the revolutionizing of reality without legitimizing the revolutionaries them-³⁶selves." For Hegel, the Reign of Terror that followed the

Revolution represented the true achievement of arrogant, doctrinaire theoreticians, indifferent to the possibilities of the present moment and what it would reasonably bear. It is clear that, for Habermas, understanding of the Philosophy of Right depends upon the prior knowledge that "Hegel desires the revolutionizing of reality without revolutionaries."³⁷ In that light, the Philosophy of Right affirms the rationality of the actual structure of existence, but denies philosophy any immediate constitutive role in the construction of a rational society.

Later, Habermas renounces the psychologistic argument that explains Hegel's conservatism (in method and in substance) in terms of his fear of anarchy and political terror.³⁸ He continues to account for the Philosophy of Right, however, as a retrospective, back-tracking and legitimizing work. Methodologically, it cancels the insight of the earlier period and announces that: "Philosophy cannot instruct the world about what it ought to be."³⁹ In a complete turnabout, the achievement of the Philosophy of Right is said to consist in the fact that, in that work, "Hegel attained the position from which philosophy could finally divest itself of a critique of the world and confined itself to contemplation."⁴⁰ The point which is reiterated is the assertion that, with the final resolution that the Philosophy of Right represents, "Hegel can relieve philosophy of its critical efforts to confront the complacent existence of social and political life with its

own concept after he has recognized, with a sigh of relief, that the spirit has lurched forward, that the principle of reason has entered into reality and has become objective."⁴¹

Now, although Habermas moves away from an excessively psychological explanation, his account of Hegel's descent into intransigent conservatism remains unsatisfactory. The psychologistic interpretation, in which fear of revolution (social change) is the decisive motivational factor, robs Hegel of political integrity: it makes him appear more sycophantic, apologetic and prejudiced than the political science 'technicians' and social engineers of the Natural Law School; but the revised argument in which his political integrity is restored, in which his politics are not an involuntary reflex, is not much better. That second interpretation which depicts Hegel as an embattled, dogged reactionary, disdaining the rising revolutionary tide, actually diagnoses another kind of dementia underlying the same uncritical turn of mind. In the end, when it is said that Habermas's interpretation is psychologistic, what is meant is that it over-stresses the problem of psychological plausibility, when it should be examining a method of political analysis. The key variables in Habermas's analysis are youth and maturity, anxiety and security. Consequently, the bulk of Hegel's thought, his mature work, becomes irrelevant to the emergence of critique. By the time Habermas has solved the problem of psychological plausibility, most of Hegel's contribution has lost its

significance for a study of the pre-history of critique.

In order to explain the connection between the development of Hegel's method and the maturation of his political judgment it is obligatory, first of all, to contest the stereotypical formula that makes him a reactionary giant. It is important to heed the arguments of Lukacs, Marcuse and Avineri, for example, to the effect that in commending the Prussian State, Hegel saw himself advocating a political system in which the reforms won in the Napoleonic period were upheld against sectarian, counter-revolutionary factions. In this estimation of Hegel's political position (not his psychological disposition), he saw himself, whatever others thought, aligned with the progressive camp against an insidious reactionary party. According to Marcuse: "Hegel wrote his Philosophy of Right as a defence of the state against this pseudo-democratic ideology in which he saw a more serious threat to freedom than in the continued rule of vested authorities." That is, Hegel's political analysis argued the supremacy of a rational state, a state based upon an explicit principle, with a circumscribed executive power, over a "pseudo-democratic ideology" and the minimalist rhetoric of the natural law school which he recognized for what it invariably is: the thin end of the totalitarian wedge.

Thus, although the Philosophy of Right sanctioned a "positive" political configuration, it did not rest upon

a naturalistic conception of society. It did not regress in that direction. For Lukacs, the core of Hegel's political thought remained the "taming of the economy..... its subordination to the interests of a fully developed socialized humanity."⁴³ But what separates the later work, for Lukacs, is a weightier realism. Decisive, in this connection, Lukacs maintains, is the fact that with regard to the problem of poverty, at which Hegel had looked long and hard, the Philosophy of Right recognized only its intransigence.⁴⁴ As a direct result, the enthusiasm of the youthful, critical period is evaporated. Substantively, Hegel tends to transpose the political problems that he attributes to the economic life of civil society as moral difficulties, as obligations outstanding and unfulfilled, whose obduracy justifies state intervention. Without a practical economics, without a sense of the transformative power of labour or any expectation that labour could carry humanity beyond the social relations of capitalism, Hegel conceives the possibility of transcendence of economic injustice in moral-political terms. The state becomes, as "concrete universal", a bulwark against the rapacity of material interest and defends moral criteria against economic ones. It attempts to impose a moral-economy upon a secular, political economy.

Hegel's growing realism also had methodological reverberations. Habermas's analysis correctly emphasized that in the late work, the dialectic of theory and practice

appears to have been projected onto the objective plane. However, Habermas tends to misconstrue this circumstance as signalling the demise of Hegelian criticism. But it is more apposite to relate Hegel's disillusionment concerning the immediate efficacy of criticism (his perception of the eclipse of the subjective by the objective dialectic) to his fuller appreciation of the mechanics of mediation. The greater emphasis given latterly to the objective dialectic should surely be understood as a momentarily important refinement; in fact as the definitively Hegelian inflection which makes philosophical comprehension, the subjective dialectic of knowledge and experience, possible only in the shadow of the anthropological-historical movement that envelops it. Habermas should have explained that for Hegel the subjective dialectic and possibility of criticism it contains, begin in recollection and theorization of those complex, concrete mediations that determine social being and consciousness. For Hegel, freedom begins in philosophic criticism that captures the structure of the objective dialectic. The Philosophy of Right attempts to specify the grounds on which social being and consciousness can be determined rationally, by universal reason. It rests on a blanket criticism of all naturalistic political theory. So, in the end, the limit of Hegel's critical method and the character of his political judgment (the relation of form and content) is defined not by a fateful abandonment of the subjective dialectic (which is really historicized) but by the precise structure of the

Hegelian practical principle. In other words, what marks the horizon of Hegel's thought, in the abstract and concretely, is the fact that it makes the question of political morality the crucial one. It defines the ultimate responsibility of the state as that of transforming the anarchy of the economy into a moral order. Subsequently, Marx attacked that political philosophy as the epitome of reaction because it contained no practical economic principle, which of course it did not; but as a result, what was genuinely critical, in both form and content, tended to be overlooked, denied or traced back to an immature stage in Hegel's development.

Conclusion

The crux of the interpretation that has been developed here is that Hegel's philosophy, logically and methodologically, is, intrinsically, a political philosophy. With this emphasis what is prioritized is Hegel's antinominalism and his rationalism. Or, it is stressed that the basic concerns of the Hegelian problematic are phenomenological and anthropological rather than moral and theological. Logically and methodologically, the principal problems it addresses are those of conceptualizing (stipulating the principle of intelligibility of) and systematically organizing (safeguarding the rational basis of) collective existence. This, it has been argued, is so, even if, ultimately and reluctantly, Hegel defines political responsibility and recognizes the power of the state in

moral terms. This is so, in other words, even if his political philosophy lacks a practical economic principle.

As a philosophy of history, the basic premiss of Hegel's thought is the historicity of things. From the outset, Hegel's systematic philosophy presupposes that Universal Reason has supplanted Necessity as the constitutive principle of the phenomenal world. Whether the French Revolution or the Reformation is construed as the pivotal, consummatory event, the indispensable premiss of Hegel's logic is that the rational has become real, that in the process of man's self-creation reason has become the essence of concrete reality.⁴⁵ Consequently, the criterion of universality becomes the epistemological-methodological centre of gravity of his system and of derived, critical, social philosophies. For Hegel, the supposition of the historicity of things functions epistemologically to define the possibility of Absolute Knowledge in terms of a generalized anthropological capability for reflection upon the completed historical process of man's formation. For Hegel's critical successors, the tacit (or explicit) claim to universality (the claim to represent a common anthropological interest) became the brittle ideological illusion projected by every theory of knowledge and representation of reality. In the light of Hegel's contribution to the progress of the theory of science and of systematic logic, it has become increasingly apparent that the logic of universal history and the methodological

foreclosure of the anthropological question are inseparable moments of the same existential crisis of alienation and domination.

Finally, it has been argued, in an attempt to rescue Hegel's contribution to the emergence of a critical social philosophy from hasty negative conclusions, that his substantive political theory was always grounded in a self-conscious opposition to Natural Law theories of the State. Moreover, it has been suggested that if between Hegel and Marx a less than unilinear theoretical development occurred, then it is in the context of the theory of the state that Marxist theory has in some sense regressed, naturalistically. At least, it seems indisputable that with Marx's disparagement of the economic naivety, perhaps economic complacency, of Hegel's political philosophy, there began a tendency to undervalue the critical element - the antinominalism and the rationalism - in the Hegelian problematic, and to condemn Hegel as a political reactionary on economic grounds alone; without regard for the conjunctural constraints that operated to delimit the horizon of Hegel's historical consciousness. (For this insight, this interpretation is indebted primarily to Lukacs). More than this, however, it is not unlikely that a summary dismissal of Hegel, which neglects to acknowledge his determination to adduce criteria that would serve a political science able to grasp the phenomenological and anthropological shape of things, also

leads to mystification of the methodological foundations of Marxist social theory; which after all begins in a contrary evaluation of the 'concrete universal' extolled by the Hegelian theory of the state: (i.e. which begins with a great deal, in epistemological and methodological terms, already settled.)

Notes

1. Habermas, Jürgen, Theory and Practice, London, Heinemann, 1974, pps. 150-51.
2. Benjamin, Walter, 'Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian', in The Essential Frankfurt School Reader, A. Arato and E. Gebhart, (eds), Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1978, p 244.
3. Habermas, Jürgen, op. cit., pps. 274 ff.
4. Ibid., pps. 281 ff.
5. Avineri, Shlomo, Hegel's Theory of the Modern State, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1972, p 10.
6. Lukacs, Georg, The Young Hegel, London, Merlin Press, 1975, p 62. See also: Avineri, Shlomo, op. cit., Chapter Two.
7. Ibid., p 402.
8. Ibid., p 75.
9. Ibid., p 75.
10. Ibid., pps. 76-77.
11. Ibid., p 76.
12. Ibid., pps. 76-77.
13. Ibid., pps. 331-2.
14. Ibid., p 332.
15. Ibid., p 332.
16. Ibid., p 333.
17. Avineri, Shlomo, op. cit., p x.
18. Ibid., p 178.
19. Ibid., p 178.
20. Ibid., p 180.
21. Ibid., p 185.
22. Ibid., p 184.
23. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973 p 458.

24. Habermas, Jürgen, op. cit.
25. Ibid., p 93.
26. Ibid., p 94.
27. Ibid., p 95.
28. Ibid., p 71.
29. Avineri, Shlomo, op. cit., p 68.
30. Ibid., p 85.
31. Habermas, Jürgen, op. cit., p 122.
32. Ibid., p 121.
33. Ibid., p 130.
34. Ibid., p 130.
35. Ibid., p 130.
36. Ibid., p 126.
37. Ibid., p 139.
38. Habermas almost renounces his earlier position, the psychologistic one, when he says: "It hardly seems convincing to me to interpret purely psychologically the insensitivity of the old Hegel and his Cassandra-like writings, which seem to correspond so little with the self-assurance of a system of the self-conscious spirit, in which reality has formed itself into reason. And if it is only, as Rosen Zweig feels, pure fear of revolution by which Hegel was driven at this time, still there is no reason for suddenly separating this attitude toward current political issues from his systematic conceptions." Ibid., p 189. In rejecting 'purely' psychological interpretation, however, Habermas still unfortunately puts too much store by psychological plausibility which he continues to seek but not to find in the context of the paradox of Hegel's critical beginnings and his (supposedly) irreducibly reactionary political reputation.
39. Ibid., p 178.
40. Ibid., p 184.
41. Ibid., p 185.
42. Marcuse, Herbert, Reason and Revolution, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, p 180. See also: Lukacs, op. cit., p 461.

43. Lukacs, Georg, op. cit., p 404.

44. Ibid., p 153.

45. Ibid., p 457.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FEUERBACHIAN PERIOD

There is ample evidence that the problems of Marxist philosophy hinge on a distinction between economic determinism and economic reductionism. So that Marx's failure, according to his critics, is that he propounded a monocausal theory of history, whose application reduces every human action to the status of an effect of a sordid economic motive. In methodological terms, the main difficulties are thought to lie in the area of developing viable theories of ideology and politics from the wreckage of an economically determinist problematic. On the other hand, in a more positive evaluation, Marx's monumental achievement inheres in the forcefulness of those arguments that impressed upon the reluctant contemporary consciousness the reality of its complicity in a barbaric mode of economic production, upon which its existence depended. In this alternative interpretation, Marx performed a salutary theoretical reduction: in concentrating upon the role of economic practice, he demonstrated, against the prevailing logic of science, that society had an historical rather than a natural foundation; and he was able to represent the ensemble of economic practices, the economic life of capitalist society, as an intrinsically divisive and dehumanizing process, rather than as a unitary, integrative event in the evolution of the human species. Viewed as economic reductionism, Marx's work becomes an adequate model for social criticism at

later stages of historical development. The methodological problems surrounding Marxist philosophy at this later stage are not thought to be essential to Marx's discourse, at all, but to arise from the need to take account of altered circumstances in which the fundamental shape of socio-existential problems has changed.

Making headway with an understanding of Marx's contribution to the philosophy of practice depends upon clarification of the distinction between economic determinism and economic reductionism. Where this distinction is blurred, indecision about Marx's theoretical and methodological protocols is inevitable. It is therefore convenient to turn to the work of Alfred Schmidt, for whom it is imperative to appreciate the methodological importance of Marx's "second appropriation of Hegel, especially the Hegel of The Science of Logic." ¹ Equally, so Schmidt's investigations suggest, it is important to recognize that before that event, before the second encounter with Hegel, the decisive influence on Marx's thinking was that of Feuerbach not Hegel. Effectively, instead of an 'epistemological break' that signals a transition from ideology to science, Schmidt discerns a methodological watershed that separates an earlier period of "historical materialism" ² from the period of the critique of political economy. Not that these phases are thought to be totally unrelated or only negatively related; but the critique of political economy is held to supersede the social theory

of the Feuerbachian apprenticeship. Which means that in Schmidt's estimation the critique of political economy avoids certain naturalistic excesses attributable to Feuerbach's influence.

For Schmidt, Marx's initial encounter with Hegel was overshadowed by the presence of Feuerbach. So that the first inversion of the idealist dialectic reiterated the point that to discuss human history as a "phenomenology of spirit" is to denigrate man. For Marx and for Engels, following Feuerbach, Hegelian idealism projected the Philosophic Idea as Subject and Man as Predicate of historical action, when in Nature the inverse relation obtained. The starting point for Marxist philosophy was the materialistic critique that inverted the Essence/Existence distinction as it appeared in Hegel: a materialism that celebrated Nature over Spirit and the Existence of the human species over the Essential Historical Victory of Reason.

There was no mere reiteration of Feuerbach, however. All along, Marx and Engels are understood to have taken a dialectical view of nature. Schmidt explains their critique of Feuerbachian naturalism as follows: "Nature as a whole was for Feuerbach an unhistorical homogenous substratum, while the essence of the Marxist critique was the dissolution of this homogeneity in a dialectic of Subject and Object. Nature was for Marx both an element of human practice and the totality of everything that exists."³

This makes Marx's position more Hegelian than Feuerbach's: Marx unlike Feuerbach conceived of nature as the metabolic relation of man at work. Marx more thoroughly inverted Hegel because he attempted to overturn the idealist dialectic as well as the ontological structure of the philosophy of history.

But the Feuerbachian influence still proved decisive. In The Paris Manuscripts, Marx acknowledged that the Hegelian dialectic as it had appeared in the Phenomenology of Spirit had, if only abstractly, grasped the constitutive role of labour in history; and until the 1850's it seems that Marx thought that his materialist inversion of the dialectic of labour coincided with the end of philosophy. As Schmidt conveys Marx's attitude to Hegel at that stage: "The indissoluble distinction between concept and reality was indeed recognized by Hegel, but at the same time devalued by being allocated to the Subject side as mere thought determination."⁴ In other words, Marx both conceded that Hegel had sought systematically to explicate the dialectical progression of the categories of the Ego as well as those of Objective Reason; and he resolved immediately to explicate the inverse relationship, the more radical dialectic of man and nature. At which point, in an over-reaction to Hegel, the Feuerbachian factor came into play. At which point, in other words, Marxism's methodological problems originate. Because, in fact, the problems of "positivistic" or "scientific" Marxism originate not

with the base-superstructure model of society, where they really re-emerge and congregate; but they begin with that initial commitment to abandon philosophy in order to concentrate exclusively upon study of the Objective Dialectic of History. The explicit intention of the early period was to break completely with philosophy and to proceed to reorganize social relations. There was an abrupt renunciation of the abstract in favour of the concrete, a denunciation of theory in favour of practice. Naturalism insinuated itself into historical materialism in the methodological silence that supposed the sufficiency of empirical observation. The magnitude of the ensuing problem is captured by Adorno when he says: "from the primacy of practical reason it was always only a step to hatred of theory."⁵

According to Schmidt, then, the key to Marx's early work was the relation to Feuerbach, not the relation to Hegel. Marx rejected Hegel's idealism on grounds derived from Feuerbach's naturalistic anthropology. At the same time, Marx rejected Feuerbach's ontological conception of nature in favour of a dialectic of labour. The methodological result was a focus upon the objective dialectic of material production that involved a constant, perhaps ineradicable tendency to economic determinism in the philosophy of history. In Schmidt's judgment, Engels never did get out of the Feuerbachian problematic. A fact, allegedly, demonstrated by the latter's elaboration of a dialectic

of nature as the final position for Marxism.⁶

The Problem of Economic Determinism

The problem of economic determinism, as it asserts itself in the methodological controversies that surround Marx's writings, boils down, in the end, to concern about the apparent strangulation at birth of theories of ideology and politics that postulate the existence of regions of experience that are autonomous with regard to the economic substratum. Economically determinist thinking denies the possibility of distinctly political or ideological types of social practice. And in the shadow of Feuerbach's influence, Marx's first critique of Hegel's essentialism appears to argue, fairly straightforwardly, that ideological and political phenomena must not be taken as, in themselves, proper or worthy targets of social criticism.

The German Ideology gave expression to the vehement anti-idealism of the early Marx. The avowed aim of that work was to "debunk and discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality."⁷ The German Ideology ridiculed the bottomless scepticism of the day which expended its energies in wrestling with "shadows of reality," with "the ideological reflexes and echoes of the life-process," instead of with reality and the life-processes of society, themselves. Marx and Engels alluded to a "revolution beside which the French Revolution was child's play."⁸ They described, tongue-in-cheek, how: "Principles ousted one

another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of-rapidity, and in the three years 1942-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries." In deadly earnest, nevertheless, The German Ideology described those armchair critics who sought to revolutionize the realm of ideas, as the "staunchest conservatives," by virtue of the fact that every precondition of their intellectual activity was left intact, while they amused themselves in a philosophic side-show.

In opposition to the idealist faction, Marx and Engels proposed to elaborate a practical philosophy with concrete presuppositions. They said: "The premisses from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premisses 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." ¹⁰ In effect, they presupposed and extrapolated from the dialectic of labour: the actuality of a process of interaction between men organized in relations of production that addressed definite historically constituted material conditions of existence.

The weakness of the materialist dialectic cannot be said to lie in its lack of explanatory power. The problem is not sociological but epistemological or methodological. In fact, the capacity of this theory of society and history to

explain cultural phenomena and human relations, has tended to conceal, or to pre-empt, criticism of its philosophic crudity. Epistemologically, it seems to excuse itself from an auto-critique by contending that its presuppositions are life forms, concrete circumstances, rather than rational forms. This contention, however, reveals it to be the most extreme objectivism, in methodological terms. It offers a mechanical, unilateral and monocausal account of the origin of ideas in general, and by implication of its own presuppositions. As a philosophy of practice it is also radically deficient in this respect: in that disparagement of the emancipatory potential of intellectual activity, and ascription of historical significance to material circumstances, alone, implies fatalism.

An excellent example of the cogency of the sociology of The German Ideology and of the narrowness of its philosophic interest is provided by its criticism of Kant. "The state of Germany at the end of the last century is fully reflected" says Marx "in Kant's Critik der Practischen Vernunft. While the French bourgeoisie, by means of the most colossal revolution that history has ever known, was achieving domination and conquering the Continent of Europe, while the already politically emancipated English bourgeoisie was revolutionizing industry and subjugating India politically, and all the rest of the world commercially, the impotent German burghers did not get

any further than "good will." Kant was satisfied with "good will" alone, even if it remained entirely without result, and he transferred the realization of this good will, the harmony between it and the needs and impulses of individuals to the world beyond. Kant's good will fully corresponds to the impotence, depression and wretchedness of the German burghers, whose petty interests were never capable of developing into the common, natural interests of a class, and who were, therefore, constantly exploited by the bourgeoisie of all other nations.¹¹ There is no inkling here that as Lukacs and Goldmann, in particular, have demonstrated, modern dialectics began with Kant. Nor is there an indication that the economic and political impotence of the German bourgeoisie might have served to provoke, in a way that pre-figured socialism, not a feeble-minded recourse to philosophy but an embittered attempt to theorize or rationalize the negativity of existential conditions, prior to the inauguration of a programme of reform. This formulation does not even suggest that Germany awaited the arrival of a new kind of knowledge, knowledge of a more practical kind, like political economy. Germany is required to wait until objective historical forces gather sufficient momentum to break it loose from the past.

Marx's renunciation of philosophy and disparagement of theoretical practice is particularly pronounced in The Poverty of Philosophy. There, in view of the subsequent

development of his thought, Marx's invective against Proudhon assumes a certain irony. Marx summarizes Proudhon's method as follows: "How does M. Proudhon distinguish himself from other economists? And what part does Hegel play in M. Proudhon's political economy?....."

Economists express the relations of bourgeois production, the division of labour, credit, money etc., as fixed immutable, external categories. M. Proudhon, who has these ready made categories before him, wants to explain to us the act of formation, the genesis of these categories, principles, laws, ideas, thoughts.¹² This exercise was regarded by Marx, at that time, as preposterous. Nothing seemed more absurd to him than to seek to explain historical conditions by reference to a series of ideas, to explain history as an essentially intellectual or mental process. These ideas had to be explained, according to Marx, as expressions of material conditions. When Marx says, in exasperation with Proudhon's idealism, that: "Machinery is no more an economic category than the bullock that draws the plough," he means to replace a misguided emphasis on conceptual determination and on the constitutive role of economic categories, with an unblinkered focus upon the movement of actual power relations. In equating machinery and "the bullock that draws the plough"¹³ and in contrasting these with ideological constructions, Marx is emphasizing the primacy of life-forms over rational forms, of reality over concept, of existence over essence. With

this emphasis, however, there was a constant tendency to reduce the role of critique to an analysis of economic conditions, and to conceive of history as a process governing the natural evolution of life forms.

Economic determinism is an especially troublesome aspect of Marx's theory of politics. Again, as with the theory of ideology in its earliest formulation, Marx's politics denied the determinacy of the State: i.e. of given political institutions. This extremism, too, originated in a Feuerbachian critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. The decisive factor was that Marx not only conducted a thorough critique of Hegel, he also situated himself polemically in opposition to Hegel. Two consequences followed. Firstly, as rigorously as Hegel portrayed the State as the objective representation of Reason as the "concrete universal," so, just as emphatically, Marx construed the State as the institutionalized misrepresentation of material conditions. Later, notably in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, this basic evaluation of the State was resurrected by Marx to provide a framework for his resoundingly successful substantive analysis. Secondly, however, Marx's initial Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State, became the pretext for a theoretical evacuation of political theory and a determination to find the truth of political society in the economic relations of civil society. In the Feuerbachian period, Marx's political analysis began in his resolve to

look away from the hallucinatory forms of constitutional politics to the realities of economic conflict.

Marx's criticism of Hegel's political philosophy depends almost entirely upon two related arguments drawn from Feuerbach. Firstly, it is argued that Hegel perpetrates a theoretical sleight of hand when he represents the Philosophical Idea as Subject of the political process, and regards the political climate and institutional structure as predicates of the Idea. Secondly, it is argued that the position of command over Civil Society, enjoyed by the State (rationalized and legitimated by Hegel), is indicative of a condition of political alienation. Theoretically, Marx aims to unmask Hegel's Philosophy of Right as a retrospective rationalization; practically, Marx's purpose is to highlight the need for complete abolition of a condition of alienation: a condition condoned by Hegel.

Together these arguments are deployed to attack Hegel's essentialism: to undermine the proposition that the State exists as the concrete and universal expression of freedom. When he maintains that the State is the "concrete universal," the realization of freedom, Hegel means that in the State all particular interests are reconciled in the general interest; or that the State has the power to mediate all particular interests, in its role as representative of the general interest. According to Marx,

however, the identity of particular and general interests postulated by Hegel is a consequence of an abstract consideration of the "essential relationship between these spheres."¹⁴ Nevertheless, Marx insists, the actual relations of domination and subordination that obtain between Civil Society and the State are, everywhere, tacitly but necessarily, acknowledged by Hegel. In particular, Marx points to the fact that, for Civil Society, the State is, in Hegel's analysis, above all, the principle of "external necessity."¹⁵

The identity of State and Civil Society proposed by Hegel is, for Marx, entirely the product of essentialism, which always involves the tyranny of the Idea; in this case the tyranny of the State as concrete representative of Transcendent Reason. This identity depends, in other words, upon the reduction of Civil Society, and its interests, to dimensions determined a prioristically (i.e. arbitrarily) by the State. This identity depends upon a series of inversions of real relationships. For example, setting the record straight, Marx says: "The family and civil society are the preconditions of the State, they are the true agents; but in speculative philosophy it is the reverse."¹⁶ "The Idea is subjectivized,"¹⁷ and real human subjects become manifestations of the Idea. This theoretical chicanery masks historical practice in which: "The ordinary empirical world is not governed by its own mind but by a mind alien to it."¹⁸ For Hegel's philosophy

and for the State that it eulogizes, the ruling principle is a rational essence. For Marx, this essentialism has the tragic corollary that as far as Civil Society and its component populations are concerned: "The goal of their existence is not that existence itself."¹⁹

The Philosophy of Right extolled the Constitutional Monarchy. Marx's critique discusses how that variant of the State (despite the eminent compatibility of that political form with Hegel's essentialist mode of thought) serves only to perpetuate the antagonism of State and Civil Society. The Monarch, Marx argues, satisfies the need engendered internally by the Philosophy of Right to personify the mythical Subjectivity of the State. However, says Marx: "If Hegel had begun by positing real subjects as the basis of the State he would not have found it necessary to subjectivize the State in a mystical way."²⁰ Subsequently, he need not have resorted to, or been seduced by, the convenience of the Monarchy as a political principle.

However, the sovereignty of the Monarch, even of a constitutional Monarch, is all too real. The sovereignty of the Monarch, the fact that sovereignty exists, only as personified in him,²¹ "is not simply an illusion." The representative status of the Crown, even the illusory power of the person who is constitutionally the sovereign power, exists as an expression of the political subjugation of the people. Constitutional Monarchy provokes the question:

"Sovereignty of the Monarch or of the people ?". Which, in a constitutional monarchy is the chimerical form of sovereignty, and which is real ? Marx answers by saying that the Monarchy is the real and at the same time a false form of sovereignty. In its reality, it satisfies only the crudest materialist criterion. Sovereignty is embodied in the person of the sovereign, so that his power to physically reproduce himself becomes the State's highest principle. As a false form of sovereignty, says Marx, Constitutional Monarchy apes democracy. It is an essentialist solution, whose legitimacy inheres totally in its claim to represent the people. In Marx's judgment, an existentialist judgment: "Democracy is the solution to the riddle of every constitution. In it we find the constitution founded on its true ground: real human beings and the real people; not merely implicitly and in essence, but in existence and reality. The constitution is thus posited as the people's own creation. The constitution is in appearance what it is in reality: the free creation of man." ²³

The Philosophy of Right defends the convention that delegates executive functions to the civil service bureaucracy. Hegel suggested that a professional bureaucracy, not bound to civil society by economic interest, would be able to perform, impersonally, functions that establish the identity of particular and general interest. Marx, however, feared that in the bureaucracy,

the state would become the private property of its
functionaries.²⁴

Moreover, the bureaucracy, in Marx's eyes, gives objective form to the State's hostility to Civil Society. "The antithesis between the state and civil society is thus established."²⁵ The State administers Civil Society, in accordance with its interests, through the bureaucracy. The identity of State and Civil Society, the false identity in Marx's estimation, lies in the equal commitment of the "illusory universal class" and of the particular interests of Civil Society to the principle of private property. Consequently, says Marx: "The identity he (Hegel) has established between civil society and the state is the identity of two hostile armies."²⁶

The Philosophy of Right accepts that the state legislature should be a representative assembly. For Marx, however, the representative role of the assembly, and its simultaneous subordination to the executive, proves only this, that: "The constitutional state is that form of the state in which the state interest, i.e. the real interest of the people, is present only formally."²⁷ What the representative system of government ensures is that: "The class of private citizens does not transform itself into a political class but enters into its political significance and efficacy as the class of private citizens."²⁸ Moreover: "The class distinctions of civil society thus become

established as political distinctions." This means, firstly, that the members of civil society are excluded from political society; and that they are represented in political society, or in the state only as members of the classes of civil society. More succinctly still, Marx argues that the constitution of the representative form of government: "expresses the idea that that civil society is in and for itself without any political significance."³⁰

Marx's conclusions here have enduring importance for the development of his thought. What conclusions did he draw then? Firstly, Marx contended that the identity of State and Civil Society postulated by Hegel was entirely spurious. On the contrary, he argued that Hegel had demonstrated that the relationship between these spheres in society was characterized by antagonism. More precisely still, Marx argued that the relation of Monarchy and People transposed and suppressed a fundamental contradiction between the principles of private property and wealth. The autonomy of the Monarch and his dominant position, what might be called the existence of a reified political power, represented the victory of the principle of private property and personal caprice over the productive power of Civil Society. This antagonism arose and was settled in favour of private property at the heart of the state itself. This was the significance of primogeniture, Marx said, since it mobilized the civil law against the idea that the family can hold property in common, and deemed

landed property, property par excellence, to be the inalienable private property of one individual.

Firstly, then, Marx argued that the State represented the estrangement of the wealth of Civil Society. Secondly, he concluded that: "the political state is an abstraction from civil society."³¹ He surmised that political society in its apparatus and practice amounted at best to a microcosm, at worst to a masquerade; either way, to a mere representation. This led him to the truly momentous judgment, in view of subsequent methodological developments, that: "civil society is the real political society."³²

In fact, there are two theories of politics in Marx's Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State. There is the methodological thesis that politics is that problematic defined by the negative relation of State and Civil Society. This is not a replica of the Hegelian position, but, not surprisingly, methodologically, it implies that analysis should concentrate, not upon the identity of opposites (as with Hegelian logic), but upon the contradiction suppressed and mystified in postulated identities. Thus, to a considerable and generally unacknowledged extent this early study of 1843 anticipates the protocols of the critique of the political economy. It does so in the sense that what distinguishes Marx's mature method is what Adorno calls a negative dialectics rather than a materialist dialectics. In the 1840's, however,

Marx was happier with the substantive theory of politics that emerged in the conclusion to The Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State. Methodologically, the decisive presuppositional factor was Feuerbach's (metaphysical) naturalism, which condemned the State as the concrete representative of alienation in political life, and which regarded the State as an unnecessary moment in the dialectic of labour. Following Feuerbach, then, Marx, at this earliest stage, abandoned the concept of politics that probes the negative mediation of state and civil society. Instead, Marx focussed upon the opposition of material forces in civil society. Unfortunately, subsequent neglect of the area of rational mediation, of the incongruence of political theory and political relations, of the disparity between constitutional law and the structure of political existence, led directly to economic determinism in social and political analysis. In a naturalistic framework, in the context of a wholly objective dialectic, mediation relates exclusively to the clash of physical forces in what is regarded as comprising the political arena in its entirety: that is, in civil society. Finally, at this point, the saturation of Marx's theory by Feuerbachian naturalism, and the attendant perception of the State as unnecessary, as determined unilaterally by contradictions specific to civil society; this naturalism prefigured Marx's conversion to a communist ideal, that urged the abolition of the state in practice.

The Naturalism of the Communist Manifesto

The legendary expression of Marx's naturalistic theory of politics is found in The Manifesto of the Communist Party. In fact, most of what is regarded as problematic in Marxist philosophy is stated starkly in The Communist Manifesto. To a considerable extent, that text can be read as an appendix to The Poverty of Philosophy, where the question of the relation of the Marxist to the Hegelian dialectic was resolved for the first time. More precisely still, the Manifesto can be read as an extrapolation from the quotation that closes The Poverty of Philosophy. The quotation, from George Sand, runs: "Combat or death: bloody struggle or extinction. It is thus that the question is inexorably put."³³

The central proposition of The Communist Manifesto is that historical processes have reduced or will reduce society in its capitalist stage of development to a simple dualism. Verbatim, it is stated that: "Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat."³⁴ The naturalistic fallacy insinuates itself in the proclaimed inevitability of the process of polarization, confrontation, conflict and liquidation of the forces of the bourgeoisie. "In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e. capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class developed."³⁵ Consequently, the familiar argument continues:

"What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own gravediggers. Its fate and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."³⁶ Already, the problem of a tendency to ontologize the historical relations of capital and labour presents itself.

Associated with the reduction in the direction of a polarized social ontology, is the precipitate obliteration of other axes of power. For example, feudal relations are declared to have been eradicated. The text maintains that: "the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder—they were burst asunder."³⁷ Subsequently it has been a matter of controversy whether a social formation can comprise more than one mode of production.³⁸ Similarly, as it dismisses the issue of feudal relations, The Communist Manifesto dismisses the national question. It says, in this connection: "National differences and antagonisms³⁹ between people are daily, more and more vanishing." Every determination of Statehood except the economic is judged to be of negligible importance: which is the essence of the the general and large problem of economism in political analysis.

In effect, politics is defined as the issue of property. Before that, however, more fundamentally, economic history is defined as the history of property relations. "For many

a decade past, the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule." In their conclusion, Marx and Engels contend that the "property question" is the "leading question." More often, it seems to be the only question, in the 1840's and, in particular, in the Manifesto. The political purpose of the proletariat is given in these terms: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie." And it seem that because, first and last, politics is conceived of as a contest about property; nothing more is articulated in the way of a political ideal or programme. Also, it is considered that the abolition of property relations would be tantamount to the end of politics as such. On this score the Manifesto says: "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another." Here, finally, the equation of politics with property relations has as its corollary ascription of a totally sinister role to the State. It leads to the notorious view according to which the "executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the

whole bourgeoisie."

Of course, the rhetorical excesses of The Manifesto of the Communist Party can be attributed to the political exigencies of the situation in which it was written. It can be regarded as an exhortation to revolutionary action that sacrifices theoretical rigour in its effort to communicate immediately, to inspire commitment and bolster morale. Its rampant economic determinism can be attributed to a desire not to tax a working class audience philosophically. However, it is not possible to find a more sophisticated theory of politics set out elsewhere, from which the Manifesto is, as it were, an abstract. There is no esoteric version: The Communist Manifesto is all there is. The text might have been measured to suit the immediate political need: political action. It may have owed its existence to political opportunism, rather than, in the first instance or directly, to philosophic conviction. This is an inconclusive argument, however. It is generally agreed that the long-run effect of economic determinism in Marxist political theory has been political passivity. In the short term, nevertheless, the Manifesto may have served to incite revolutionary fervour. In any case, it may have been expected to do so by its authors. It might also be argued, however, and more consistently, that The Communist Manifesto was less an exhortation, or a practical guide for revolutionaries, than a carefully considered theoretical intervention, that attempted to

conceptualize a political crisis as well as to supply the working class party with philosophic credentials, with self understanding. In addition it might be said that in this attempt, Marx and Engels applied all the intellectual resources at their disposal. In other words, it seems not unreasonable to interpret the Manifesto as representing a crystallization of Marx's position in 1847, and as the philosophical culmination of the Feuerbachian period. This interpretation has plausability, not least because the Manifesto propounds ideas that remain fundamental for Marx even in the period that follows, in what Schmidt calls "the second appropriation of Hegel." Latterly, they form a backdrop to the meticulous study of economic theory.

Among these central ideas is the conviction upon which Marx's materialist philosophy of history stands: that the "concrete universal," the agent through which the "truth" value of philosophy can be realized is the proletariat.⁴⁵ Methodologically, the Manifesto emphasizes the necessity to analyze and conceptualize the dialectic of labour, the disposition of the forces that promote and obstruct the proletariat. Marx decides in favour of the principle of wealth, for general economic emancipation, for the expansion of the forces of production, and he decides against the bourgeoisie because its interest is co-extensive with a certain level of the development of society's productive forces; a level at which the principle of private ownership predominates. For Marx, the political

rule of the bourgeoisie is inimical to the principle of social wealth. Nevertheless, insofar as Marx predicted the inevitable extinction of bourgeois relations of production he hampered the development of Marxist social theory with the doctrine of economic determinism. Subsequently, a voluminous literature has been produced that attempts to extricate Marxism from that problem.

Notes

1. Alfred Schmidt, History and Structure, Mass., The M.I.T. Press, 1981, p 61.
2. The concept of the 'epistemological break' is borrowed by Louis Althusser "from Gaston Bachelard to designate the mutation in the theoretical problematic contemporary with the foundation of a scientific discipline." See Louis Althusser, For Marx, London, N.L.B., 1977, p 32. By means of the concept of the 'epistemological break,' Althusser is concerned to distinguish Marx's scientific problematic from those which informed his earlier discourse: Feuerbach's anthropological problematic and Hegel's problematic of absolute idealism. See Louis Althusser, Reading Capital, London, New Left Books, 1970, p 33.
3. Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, London, N.L.B., 1971, p 27.
4. Ibid., p 26.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, Minima Moralia, London, N.L.B., 1979, p 88.
6. Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, p 191 and pps 57, 135, 166 and 189-92.
7. Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, The German Ideology, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1965, p 23.
8. Ibid., p 27.
9. Ibid., p 27.
10. Ibid., p 31. See also pp 37-38.
11. Ibid., p 207.
12. Marx, Karl, The Poverty of Philosophy, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1969, p 117.
13. Ibid., p 149.
14. Marx, Karl, Early Writings, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975, p 59.
15. Ibid., p 59.
16. Ibid., p 62.
17. Ibid., p 62.
18. Ibid., p 62.

19. Ibid., p 63.
20. Ibid., p 80.
21. Ibid., p 86.
22. Ibid., p 86.
23. Ibid., p 87.
24. Ibid., p 108.
25. Ibid., p 112.
26. Ibid., p 112.
27. Ibid., p 129.
28. Ibid., p 136.
29. Ibid., p 136.
30. Ibid., p 141.
31. Ibid., p 145.
32. Ibid., p 189.
33. Marx, Karl, The Poverty of Philosophy, p 197.
34. Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy, Lewis Feuer (ed), Glasgow, Fontana, 1969, p 49.
35. Ibid., p 55.
36. Ibid., p 61.
37. Ibid., p 54.
38. The tendency to construe Marx's theory as a social ontology that fully accounts for the objective possibilities of capitalist social relations represents one broad influential strand of Marxist scholarship. Two examples not given consideration in this study are: Lucio Colletti, Marxism and Hegel, London, N.L.B., 1973 and Istvan Meszaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation, London, Merlin Press, 1972. These studies, however, obscure a distinction between the ontological and the historical, that is held to be quite indispensable throughout this study. Nothing sums up the weakness of the ontological viewpoint better than Raymond Williams' comments on the concept of the economic 'base' in Marxist theory. See Raymond Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,' in N.L.R. 82 Nov-Dec, 1973.

39. Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy, p 67.
40. Ibid., p 54.
41. Ibid., p 82.
42. Ibid., p 69.
43. Ibid., p 70.
44. Ibid., p 51.
45. Marx, Karl, Early Writings, pps 256-257.

CHAPTER TWO

ANTONIO GRAMSCI AND THE THEORY OF THE
SUPERSTRUCTURE

The political philosophy of Antonio Gramsci comprises the prototypical attempt to rescue Marxism from economic determinism: the problem that erupted into historical materialism from Feuerbach's naturalism and which was formalized firstly in Engel's evolutionism; the problem that, from a methodological standpoint, threatens to leave Marxist social theory bereft of distinctive and irreducible theories of ideology and politics. Gramsci's importance derives from his acknowledgement of this difficulty and consists in his elaboration of the theory of hegemonic political practice as a possible solution. Subsequently, attempts to develop theories of ideology and politics in a Marxist framework have echoed Gramsci and only arguably improved on his position, methodologically.

Nicos Poulantzas, for example, entirely endorses Gramsci's interpretation of the theoretical impasse arrived at by materialist dogma. The problem, as Poulantzas transcribes it, is that: "No systematic theory of ideology in the C.M.P. (capitalist mode of production) is to be found in Capital, for the remarks on capitalist fetishism cannot claim this title, nor is there a theory of politics in it." In both the political and ideological regions, so seriously underdeveloped, Poulantzas locates his own work by emphasizing the uniqueness of Gramsci's contribution. To a considerable extent, Poulantzas may be understood to

situate himself, with Althusser, between Gramsci, on one side, and Marx, Engels and Lenin, on the other side. In any case, gesturing in the direction of Gramsci's effort to advance the Marxist theory of ideology, Poulantzas writes: "As opposed to science, ideology has the precise function of hiding the real contradictions and of reconstituting on an imaginary level a relatively coherent discourse which serves as the horizon of agent's experience; it does this by moulding their representations of their real relations and inserting these in the overall unity of the relations of a (social) formation." ² And he continues, immediately: "This is certainly the fundamental meaning of the ambiguous metaphor of 'cement' used by Gramsci to designate the function of ideology. Ideology which slides into every level of the social structure has the particular function of cohesion." ³ On the matter of ideology, too, as a substantiated system of relations, Poulantzas urges the point that: "As Gramsci clearly realized, ideology encompasses not merely scattered elements of knowledge, notions, etc., but also the whole process of symbolization, of mythical transposition, of 'taste,' 'style,' 'fashion,' i.e. of the 'way of life' in general." ⁴

With respect to Gramsci's part in the effort to reconstruct a Marxist theory of politics, Poulantzas is, if anything, more emphatic. There, in that context, he remarks: "The theory of the State and of political power has, with rare exceptions such as Gramsci, been neglected by Marxist

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thought. To which statement he adds: "The classic Marxist tradition of the theory of the State is principally concerned to show the repressive role of the State, in the strong sense of organized physical repression. There is only one notable exception, Gramsci, with his problematic⁶ of hegemony."

Poulantzas' own purpose is more academic in character than Gramsci's. It is to purge Gramsci of historicism, and to appropriate the concept of hegemony for structuralist Marxism. The criticism levelled at Gramsci is that as the basis of a "positive", political theory, as a programmatic statement, as theory with a direct practical intention, the hegemonic theory is profoundly suspect. This is because, says Poulantzas, it requires the working class party to adopt the tactics of the bourgeoisie, which given the radical divergence between their interests, may prove ruinous: "its success in the theory of the working class is⁷ exceptionally suspect." In Poulantzas' view, the trouble is that Gramsci's historicism leads him to mistake the Jacobin party for the embryonic Communist party.⁸ This continuity is mythical and would be irrelevant from a structuralist perspective for which the decisive factor in conjunctural analysis is the actual composition of forces.

However, in spite of the fact that Poulantzas differentiates his position from Gramsci's by rejecting the latter's historicism, Poulantzas does not in fact offer a

methodological criticism of Gramsci. The alleged misconception about the significance of the Jacobin party in the French Revolution, and the related misgivings about the wisdom of Gramsci's practical or tactical pronouncements, amount to no more than a substantive criticism and a conjecture. In fact, on the most general methodological level, where the question of how to conceptualize political and ideological realities is concerned, Poulantzas slips into Gramsci's shoes. This is so: firstly, in the sense that the general methodological problem of overcoming economic determinism recedes as the more analytic-theoretical difficulty of extricating the concept of hegemony from its historicist background takes precedence; secondly, and consequently, because Poulantzas achieves no more decisive victory over the threat of economic determinism. For this reason, having made reference to Poulantzas' acknowledgement of Gramsci, it is appropriate to look more closely at the Gramscian theory.

Gramsci's Problematic

Gramsci's purpose and point of reference were less abstract, more urgently defined by practical considerations than those of Poulantzas. What Gramsci demanded of Marxist theory was that it should supply, after World War I, an understanding of the structure of the Italian State. Unfortunately, this was something it proved unable, straightforwardly, to do. Italy, in the first quarter of the 20th century and beyond, did not conform to the

pattern of development of the leading industrial countries. The State appeared not to be dominated by the interest of capital: political life had not crystallized into a bipolar class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat; traditional social forms had evidently not been dissolved and transformed by the inexorable expansion of capitalist production. Instead, economic development was uneven: localized in the North and constrained by considerable national and international forces. The feudal aristocracy, the military caste and the Church remained influential at every level in society; and fascism rather than socialism or communism emerged as the victorious, popular and radical, ideology. The account given of the composition of forces in modern society, in The Manifesto of the Communist Party, was irrelevant to the Italian experience. For Gramsci, the theoretical matter-at-hand was to accommodate Marxism to the study of specific historical circumstances. Principally, there was a need to conceive of the possibility of social revolution without reliance upon a presupposition of economic revolution. Without the capability, Gramsci appreciated, of understanding the field of conflict (the Italian State) as an arena in which the preponderant social forces were not economically progressive and did not represent themselves as economic forces, there existed no possibility of elaborating a rational revolutionary practice. In other words, Gramsci was acutely aware that Marxism had to undergo

theoretical change before it could conceptualize the reality of ideology and politics in Italy in the 1920's.

Methodologically, Gramsci has but one thought: that to explain every social phenomenon, causally, by reference to a determinate economic momentum, is to fail to produce historical explanation. His exasperation with economic determinism in Marxist social theory explodes on numerous occasions. He says, for example, in typical fashion: "The claim, presented as an essential postulate of historical materialism, that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented and expounded as an immediate expression of the structure, must be contested in theory as primitive infantilism."⁹ Even more scathingly and bluntly, if that is possible, he says: "The search for "dirty Jewish" interests has sometimes led to monstrous and comical errors of interpretation, which have consequently reacted negatively on the prestige of the original ideas. It is therefore necessary to combat economism not only in the theory of historiography, but also and especially in the theory and practice of politics."¹⁰ Economism is firmly denounced as theoretical and practical wrongheadedness, even as simple-mindedness.

In Stuart Hall's estimation, Gramsci's philosophic stature derives from his success in re-thinking the base-super-structure metaphor,¹¹ which is the algebra and geometry of economistic theory. It can be argued, more emphatically,

however, that the sole purpose of Gramsci's methodological investigations was to completely discredit and finally dispense with the legendary metaphor. Reluctance to accept this interpretation, the tendency to refer euphemistically to the fate of the metaphor at Gramsci's hands, may be sentimental, since that figure has certainly played its part in the class struggle. Alternatively, it may survive on practical grounds, since although it is a well-worn piece of equipment it is still not entirely useless.

Nevertheless, Gramsci's attitude to the base-superstructure model was uncompromisingly negative. He strove to dissociate his position from the orthodox one, as it were, on two distinct locations. Nevertheless, at each site, his writing betrays a desperate anxiety to combat economism without entering into direct conflict with fundamental Marxist principle; and this anxiety may explain the discrepancy between the depth of his opposition to the orthodoxy and the apparent similarity between his theory of society and the base-superstructure model, a similarity which has led many commentators to believe that Gramsci rethought or re-worked that conception.

The first location on which Gramsci confronted economism was the classic text by Bukharin, the Theory of Historical¹²
Materialism: A Popular Manual of Marxist Sociology. Here, Gramsci thought it necessary to drive a wedge between Marx and Engels and to argue that Bukharin's School was more

faithful to Engel's interpretation than to Marx's intention. For example, Gramsci says: "the question of the relationship of homogeneity between the two founders of the philosophy of praxis (Marx and Engels) should be posed."¹³ It is suggested that the facts of early co-authorship and of Engels' later role as Marx's literary executor, may have provided the ingredients of a myth that proclaims that Marx and Engels had one intellectual life between them. Gramsci recognized that Engels' not altogether identical position may have been projected onto Marx. A cautionary note to this effect is contained in the statement that runs: "It has been forgotten that in the case of a very common expression (historical materialism) we should put the accent on the first term - 'historical' - and not on the second which is of metaphysical origin."¹⁴ This can only really be construed as an indictment of the metaphysical materialism associated, in the first instance with Engels, especially as set out in Anti-Duhring. It is the metaphysic associated secondly with Bukharin's School. Against this current, Gramsci develops his historicism, as a neglected aspect of Marx's thought.

The second location for Gramsci's work of demolition was the text of Marx's Preface to A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy. According to the rather thoughtless explanation offered by the editors of the Prison Notebooks, the text in question looms large, because it was one of the few fragments of Marx available to Gramsci in his

imprisonment. Much more pertinently, however, in spite of the existence of similar pronouncements in The German Ideology, the Preface includes the source of the base-superstructure metaphor. It contains the famous passage to the effect that: "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of the material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."¹⁵

Gramsci obviously felt compelled to return repeatedly to this Preface because it was here that he encountered a major obstacle to his theoretical purpose: which was to dissolve (it was never a question of revision) and move beyond the restriction imposed by the deterministic formula presented there; without entering into contradiction with Marx himself. In a preliminary way it may be said that Gramsci's reading of the Preface was principally concerned to shift attention from the lines on the relationship

between base and superstructure, in the direction of another, methodologically, more important observation, in whose light the apparently crushing finality of the deterministic construction is precisely qualified. For Gramsci, the rational kernel of the Preface is the instruction to those studying social revolution and its portents, which advises that: "it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic - in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."¹⁶ In effect, Gramsci suggests, with his usual delicacy, that when the material supports of Marx's early political optimism have evaporated it remains absolutely imperative to retain the methodological insight that the material conditions of social existence stand in contradiction with, and persist as a concrete indictment of, the ideological forms in which that reality presents itself (in a variety of mediations) to consciousness.

In the end, Gramsci's references backward to the metaphor signify the discontinuation of a line of thought. In the Althusserian terminology, they indicate a caesura, a break, a rupture, though the violence of this imagery conveys a misconception of Gramsci's style. It should be enough when considering Gramsci's relation to Marx to repeat after Adorno that: "the decisive differences between

philosophers have always consisted in nuances" and to re-emphasize that Gramsci's efforts were occasioned by another historical crisis. But the Althusserian language is more vivid. There should, in any case, be no doubt that the base-superstructure model is exactly what Gramsci refused of Marxist thought.

In fact, Gramsci repudiated that hackneyed metaphor not once but twice: he found it unconvincing as the essential truth of a theory of social structure and he rejected it because it excluded an historical perspective on the composition of social forces. As a theory of social structure, it was viewed as the mainspring of economic thinking; it was a conception which condoned and encouraged neglect of the independent question of the generation and reproduction of what are referred to as the 'superstructures.' As a theory of history, on the other hand, the base-superstructure cliché exists in a state of innocence. Correspondingly, there are two elements in Gramsci, two substitutions that make the old terminology redundant. Firstly, there is the element recognized by the structuralist Marxists, the theme of the autonomy of the superstructures. Secondly, there is the theme of the 'historical bloc,': the perception of 'the base' as process, to acknowledge Raymond Williams.¹⁸ The concept of hegemony incorporates both elements. More properly, since Gramsci offers something more comprehensive and something less precise than a concept, these elements in combination

comprise the analytic secret of Gramsci's theory of society: in which society is conceived as the realization of a hegemonic politics.

Firstly, then, Gramsci reconceptualized social structure. Each of the 'superstructural' domains is defined in terms of a specific contradiction. It was this exactitude that became the (hidden) principle of the autonomy of the superstructures. The more important (at least, the less familiar, and the more central) innovation; or the clarification with most far reaching consequences was that made with respect to the concept of ideology. Chantal Mouffe has argued this point. She says: "if Gramsci's hegemony were limited to political leadership it would only differ from Lenin's concept in that Gramsci does not restrict its use to the strategy of the proletariat, but also applies it to the bourgeoisie."¹⁹ Instead of this, however, she says: "the Leninist conception of hegemony is doubly enriched: firstly its extension to the bourgeoisie and then the addition of a new and fundamental dimension (since it is through this that unity at the political level will be realized), that of intellectual and moral direction."²⁰ Gramsci demonstrates, says Chantal Mouffe, that if it is correct to interpret economic life as mediated by politics, it is equally correct to expect political life to be mediated by ideology. For a hegemonic politics the key question becomes: "how can one forge genuine ideological unity between different social groups

in such a way as to make them unite to a single political
subject ?"²¹

Obviously, the foregoing analysis is substantially incontestable. It still fails to do justice to Gramsci, however, insofar as it omits to acknowledge his successful differentiation between the levels of political and ideological analysis. In particular, there is no recognition that Gramsci designated the ideological in terms of the antinomy of consciousness and social being. This is the significance of Gramsci's shift of focus in reading Marx's Preface to A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy. That text enunciates the principles in whose terms Gramsci's continuity and discontinuity with Marx must be understood; since just as firmly as the base-superstructural model is renounced, so, just as enthusiastically, is the necessary distinction between consciousness and social being embraced as a reliable point of departure.

Not only does that contradiction between social being and consciousness provide for the specificity of the ideological level of analysis, but the principle "that men acquire consciousness of structural conflicts on the level of
²²ideologies" has an epistemological value, for Gramsci. This is a particularly important emphasis in the light of Habermas' damaging criticism that in Marx (and so in Marxism), the subjective dialectic, the dialectic of

consciousness is totally eclipsed by the dialectic of labour. In Habermas's judgment: "Marx did not adopt an epistemological perspective in developing his conception of the history of the species as something that has to be comprehended materialistically." ²³ Now although this criticism is in a sense incontrovertible (in the sense that Marx insisted on an economically reductive mode of social analysis), yet Gramsci promises to rescue an epistemological rationale where Habermas finds a fundamental fault; and Gramsci is able to explain the possibility of cogent criticism of material conditions even in the absence of solid methodological (i.e. scientific) principles.

The epistemological point that Gramsci wishes to make, is this: "The starting point of any critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is..... as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces without leaving an inventory." ²⁴ It is a conception of the basis of theory in the capacity to conceptualize the impositions of social existence and in an ability to penetrate and refuse ready-made nostrums that naturalize and legitimize these exigencies of social being. Gramsci stresses the contingency of intellectual development upon the need to abjure the general invitation to identify with received formulae in theory and practice; which simply endorse the persistence of the merely existent. Gramsci warns in this connection: "Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously

"born" in each individual brain: they have had a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion - a group of men, or a single individual even, which has developed them and presented them in the political form of current reality." ²⁵ The individual therefore finds himself, characteristically, to begin with, pre-theoretically, possessed by ideas that misrepresent his own experience, subjugate and subvert his own interests and invest him with alien needs. The individual is posited in society as a being divided against himself. This is how Gramsci conceptualizes the condition of the empirical subject: "The active man-in-the-mass," he says "has a practical activity, but no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world insofar as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. But this verbal conception is not without consequences. It holds together a specific social group, it influences moral conduct and the direction of will, with varying efficacy but often powerfully enough to produce a situation in which the contradictory state of consciousness does not permit of any

action, any decision or any choice, and produces a condition of moral and political passivity."²⁶

To some extent, undoubtedly, Chantal Mouffe captures the sociological meaning of Gramsci's position where she presents the hegemonic theory of ideology as envisioning a moral and intellectual contest for the minds of the people. But there is also in her interpretation an Althusserian form of condescension which suggests that Gramsci offered only a half-baked notion, available only in a "practical state."²⁷ However, the Althusserian structuralist approach, which is concerned primarily to reconstitute the Marxist theory of the superstructures, actually misses the epistemological significance of Gramsci's intervention. It fails to do justice to Gramsci's claim that: "the political development of the concept of hegemony represents a great philosophical advance as well as a political-practical one."²⁸ Epistemologically, Gramsci poses the question of the formation of the subject of historical knowledge in conjunction with the substantive political question concerning the formation of the superstructures; and his theory of ideology thrives upon the simplicity of his articulation of these issues. For Gramsci, in fact, the philosophical 'problem of knowledge' and the sociological problem of the formation of superstructures are microscopic and macroscopic perspectives on the pervasive antinomy of consciousness and social being.

There are at least two major Gramscian contributions to the theory of ideology. Firstly, the neglected point that: "the choice and the criticism of a conception of the world is also a political matter."²⁹ This emphasis pre-figures the most avant-garde standpoint for which all discursive events are embroiled in a politics of signification, in which every communicative act is a signifying practice.³⁰ Secondly, there is the complementary point that: "philosophical activity is not to be conceived solely as the "individual" elaboration of systematically coherent concepts, but also and above all as a cultural battle to transform the popular "mentality."³¹ Which is a second factor. The Gramscian theory of ideology makes these two points simultaneously: that criticism must explore the question of the transformation of consciousness and of the reorganization of social structure, and must acknowledge that there are two variables in any study of ideological forms.

Gramsci's theory of social structure proceeds with a similar analytic clarity on the political plane. There, the base-superstructure relation is replaced by the antinomy of state and civil society. Even here, Gramsci proceeds circumspectly, however, as though constantly measuring the distance between his own speculation and Marx's position. To begin with, Gramsci insists that the distinction between state and civil society is methodological, not real: "in actual reality civil society

and state are one and the same."³² But with this precautionary note Gramsci once again renounces the base-superstructure model. With this disclaimer, too, which quietly denounces ontological thinking, Gramsci separates himself from the neo-Gramscians Poulantzas and Althusser, whose³³ determination to redeem the base-superstructure model has been appositely described³⁴ by Laclau as elaboration of a "metaphysic of instances." Alternatively, perhaps, they are trapped in an ontology of levels.

Although he does not unreservedly reinstate what he calls the power-bloc/people (i.e. the state/civil society) couple in his own work, but attempts to subordinate it to class relations, Laclau is closer to Gramsci than Althusser or Poulantzas. Although, finally, Laclau, too, underestimates the state - civil society distinction³⁵ and ontologizes the social relations of production; still he grapples with the central principle of Gramsci's theory of politics when he condemns orthodox Marxism for its uncritical, automatic class reductionism in political analysis. Says Laclau: "Traditionally, among the various paradigms which we have characterized the kind of Marxism with which we are concerned, there is one which is the source of them all: class reductionism. Contradictions are seen in a hierarchical system that can be directly or indirectly reduced to a class contradiction. Any element or contradiction at the political and ideological level is therefore, a class³⁶ appurtenance." The problem is

engendered by the, in one sense, authentically Marxist tendency to regard the apparent contradiction between state and civil society as a projection and distortion of the more fundamental conflicts intrinsic to civil society itself, i.e. of class conflict. As Laclau points out, however, class reductionism makes ideological analysis redundant by conceiving of ideologies as class "essences."³⁷ By way of clarification, there is Laclau's argument that: "It is precisely because "the people" can never be totally absorbed by any class discourse, because there is always a certain openness in the ideological domain, whose structuring is never complete, that the class struggle can also occur as ideological struggle. To suppose, on the contrary, that class ideologies constitute a closed and perfectly consistent bloc is to reduce the conflict between them to a purely mechanical clash which could hardly be characterized as ideological struggle." To deny the dialectic between 'the people' and classes would be, then,³⁸ to deny the ideological class struggle."

Laclau assimilates the primary amendment of Gramsci's political theory by incorporating a 'power bloc/people' distinction. Recently, this theoretical innovation has been emphasized in an effort to understand the phenomenon of Thatcherism. Stuart Hall says, for example, of Thatcherism: "Its radicalism connects with radical-popular sentiments, but it effectively turns them round, absorbs and neutralizes their popular thrust, and creates, in the

place of a popular rupture, a populist unity." Its national-popular ethic operates like this, Hall suggests: "When in a crisis the traditional alignments are disrupted, it is possible, on the very ground of this break, to construct the people into a populist political subject: with, not against the power bloc, in alliance with new political forces in a great national crusade to 'make Britain "Great" once more."⁴⁰ Hall also echoes Laclau in attributing the success of Thatcherism to the refusal of the Labour Party to develop and practice a hegemonic politics: when he accuses the Labour Party of sectarianism⁴¹ or class reductionism in its political strategy.

There is more, however, to Gramsci's critique of the orthodox Marxism of his day than opposition to class reductionism. Gramsci was equally concerned to correct a simplistic one-dimensional concept of the State. Because, as surely as the base-superstructure model involved class reductionism; just as inevitably, it condoned what has become known as statism. For Gramsci, the main corollary of this fallacy was an exclusive reliance on violence and confrontation in political strategy. For this politics the ultimate practical goal was the coup d'état. 'The military model,' in Gramsci's estimation, had become a "pernicious prejudice."⁴² It had become necessary, he argued, to conceive of the state, dialectically, as an amalgam of coercion and consensus. He felt obliged to revise certain "determinations of the concept of the state, which is

usually understood as political society (or dictatorship; or coercive apparatus to bring the mass of the people into conformity with the specific type of production and the specific economy at a given moment) and not as an equilibrium between political society and civil society (or hegemony of a social group over the entire national society exercised through the so-called private organizations, like the Church, the trade unions, the schools, etc." In another similar formulation, Gramsci remarks: "The methodological criterion on which our own study must be based is the following: that the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership.' A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to 'liquidate,' or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups." Politics are not confined to the formal political arena e.g. to parliamentary debate, nor are they promoted outside the chambers of government only by brute force. Mainly, in fact, in conditions short of war, political strategy and objectives are mediated by ideology. As Gramsci puts it: "it is precisely in civil society that intellectuals operate."

James Curran redeploys Gramsci's insight into the role of the intellectuals when he writes: "The modern mass media in Britain now perform many of the integrative functions of the Church in the middle ages..... The mass media have now assumed the role of the Church, in a more secular age,

of interpreting and making sense of the world to the mass public. Like their priestly predecessors, professional communicators amplify systems of representation that legitimize the social system..... The new priesthood of the modern media has supplanted the old as the principal ideological agents building consent for the social system."⁴⁶

Up to this point, Gramsci's deconstruction of the base-superstructure model has been traced along only one axis: in structuralist terms, discussion has been confined to the synchronic dimension. But Gramsci repudiated that formula not only as a simplistic theory of social structure. He also, and more emphatically, rejected it because it made no sense in the context of his historical investigations. And so Gramsci's farewell to the economistic model takes the form of his pronouncement that: "Structures and super-⁴⁷structures form an 'historical bloc'." In a formulation whose critical edge is typically camouflaged, Gramsci contends that society denotes an ensemble of practices: so that any state of equilibrium however deep-rooted, is ultimately the resultant of a conjunctural play of political forces. In Gramsci's analysis, the 'historical bloc' defines society primarily as a political phenomenon in which moral, economic and cultural practices reproduce or transform communal conditions and means of existence. The importance of the 'historical bloc', the advisability of conceiving of social relations as a complex of political

determinations, is reluctantly, perhaps, completely involuntarily conceded by Althusser in the essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," when he begins by arguing the priority of the question of social reproduction over the question of production.

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According to the Editors of the Prison Notebooks: "Gramsci did not succeed in finding a simple, wholly satisfactory conception of 'civil society' or the 'state.'" No doubt this was because, for Gramsci, these concepts were worthless except when they were operationalized; when they would look different in different circumstances, where their content would vary. What Gramsci did achieve, however, is well illustrated by a glance backward to the restriction imposed upon social criticism by the 'base-superstructure' metaphor. The real danger lay, for Gramsci, in the possibility that such a crude figure could gain sufficient credibility to become a reference point for political action. As a corrective to political malpractice attendant upon economistic thought, Gramsci specified the principles that accounted for the distinctiveness of political and ideological analysis of social phenomena. He recommended that due attention should be paid to the contradictions of social being and consciousness and of state and civil society. The 'base-superstructure' metaphor employed by orthodox Marxists was associated in Gramsci's mind with unfortunate political strategies and attitudes. It engendered apathy and fatalism by placing an

excessive emphasis upon automatic economic transformations. It fostered militarism by conceiving of the state as repression and domination. It condoned sectarianism by trade unions and working class parties where it construed the class divisions of capitalist society as ontological facts.

Instead of these prevalent forms of misconception and malpractice, Gramsci proposes his hegemonic theory as an alternative reference point for political practice. Above all the new politics is required to take account of the role of mediation performed by ideology (and its functionaries and institutional networks) in the construction and maintenance of political consensus. This is the factor that makes Gramsci's work relevant in the study of mass communications. Enveloped and almost lost in this emphasis on the 'relative autonomy' of ideological practices, there is also an epistemological revision that defines self-knowledge as a process of emancipation from the pervasive webs of misrepresentation. Which means that for Gramsci criticism is a political activity that begins in the realms of ideology where men and women enter the symbolic universe. Entirely consistent with this double emphasis which construes Ideology as the Transcendental Subject that constitutes a political consensus and which construes the critique of ideology as the subversive activity of the oppressed empirical subject; entirely consistent with this double emphasis, on a substantive

level, there is Gramsci's estimation of the importance of the intellectual strata. He stresses the practical importance of the intellectuals in the formation of a political universe and in the preparation of conditions of change. In the context of Italian politics, he put great store by the fact that: "there is a great gap between the popular masses and the intellectual groups, even the largest ones, and those nearest to the peripheries of national life, like priests and school teachers."⁵⁰ It was in that space that Gramsci envisaged the possibility of an alternative hegemony: one constructed by the working class. (Gramsci's perception of that space, however, certainly makes his work slightly anachronistic: it is indicative of the fact that he thought and wrote prior to the age of the mass media which have now occupied that vacuum).

Gramsci's political theory was a Marxism without economic determinism. He offered the working class intellectual and moral control of social conditions. He recommended strategic control through knowledge and not directly through physical possession of the means of production. His movement out of economism, in fact, originated in relinquishment of an obsessive concern with property (perhaps, ethically, in renunciation of commodity fetishism) and in a commensurate emphasis on the role of knowledge as the basis of social power. With Gramsci, social transformation and the hegemony of the proletariat demand commitment to an arduous educative process. It

means release from delusion and preparation for participation in genuinely democratic forms of social life, as opposite sides of the same new coin.

It is best to summarize Gramsci's position vis-a-vis the orthodox economic position by beginning with his own statement: "Although it is certain that for the fundamental productive classes (Capitalist bourgeoisie and modern proletariat) the State is only conceivable as the concrete form of a specific economic world, of a specific system of production, this does not mean that the relationship of means to end can be easily determined or takes the form of a simple schema, apparent at first sight."⁵¹ Here, Gramsci acknowledges the brute fact that the bourgeoisie and proletariat necessarily proceed in their mundane practices from the standpoint of economic-corporate interest. They are the blind instruments of a divisive but productive economics. Nevertheless, Gramsci is adamant that realization of economic-corporate interest inevitably requires reflection on, modification of and, in some measure, transcendence of narrow economic world-views. Gramsci draws attention to a dialectic whereby power originally concentrated in property becomes power increasingly invested in knowledge: he remarks on the manner in which economic-corporate interests have to be translated into mathematic-symbolic and ideological-political sorts of knowledge capable of organizing nature and of articulating and mobilizing popular sentiment and

energy. Where hegemonic power is exercised, economism has been outgrown, and says Gramsci: "the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups, and in the life of the state is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on the judicial plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups - equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e. stopping short of narrowly corporate economic interest."⁵²

Gramsci's Legacy

Gramsci's theoretical legacy is thoughtfully, though obliquely, examined by Stuart Hall in his essay: "Cultural Studies: two paradigms."⁵³ What that essay does is to ponder a schism in the Gramscian camp between structuralists and cultural theorists. Hall suggests that the main weakness in each school is the result of an unnecessarily restrictive interpretation of Gramsci. Where structuralism has over-emphasized 'conditions,' the conjunctural disposition of forces; culturalism is understood to have become bogged down in the dialectic of consciousness.⁵⁴ A re-appraisal of Gramsci is recommended as a means of finding "a way through this false polarization."⁵⁵

Quite obviously, in one direction, difficulties emerge because Structuralist Marxism had conceded too much,

methodologically, to Structuralism before its encounter with Gramsci. Chantal Mouffe is not mistaken when she contends that structuralist linguistics, psychoanalysis and anthropology have contributed enormously to the study of mass communications and that they have enabled the theory of ideology to advance beyond the point that was reached by Gramsci. But the advance has not been unilinear and continuous. Structuralism also regresses behind Gramsci. In Hall's estimation: "The problem is that the manner in which this 'subject' of culture is conceptualized is of a transhistorical and 'universal' character: it addresses the subject-in-general, not historically-determinate social subjects..... Thus, it is incapable, so far, of moving its in-general propositions to the level of concrete historical analysis."⁵⁶

It is also reasonable to suggest that structuralist Marxism involves an intransigent resistance to Gramsci's historicism. Several connotations merit consideration. Nothing, to begin with, is more expressive of the Althusserian anti-historicism than its scientific pretension: its concern to validate the science of historical materialism. And, nothing, in turn, is more typically scientific than structuralism's tendency to hypostatize its categorical equipment: to posit its conceptual framework as real. So, in its scientific approach, in its disdain for the historical approach, structuralism translates its perception of a need to

differentiate ideological and political levels from an economic level of social reality, into a social ontology that recognizes three distinct levels of social practice. It transforms the base-superstructure model into a three-tier system.

Immediately, however, the structuralist recourse to ontology involves a debasement of the concept of practice. It inevitably adulterates Gramsci's achievement. On the political level, where least damage is done to the Gramscian theory of society, the contradiction between state and civil society is installed as the analytical mainstay of structuralist political science. It appears in this central position notably in Poulantzas and Laclau, who are thus able to indulge in substantive analyses. Even here, however, it is evident that the concept of practice is cheapened by being confined to a reified domain: by virtue of the fact that politics are confined to one region of existence and reduced to an aspect of class relations.

It is on the ideological level, however, that the intransigent anti-historicism of the Althusserian position has its worst effect. On that level the concept of practice is entirely absent. There is no incorporation of the Gramscian concept which articulates the possibility of ideological practice to the contradiction of social being and consciousness. Instead, in Althusser's unilateralist construction, the transcendental subject, Capital,

interpellates empirical subjects, constitutes them in its image, colonizes individual dispositions and energies and systematically obliterates the historicity of things.⁵⁷ There is in the Althusserian framework no dialectic of transcendental and empirical subjectivity. Ideology transcends contradiction. The transcendental subject, Capital, assumes the transhistorical significance of an ontological order.

Failure, attributable to its positivistic blinkers, to comprehend the Gramscian theory of ideology leaves the Althusserian system unable to provide a theoretical explanation of the specificity or distinctiveness of ideological practices. Instead, structuralism, on the epistemological level, proclaims the absolute heterogeneity of scientific and ideological forms of knowledge, and on the substantive-sociological level, it proclaims the heterogeneity of economic, political and ideological modes of 'practice.' In the end, in formal-polemical terms, the Althusserian discourse originates, at one point, in opposition to the historicism of Gramsci. This means that, formally, Althusser and his followers refuse Gramsci's reconceptualization of society as an ensemble of practices; as a political universe in its every aspect. Ironically, however, in the essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,' where he insists on the priority of the question of social reproduction i.e. of social practice in general over economic practice (production) in particular,

Althusser capitulates completely, if tacitly, to Gramsci. In effect, though it only appears there in a "practical state," inadequately theorized, Gramsci's theory of society, the hegemonic theory, eventually triumphs in the principal Althusserian contribution to the study of mass communications.

Stuart Hall's reservations about culturalism and its tendency to become ensnared in a dialectic of consciousness are submitted mainly with Raymond Williams' contribution in mind. ⁵⁸ And, no doubt, there is both a pluralist overtone in Williams' writings that apparently divorces politics from the contradictions of economic production altogether; and an inclination to conflate political and ideological dimensions of the conjunctural institutional structure and to designate the resulting amalgam as culture. To put it another way: there is some justification for alleging, as Stuart Hall does, that culturalism underestimates the importance of non-cultural, institutional constraints on social change, and envisages social history as a 'long revolution' that will or should eventually assimilate all sections of the population in a common culture.

It is also worthwhile to argue, as Stuart Hall does, that Williams' culturalism may be regarded as responding to only one strand of Gramsci's hegemonic construction. Nevertheless, it must also be admitted that Raymond Williams incorporates the best of Gramsci. The affinity

between Williams and Gramsci may be defined as historicism, and it is most easily recognized in the vehemence with which they repudiate the base-superstructure model of society. Williams' revulsion may be gauged from the three quotations where he maintains "that when we talk about 'the base' we are talking of a process not a state;" when he adds that what 'the base' attempts to comprehend is "something much more complicated and contradictory than the developed metaphysical notion of 'the base' could possibly allow us to realize;" and when he suggests that "we have to revalue 'the base' away from the notion of a fixed economic or technological abstraction, and towards the specific activities of men in real social and economic relationships, containing fundamental contradictions and variations and therefore always in a state of dynamic process." In effect, Williams can be seen to have viewed society as an "historical bloc."

Most importantly, however, Williams follows Gramsci, and acknowledges the theory of hegemony, in supplanting the base-superstructure conception with the antinomy of consciousness and social being: in making the dialectic of knowledge and experience the key epistemological and sociological relation. It is by virtue of his grasp of the importance of this antinomy of consciousness and social being that Raymond Williams has been able to promote a Marxist perspective on culture and a brisk, sociologically informed, materialist aesthetic. The defining characteristic

of Williams' position is not, on reflection, his tendency to explain social history as a long revolution that progressively incorporates everybody: the hallmark of his criticism is the ability to divulge and convey a sense of the duplicity of cultural forms, to reveal their capacity to misrepresent as well as to express and communicate experience, as it is currently organized. So he says in a characteristic tone: "I am saying then that in relation to the full range of human practice at any one time, the dominant mode is a conscious selection and organization..... But there are always sources of real human practice which it neglects or excludes." Which formulation reiterates his earlier focus upon dominant cultural forms as aspects of a 'selective tradition' which, as carefully as it protects, fosters and promulgates, actively discourages, rejects and dissipates, the common stock of experience in its representation and evaluation of that experience. Raymond Williams belongs to a fairly select group of social critics who can explicate culture as both art and exploitation, as enlightenment and deception. And the theoretical basis of that perspective on culture is an intellectual response to external existential pressures. It is a practical theory that reacts against the heteronomy entailed in the antinomial relation of consciousness and social being, of knowledge and experience, as presently constituted and maintained.

Notes

1. Poulantzas, Nicos, Political Power and Social Classes, London, Verso, 1978, p 21.
2. Ibid., p 207.
3. Ibid., p 207.
4. Ibid., p 208.
5. Poulantzas, Nicos, 'The Problem of the Capitalist State,' New Left Review, No 58, Nov-Dec, 1969, p 67.
6. Ibid., p 76. See also Political Power and Social Classes, pps. 137-41.
7. Poulantzas, Nicos, Political Power and Social Classes, p 173.
8. Ibid., p 179.
9. Gramsci, Antonio, Selections from Prison Notebooks, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1971, p 407.
10. Ibid., p 165.
11. Hall, Stuart, 'Re-thinking the "Base and Super-Structure" Metaphor,' in Class, Hegemony and Party, Jon Bloomfield, (ed), 1977, Lawrence and Wishart, London. See, e.g.: "Of the many problems which perforce Marx left in an 'underdeveloped' state, none is more crucial than that of the 'base and super-structure'." Op. cit., p 43. Which preliminary assessment precedes the judgment that: "Much of Gramsci's work is directed in polemic against economic reductive theories of the superstructures. Hence he argued that the proper posing of the relation between base and superstructure was the seminal issue in a Marxist theory of politics." Ibid., p 65.
12. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., p 419 ff, 'Critical Notes on an Attempt at Popular Sociology.'
13. Ibid., p 385.
14. Ibid., p 465.
15. Ibid., p 425.
16. Ibid., p 426.
17. Adorno, Theodor, W., Prisms, Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1982, p 231.

18. Williams, Raymond, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', in New Left Review, No. 82, Nov-Dec, 1973, p 5.
19. Mouffe, Chantal, Gramsci and Marxist Theory, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p 183-84.
20. Ibid., p 181.
21. Ibid., p 184-85.
22. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., pps. 365, p 371-72.
23. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, London, Heinemann, 1973, p 62.
24. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., p 324.
25. Ibid., p 192-93.
26. Ibid., p 333.
27. Ibid., p 199.
28. Ibid., p 333.
29. Ibid., p 327.
30. For a lively introductory text on this theme see: Catherine Belsey, Critical Practice, London, Methuen, 1980.
31. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., p 348.
32. Ibid., p 160.
33. The embeddedness of Marxist structuralism in the base-superstructure model emerges in the intractability of the problem of "determination-in-the-last-instance" by the economic. Two statements by Althusser put the problem in perspective from a structuralist standpoint. Firstly: "Marx has (at least) given us the 'two ends of the chain,' and has told us to find out what goes on between them: on the one hand, determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production; on the other, the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity." Althusser, L., For Marx, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, p 111. Secondly: "It is economism that identifies eternally, in advance, the determinant-contradiction-in-the-last-instance with the role of the dominant contradiction..... whereas in real history, determination in the last instance by the economy is exercised precisely in the permutations of the principal role between the economy, politics, theory, etc." Ibid., p 213.

34. Laclau, Ernesto, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, London, Verso, 1979, p 77.
35. So that for Laclau, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein espouse an heretical Marxism. They offend Laclau by operating on the wrong level of analysis: i.e. on the level of exchange relations rather than on the level of production relations. See Laclau op. cit. pps. 42-50. In fact, however with their 'metropolis-satellite' (Frank) and 'centre-periphery' (Wallerstein) models, these theorists have generated stimulating, well-documented, and ideologically combative theses on the politics of capitalist exchange. (See: Frank, Andre Gunder, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, London, Monthly Review Press, 1969; and, Wallerstein, Immanuel, The Capitalist World-Economy, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1979.) Moreover, Laclau's structuralism, his own imprisonment in an ontology of levels, causes him to exaggerate his substantive differences with Frank and Wallerstein. The complementarity of their concrete-practical interests is obscured by a tendency on Laclau's part to doctrinaire methodology.
36. Laclau, Ernesto, op. cit., p 11.
37. Ibid., p 113.
38. Ibid., p 195.
39. Hall, Stuart, 'The Great Moving Right Show,' in The Politics of Thatcherism, edited by Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1983, p 31.
40. Ibid., p 30.
41. Eric Hobsbawm's analysis of the politics and ideological implications of the Falklands War also employs this Gramscian framework. E.g. Hobsbawm says: "One of the most sinister lessons of the Falklands is the ease with which the Thatcherites captured the patriotic upsurge which initially was in no sense confined to political Conservatives, let alone do Thatcherite ones," in The Politics of Thatcherism, p 268.
42. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., p 301.
43. Ibid., Note 5, pps. 55-56.
44. Ibid., p 57.
45. Ibid., Note 5, p 56.

46. Curran, James, Communications, Society and the Media, Michael Gurevitch, et alia (eds), London, Methuen, 1982, p 228.
47. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., p 366.
48. Althusser, Louis, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, London, New Left Books, 1971, p 123.
49. Gramsci, Antonio, op. cit., p 207.
50. Ibid., p 342.
51. Ibid., p 116.
52. Ibid., p 182.
53. Hall, Stuart, 'Cultural Studies: two paradigms,' in Culture, Ideology and Social Process, Tony Bennet et al (eds), London, Batsford, 1980.
54. Ibid., p 33.
55. Ibid., p 33.
56. Ibid., p 34.
57. "Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects." Althusser, L., Lenin and Philosophy, p 160. Ideology is the monopolistic principle of subjectivity "which recruits subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellating or hailing." Op. cit., p 163. The obliteration of the historical emerges as Jorge Larrain remarks as a kind of Hegelian nemesis in the superstructure of Althusser's anti-historicist problematic. Implicit in the inversion whereby the constitutive subject of historicist philosophies is displaced by the interpellating Subject, Ideology, Larrain observes, are: "the elements of a Hegelian conception in which historical class ideologies and human subjects become manifestations and instruments by means of which ideology in general, (the Idea, one might say) unfolds itself." See Larrain, Jorge, The Concept of Ideology, London, Hutchinson, 1979, p 161.
58. Hall, Stuart, 'Cultural Studies: two paradigms.' p 33 ff.
59. Williams, Raymond, op. cit., p 5.
60. Ibid., p 5.

61. Ibid., p 6.
62. Ibid., p 13.
63. Williams, Raymond, The Long Revolution, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, p 66 ff.
64. A short selection of quotations almost randomly chosen should convey a sense of Raymond Williams' capacity to reveal the duplicity of cultural forms. On the popular press he has written characteristically: "the position is that newspapers do not survive or fail according to how many people want them, but according to their suitability as media for advertising." See Communications, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p 21. On the fiction contained in women's magazines he has written: "The most striking general feature of most of the stories is that they were evidently written to promote a particular psychological process in the reader." Op. cit., p 80. On Television he has written: "Television interviewers and commentators have become, in a sense, political figures in their own right, and there has been evident tension between them and orthodox (usually elected), political leaders." Television, Technology and Cultural Form, Fontana, Glasgow, 1974. Yet again he has stressed: "It can be reasonably argued that the television impression of 'seeing events for oneself' is at times and perhaps always deceptive. It matters very much, for example, in the visual reporting of a civil disturbance, whether 'the camera' is looking over the heads of the police being stoned or over the heads of the demonstrators being tear-gassed." Op. cit., p 48. In each area of cultural studies, so it seems, Raymond Williams has made an early and enduringly important contribution.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CRITIQUE OF IDEOLOGY

According to Jürgen Habermas, the need to establish the coherence of social theory in a methodologically sound notion of critique must be met without invoking Marx: "Marx did not develop this idea of the science of man. By equating critique with natural science, he disavowed it."¹ For Habermas, Marxism is synonymous with a materialist metaphysics that reduces social relations to economic relations. Marx is understood to have impeded clarification of the epistemological foundation of critique by confounding production and interaction: instrumental action and communicative action.² Habermas maintains that Marx looked misguidedly to natural science for methodological inspiration. Inevitably, the argument runs, Marx suppressed the epistemological/methodological questions vital to the possibility of social knowledge. The corollary of Marx's naturalistic inclination, Habermas concludes, is that in Capital, Marx concentrated exclusively upon the Objective Dialectic, which meant that he conceptualized social existence in the shape of an economistic framework governed by determinate laws of motion, without ever supposing that anything more than meticulous observation of the Objective Dialectic of History was required by way of method.

In a strong counter-current, the emergence of ideology

critique is held to be unimaginable without Marx's superlative theoretical contribution. In this antithetical interpretation, the critique of Political economy has, allegedly, completely outgrown the dependencies of the Feuerbachian period. Alfred Schmidt gets concisely to the crux of this alternative case when he suggests that critique of political economy is the product of Marx's "second appropriation of Hegel, especially the Hegel of The Science of Logic." ³ Immediately, two implications of Schmidt's observation deserve to be spelled out more fully, even in a preamble. Firstly, this construction makes the Grundrisse the key interpretative document, since it is in that text that the methodologically decisive dialogue with Hegel occurs. Secondly, this construction represents Marx's theory of society not as materialist dogma, not as an inflexible, presuppositional blindfold; but as the culminating success of a method of critique: which supplies the enigmatic formula that is required to resolve (theoretically) the antagonism at the heart of the practical philosophy of the bourgeoisie; namely, a poorly articulated but determinate conception of what society should be, or of how its productive forces should be deployed, i.e. a theory of society.

The critique of political economy is, in this interpretation, a methodological possibility attributable, in the first instance, to an intensification of Marx's ambivalence to Hegel. Thus, on one side, Marx's analyses

in the Grundrisse undoubtedly incorporate Hegel's antinominalism. This antinominalism becomes a primary intellectual resource in his engagement with the political economists. That is, Marx fully appreciated Hegel as the philosopher of the "concrete universal." Marx assimilated the 'historical secret' of The Science of Logic. On the other hand, Marx's ambivalence must not be understated: not only did Marx consider that Hegel had in his political philosophy misnamed the 'concrete universal;' but he also repudiated the essentialism of Hegel's logic. Which is to say that where Hegel recognized in the "concrete universal" (of Statehood in the guise of constitutional monarchy) a positive identity of essence and existence, concept and reality; Marx deplored the postulated identity which mystified the real (antagonistic) historical relation of theory and practice and enforced or condoned an enforced devaluation of the real.

The Science of Logic as much as the Phenomenology of Spirit was rooted in a philosophy of history. In that respect, the Logic merely re-iterated the solution to the problem of nominalism submitted in the Phenomenology. Kant had remained profoundly equivocal about the possibility of phenomenal knowledge: he had relinquished the "thing-in-itself" that existed independently of consciousness and had resigned philosophy to knowledge of the categorical structure of cognition and what it could relay and provide a nomenclature for. Hegel, for his part, conceived of

historical reality as a substantiation of the human spirit. The Science of Logic appraised all categorial systems not only as cognitive or theoretical frameworks, but also as so many instances in which the human essence, Reason, had been realized in the phenomenal world. In this sense, Hegel exploded the nominalist prejudice.⁴

At the same time, however, Hegel's Science of Logic, like the Phenomenology, presupposed the completed formation of the historical. On the basis of that presupposition, Hegel chronicled the progress of Reason to Absolute Knowledge; by way of stages in which it had failed to actualize the Philosophic Idea, except partially and precariously. This presupposition of the closure of the Objective Dialectic in Absolute Knowledge, nevertheless and despite its vigorous antinomialism, brought Hegel back into line with Transcendental Idealism. It accorded with the most extravagant claims of Kantian epistemology which had previously proclaimed the absolute validity of the categorial frameworks of modern science. Hegel, especially as the Philosophy of Right makes clear in the case of the epistemological status of political science (by implication with regard to the status of political economy), validates the emerging anthropological discourses. In short, Hegel's essentialism consisted in his acknowledgement that the categorial frameworks of modern political science encompassed and comprehensively represented the real in theory; while the real existed,

conversely, though equally unproblematically, as the concrete representative of the 'positive knowledge' possessed by political science.

Marx's 'second appropriation of Hegel,' to return to the matter at hand, issues in a notion of critique that combines an antinominalist principle derived straightforwardly from Hegel and an anti-essentialist principle that originates in opposition to Hegel. On the one hand, Marx inherits the Hegelian method that approaches the concrete particular available to cognition as the representative of an absent universal principle. On the other hand, Marx pronounces a negative judgment on the universal: on the principle of intelligibility and criterion of value imposed by History on the material substratum of the world. Hegel's antinominalism is turned against him. The Universal comes under review, from the direction of the concrete particular; from which direction it signifies a process that organizes reality in accordance with an alien and indifferent principle. Amplifying Marx in this regard, Adorno explains: "There is only one way for Hegelian logic to succinctly identify a universal and an undefined particular..... and that is for logic..... not to deal with the particular as a particular at all. His logic deals only with particularity, which is already conceptual."⁵ In other words, Hegel's essentialism systematically effaces an extra-conceptual, logically superfluous but potentially resistant material element in

the concrete particular. No doubt, Hegel's essentialism captured the movement of History, but it also endorsed that tyranny of the symbolic established and advanced by the logic of a universal history.

With Marx, theory demurs. Marx, continuously and energetically, repudiates the postulated identity of concept and reality affirmed by Hegel's philosophy of history. Adorno again encapsulates the intention of Marx's extensive argumentation against essentialism when he observes that ideology critique emerges in confrontation with identitarian thinking, which reached an unprecedented level of sophistication in Hegel. Expressing the anxiety embedded in the oppositional standpoint, Adorno submits: "Identity is the primal form of ideology. We relish it as adequacy to the thing it suppresses.Ideology's power of resistance to enlightenment is owed to its complicity with identifying thought...."⁶ In this sense, critique strives to prise apart the logical universal and the concrete particular which in ideology become indistinguishable. And it is in this respect, as a monumental effort to give sociological significance to the obfuscations of political economy and to bring it into contradiction that the Grundrisse may be regarded as the fundamental text not only of the critique of political economy but also of the critique of ideology.

The Analytic of Political Economy

In the Grundrisse, Marx appraises political economy not only as economic theory but also as a codification of the practical philosophy of the bourgeoisie. Occasionally, he appears to address purely theoretical matters, especially when he discusses what were topical issues, such as the causes of foreign exchange crises or the advisability of fiduciary note issue; but, in fact, Marx consistently regards the logical and the historical as inseparable considerations (his antinominalism), however much he insists upon their irreconcilability (his anti-essentialism). His critique of political economy begins, in the Grundrisse, in a hermeneutic exercise that advertizes the ineptitude with which the relation of the universal and the particular is conceptualized by utilitarian economic theory. In the Grundrisse, where what may be usefully called his critique of the analytic of political economy has been unfortunately suppressed, Marx subverts the arguments of his opponents immanently. Political economy is exposed as theoretically deficient (committed to a logic of misrepresentation), before the suggestion is made that the social practice it rationalizes is, and not coincidentally, contradictory. The enormous importance of the Grundrisse, therefore, consists in the fact that it contains Marx's preliminary hermeneutic as well as a record of the theoretical linkages between that effort and the critique of the practical philosophy of the bourgeoisie that it made possible.

Unless the importance of Marx's antinomialism is appreciated his generalized polemic can seem pedantic, perhaps pointless. There can be no doubt, however, that this principle separated Marx from his contemporaries. Generically, the Grundrisse disparages "the sophistry of the bourgeois economists, who embellish capital by reducing it in argument to pure exchange."⁷ Likewise, the various schools of thought are accused individually of nominalism. For example, of Ricardo, Marx says that he does not develop the contradictions of capital, "but rather shifts them off by considering the value in exchange as indifferent for the formation of wealth."⁸ In other words, Ricardo evades rather than explores the possibility that theoretical difficulties surrounding the concept of value could imply practical problems generated in the social production of wealth. Ricardo, Marx maintains "regards exchange value as merely formal."⁹ Similarly, in distancing himself from the French socialists grouped around Proudhon, Marx contends: "What divides these gentlemen from the bourgeois apologists is, on one side, their sensitivity to the contradictions included in the system; on the other, the utopian inability to grasp the necessary difference between the real and the ideal form of bourgeois society."¹⁰ With regard to "bourgeois apologetics", Marx wrote: "According to this, all economic categories are only so many names for what is always the same relation, and this crude inability to grasp the real distinctions is then supposed to represent pure common sense as such."¹¹

Marx's antinomialist position on money (for example, but also in all key categories) signifies something quite unprecedented, when it is contrasted with the positions of those against whom he polemicized. For his part, Marx insisted that the monetary system had to be theorized not only as a calculus of pure exchange, but also as a network of real transactions. Conversion of commodities into money, Marx argues, occurs in two dimensions: ideally, commodities are transformed into prices, they are inscribed in an abstract representative system; really, commodities are transformed universally into exchange values in specific social circumstances. Pure exchange follows strict logical rules; real exchange runs another course carried by specific forms of social practice. In Marx's own words: "If exchange values are ideally transformed into money by means of prices, in the act of exchange, in purchase and sale they are really transformed into money, exchanged for money, in order then to be again exchanged as money for a commodity. A particular exchange value must first be exchanged for exchange value in general before it can then be in turn exchanged for particulars."¹²

Political economy, as nominalism, did not develop the difference between economic theory and economic reality. This does not mean that political economy made no claim to know the real. On the contrary, as essentialism, it proclaimed the epistemological impeccability of its categories: which is to say, that it purported to know

economic phenomena absolutely, even if it did not claim an exhaustive knowledge of reality, in general. Political economy presupposed the correspondence of its theory of pure exchange and the reality of a market-based society. It grounded itself in an axiomatic core of postulated identities organized concentrically around a central assumption of the equivalence of production and consumption: e.g. supply and demand, commodity and money,¹³ value and price, use-value and exchange-value, etc. Marx offered a compact account of that analytic of economic production in the following terms: "Production creates the objects which correspond to given needs; distribution divides them up according to social laws; exchange further parcels out the already divided shares in accord with individual needs; and finally in consumption, the product steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need and satisfies it in being consumed. Thus the product appears as the point of departure, consumption as the conclusion, distribution and exchange as the middle, which is however itself twofold, since distribution is determined by society and exchange by individuals. The person objectifies himself in production, the thing subjectivizes itself in the person; in distribution society mediates between production and consumption in the form of general, dominant determinants; in exchange the two are mediated by the chance characteristics of the individual."¹⁴

It is because he became embroiled in this framework that the Grundrisse may be said to contain Marx's critique of the analytic of political economy. The ultimate aim of Marx's criticism at that stage was to reveal the general theory of pure exchange and the theory of production (the minimal theory of society and theory of history, respectively, of political economy) as the products of a dubious mode of abstraction, rather than as grounded in apodeictic truths. So in the Grundrisse, Marx consistently argues that political economy employed a process of abstraction that systematically distorted and obfuscated its relation to economic conditions. The symmetry of the moments of economic activity that it eulogized, such as the postulated identity of production and consumption, Marx maintained, depended upon this dubious logic. For example, Marx says: "To regard society as one single subject is..... to look at it wrongly, speculatively. With a single subject, production and consumption appear as moments of a single act."¹⁵ In general, it is argued, the abstract identities, the transparent categories, in which political economy finds its epistemological warranty, substitute for and exclude real economic processes and circuits.

From Marx's antinomialist perspective there was no possibility that the analytic logic of political economy could in fact, dispense totally with either a theory of society or a theory of history. His arguments are

marshalled to exhibit the deficiencies of political economy in this area. He maintains that the process of abstraction employed by his adversaries to arrive, economically, at a conceptual fundament, serves to short-circuit enquiry into the concrete mediations through which the economy moves. This focus upon production in general (an a prioristic procedure), did not however acquit political economy, so Marx submitted, of its obligation to theorize an extra-logical factor. Nor could political economy altogether avoid adumbrating a general account of what it excluded. And it is upon this characterization of real relations that Marx's analysis focusses, in order to explain the ideological import of the general theory of production. "The aim is" Marx writes, "to present production..... as encased in eternal natural laws independent of history, at which opportunity bourgeois relations are then quietly smuggled in as the inviolable natural laws on which society in the abstract is founded. This is the more or less conscious purpose of the whole proceeding."¹⁶ From first principles, in other words, political economy is accused of protecting its principal categories from historical qualification, by conferring upon them an ontological significance. The categories of political economy are held to represent, theoretically, the natural structure of production.

Against the backdrop of the eternal verities of economic production, political economy proceeds, more minutely

and concretely, where it must incline more in the direction of real conditions, to theorize the movement of the economy by concentrating exclusively upon exchange relations. For Marx, the significance of this preoccupation with the circuit of exchange and more particularly with the monetary system (which is the historically developed form of exchange relations), consists in this: "that all inherent contradictions of bourgeois society appear extinguished in monetary relations as conceived in a simple form."¹⁷ The theory of exchange is abstract precisely as the general theory of production is abstract: in that it excludes the historical or subsumes the historical under the natural, where it becomes unproblematic. To an abstract theory of social structure it adds an abstract theory of social behaviour. Thus, examining the lineaments of the theory of exchange, Marx notes that it has only three elements: "the subjects of the relation, the exchangers.....; the objects of exchange, exchange values, equivalents.....; and finally the act of exchange itself."¹⁸ Each of these elements, the exegesis makes clear, postulates what is left out of account as nothing but an irreducibly natural factor.

Considering the relation envisaged between exchanging individuals, Marx writes: "the subjects between whom this process goes on, are simply and only conceived of as exchangers..... Each of the subjects is an exchanger.... As subjects of exchange, their relation is therefore that of equality. It is impossible to find any trace of

distinction, not to speak of contradiction between them; not even a difference."¹⁹ The possibility of a difference occurring in exchange is explained away at this level in terms of the intrusion of natural circumstance. Says Marx: "the most that could happen would be a subjective error in the reciprocal appraisal of values, and if one individual, say, cheated the other, this could happen..... only because of natural cleverness, persuasiveness etc., in short only the purely individual superiority of one individual over another. The difference would be one of natural origin."²⁰

"Furthermore," Marx continues, "the commodities which they exchange are, as exchange values, 'equivalent.'²¹" What stands behind the availability of the commodities in the act of exchange, is posited as a natural difference between the exchangers in their needs and in their capacity to produce. "Only the differences between their needs and between their production gives rise to exchange and to their social equation in exchange; these natural differences are therefore" Marx says "the precondition of their social equality in the act of exchange."²² Again, disequilibrium, difference, need are relegated to an immutable pre-social, pre-historical level, and imputed to nature.

Outside the act of exchange (the social relation which is recognized as the truly economic one), there is only the non-economic which is known, as far as it needs to be

reckoned with, as the natural. This excluded factor: "is posited as a natural content distinct from the economic, a content about which it may be said," Marx adds "that it is still entirely separated from the economic relation because it still directly coincides with it." What this means is that the theory of exchange leaves nature out of account, because it purports to know that the natural effect will not distort the economic effect: political economy, in other words, claims to know the historical as the natural; and postulates the identity of its concept of nature with the reality of nature. It does not neglect the extra-economic as an unknown variable, but as a familiar invariant.

So far, this first phase has presented a clear delimitation of the relation between the logical and the historical recognized by political economy. To this end, Marx explained: firstly, that in the general theory of production, the principle categories of economic logic were introduced and simultaneously proposed as exhaustively descriptive of the structure of economic conditions; secondly, that in the theory of pure exchange, the structure of economic activity was delineated or abstracted from non-economic relations; and, thirdly, that the science of political economy invariably postulated the relation between economic logic and social action as passive, disinterested: as one governed by the natural limit of categorically determined understanding, on one side, and

by the natural environment, on the other. All of which amounts to this: that the first phase of Marx's critique concludes with the judgment that political economy depends crucially upon a naturalistic theory of society; or that it construes the relation of Man and Nature in the light of eternity, as transhistorical.

Relations of Exchange and Conditions of Production

Political economy, then, propounds a naturalistic theory of society. Says Marx: "The economists express this as follows: Each pursues his private interest and only his private interest; and thereby serves the private interests of all, the general interest, without willing or knowing it."²⁵ The market, in countless separate transactions mediates the natural cycle of consumption and production. The symmetry of production and consumption underwrites the harmony of private and general interests. The second phase of Marx's critique involves a demonstration of the untenability of this naturalistic conception of society. To which end, Marx begins in characteristically antinominalist fashion by positing the categorial systems of political economy, unreservedly, as real. They are evaluated as 'positive' forms of knowledge that operate with determinate effect throughout social space.

The Chapter on Money in the Grundrisse revolves around this question: what does the ubiquity of the market, what does the universality of exchange relations, signify socially ?

Which is the question that political economy raises only to mystify it: political economy admits that the system of universal exchange presupposes the existence of individual exchangers; but their existence is never regarded as problematic, the conditions of production never become matters requiring investigation.

On this important question, Marx complains, political economists offers only Robinsonades: they recognize the prevalence of individual production in conditions of free competition, but they do not understand this universal individual as "the product on one side of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of the new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century."²⁶ Instead the free individual who appears in the exchange relation is introduced: "As the Natural Individual appropriate to their notion of human nature, not arising historically, but posited by nature."²⁷

As was explained above, this natural individual was brought to market by a natural difference with his neighbour: he had a different need and a different kind of surplus product to exchange. As Marx explains at length, however, in the naturalistic construction: "it is forgotten, that the presupposition of exchange value, as the objective basis of the whole system of production, already in itself implies compulsion over the individual, since his immediate product is not a product for him, but only becomes such

in the social process, and since it must take on this general but nevertheless external form; and that the individual has an existence only as a product of exchange value, hence that the whole negation of his natural existence is already implied; that he is therefore entirely determined by society; that this further presupposes a division of labour etc., in which the individual is already posited in relations other than that of mere exchanger, etc. That therefore this presupposition (the prevalence of exchange value and the monetary system) by no means arises either out of the individual's will or out of the immediate nature of the individual, but that it is, rather, historical and posits the individual as already determined by society." ²⁸

Nor, Marx argues, does the individualism attendant upon a developed system of exchange coincide with universal realization of a 'natural right' to personal freedom. Its arrival signifies not the end of heteronomy but a new kind of domination: "When we look at social relations which create an undeveloped system of exchange, of exchange values and of money, or which correspond to an undeveloped degree of these, then it is clear from the outset that the individuals in such a society, although their relations appear to be more personal, enter into connection with one another only as individuals imprisoned within a certain definition, as feudal lord and vassal, landlord and serf, etc., or as member of a caste etc..... In the money

relation, in the developed system of exchange (and this semblance seduces the democrats), the ties of personal dependence, of distinction of blood, education etc. are in fact exploded, ripped up.....; and individuals seem independent (this is an independence which is at bottom merely an illusion, and it is more correctly called indifference), free to collide with one another and to engage in exchange within this freedom; but they appear thus only for someone who abstracts from the conditions, the conditions of existence within which these individuals enter into contact (and these conditions, in turn, are independent of the individuals and, although created by society, appear as if they were natural conditions, not controllable by individuals). The definedness of individuals, which in the former case appears as a personal restriction of the individual by another, appears in the latter case as developed into an objective restriction of the individual by relations independent of him and sufficient unto themselves." ²⁹ To abbreviate this argument, the difference between dependency relations of an older historical type, and those signified by the predominance of exchange relations consists in this: objective conditions presently dominate "in such a way that individuals are now ruled by abstractions, whereas earlier they depended on one another." ³⁰

The second sine qua non of exchange recognized by political economy is the availability of objects of exchange

as equivalents. The unexplicated presupposition, in this case, according to Marx, is the generalized production of exchange-value: the socially determined need to produce, rather than anything in particular, an abstract form of value, the commodity exchangeable for money. The key factor, as Marx explains, is the production of exchange value: "by means of which alone each individual's own activity or his product becomes an activity and a product for him; he must produce a general product - exchange value, or, the latter isolated for itself and individualized, money. On the other side, the power which each individual exercises over the activity of others or over social wealth exists in him as the owner of exchange values, of money. The individual carries his social power, as well as his bond with society, in his pocket." What does this imply when it is posited as an historical fact? Marx answers as follows: "The very necessity for first transforming individual products or activities into exchange value into money, so that they obtain and demonstrate their social power in this objective form, proves two things: (1) That individuals now produce only for society and in society (2)....Individuals are subsumed under social production; social production exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not subsumed under individuals, manageable by them as their common wealth. There can therefore be nothing more erroneous and absurd than to postulate the control by the united individuals of their total production, on the basis of

exchange-value, of money."

To answer the general question concerning the significance of the universality of the exchange act it is enough to recapitulate. Firstly, for individuals, it was shown to imply subordination to abstract relations which govern production; which in turn implied a form of individualism rooted in a rational social order rather than in a natural community. This individualism was seen not to correlate to the realization of natural freedom but to be constrained by and condemned to find expression through its social experience of the need to produce exchange value, money. With regard to the object of exchange, universal exchange was bracketed with the predominance of the commodity-form: with production of goods realizable as exchange value; which was understood to presuppose the supersession of a natural economy organized for the production of simple use-values, intended for immediate consumption. On both the subjective and objective sides of the relation, Marx explained how the identity of production and consumption that might be imagined in the context of a natural economy, had been irreparably restructured and was now mediated by the social process of exchange realized in the monetary system. In other words, Marx demonstrated that the universality of the exchange act presupposed the dissolution of a natural economy.

By positing the theory of exchange as a concrete universal,

Marx was able to reveal the central theoretical contradiction of bourgeois economics: that while it postulated a natural relation between the logical and the historical, its cogency as positive knowledge depended upon its capacity to ensure domination of nature and to effect subordination of all natural relations to social control. It is important to recognize this as a theoretical problem - to appreciate that the limit of political economy's rationality was located here by Marx. A reluctance or refusal to perceive itself as a 'positive knowledge', to admit that the categories it reflected upon were posited and institutionalized as social structure, as a mode of production, hampered political economy as social theory. It preferred to present itself as the product of a disinterested reflection upon economic life, rather than as a theoretical activity intent upon rationalizing the production of exchange-value in society. Bourgeois thought was essentially schizophrenic in Marx's judgment: it had an equal interest in grasping the economics of exchange value, theoretically, and in disavowing or misrecognizing its practical contribution to the construction of a barbaric system of production.

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The Critique of the Dialectic of Political Economy

Martin Nicolaus is correct when he maintains that to read the Grundrisse is to encounter Marx's materialist dialectic in the form of a complex of mediations; mediations not explored by political economy.³⁴ Here, the 'dialectic'

denotes Marx's mode of argumentation. Thus in his critique of the analytic of political economy (its explicit logic and ontology), Marx can be said to have counterposed a dialectical logic, characterized by its hostility to essentialism and nominalism. Another use of the term is involved, however, when it is suggested that the Grundrisse also contains a critique of the Dialectic of political economy. In this case, the Dialectic is that which permeates political economy as an amorphous, inexhaustible, unexplicated, (ultimately non-theoretical) presupposition. The Dialectic of political economy, in this sense, denotes the structure of economic existence, in general, which has the status, in Kantian terminology, of the "unconditioned": as such, this highest principle of political economy designates, simultaneously, an unattainable knowledge, and an immutable configuration of things. Marx's critique, in this more advanced theoretical stage, entailed extensive excavation among the premisses of political economy to explicate this Dialectic as gesturing indecisively but unmistakably towards the property relations and the laws of production of capitalism.

In the second phase of his enquiry, Marx does not set aside the result of his critique of the analytic of political economy; he extrapolates from that result. In the Chapter on Capital in the Grundrisse, Marx does not proceed in a new direction; he advances more deliberately upon the

question which the logic and ontology of political economy obfuscate, namely: the mystery of the real presupposition and precondition, the real logic and structure of capitalism. The purpose underlying this second phase of Marx's enquiry in which he ransacked the texts of political economy, was to discover a secret logic inscribed in the structure of modern economic thought and activity. Marx, then, equipped himself in the Grundrisse, in a meticulous investigation of the texts, with a knowledge of this logic (a logic that he did not invent but which he made visible). And so he prepared to rewrite the history of social relations. The objective relation between that logic and that history are delineated in Capital Vol. I.

Even at its most enlightened, Marx argued, even where from Adam Smith onward, it brought before consciousness a view of the economy in which labour was the source of value and capital its ruling principle; even here, political economy never conceived of its central categories other than as simple representations of natural phenomena. Setting the tone, Marx submitted, Adam Smith defined capital as accumulated labour; and although this definition was not entirely wide of the mark, it still supposed that capital had always arisen spontaneously as a natural by-product of human labour. "According to this," says Marx "Capital would have existed in all forms of society and is something
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altogether unhistorical." Ricardo subscribed to the same fallacy: "With him" Marx declared "wage labour and capital

are again conceived as a natural, not as a historically specific social form for the creation of wealth as use-value; i.e. their form as such, precisely because it is natural is irrelevant..... thus" Marx continued "the specific character of bourgeois wealth is not grasped.... and thus although exchange value is the point of departure, the specific forms of exchange themselves play no role at all in his economics."³⁶

Faced with the impenetrable silence of his adversaries concerning the specificity of the contemporary structure of production, Marx felt compelled to re-open the basic question, the significance of exchange, or to probe political economy for an answer to the riddle of the almost emblematic significance of exchange relations in bourgeois theory and social practice. Thus, to begin with, Marx deduced the variability or instability of the relationship of exchange and production. He held that the predominance of exchange over production, properly, the priority of production for exchange over production for immediate consumption, implied a specific concatenation of circumstances. In abstract terms, it proposed, Marx argued:³⁷ "the production of a constantly widening sphere of circulation." This followed from the fact that the whole purpose of production for exchange was realization of surplus value. It signified production driven forward by a compulsion to maximize this realization. It therefore traced an expansionary trajectory. In concrete terms, the

priority of production for exchange implied, a relentless drive towards the creation of a world market. "The tendency to create the world market is directly given in the concept of capital itself. Every limit appears as a barrier to be overcome. Initially, to subjugate every moment of production itself to exchange and to suspend the production of direct use-values not entering into exchange i.e. precisely to posit production based on capital in place of earlier modes of production, which appear primitive from its standpoint. Commerce no longer appears here as a function taking place between independent producers for the exchange of their excess, but rather as an essentially all-embracing presupposition and moment of production itself."³⁸

The predominance of exchange, Marx maintained, connoted the subordination of production organized for immediate gratification: it betokened the abrogation of natural relations of production and consumption. In other words, the predominance of exchange relations implied a progression, a transcendence, a process of transformation, culminating in a developed market; it alluded grudgingly, cryptically, but unavoidably to the history of labour and economic relations. In these terms, a developed system of exchange demanded a kind of explanation as yet unforthcoming. Moving to answer this demand, Marx surmised that interruption of a self-sufficient cycle of production and consumption would require the intrusion of an extraneous factor: so that while a surplus product could arise

spontaneously, translation of that surplus product into exchange value could only occur adventitiously, where an external demand made that translation possible. Says Marx: "the first exchange appears as exchange of the superfluous only, and it does not seize hold of and determine the whole of production: that is, trade appears initially at the margin of communities." Also, "the impulse for the activity of positing exchange values comes from outside and not from the inner structure of (its) production." Equally, ongoing trade requires that "the surplus of production must no longer be something accidental, occasionally present, but must be constantly repeated; and in this way domestic production itself takes on a tendency towards circulation; towards the positing of exchange values."

Shifting as it were from the subjunctive to the affirmative mood, anticipating the historical transcription effected in Capital Vol. I, Marx explains how this logic implicit in the theory of political economy operated historically. He says: "In England, for example, the import of Netherlands commodities in the sixteenth century gave to the surplus wool which England had to provide in exchange, an essential decisive role..... Thus, here was a circulation which presupposed a production in which only the overflow was created as exchange-value, but it turned into a production which took place only in connection with circulation, a production which posited exchange values as its exclusive content."

Political economy, Marx argues, mistakes the relationship between production and exchange for a natural one. It is oblivious, perhaps blissfully ignorant, of the fact that the relation of all the economic categories essential to modern production are historically unique. The unique categorical constellation whose combined objectification realizes the structure of production, is mistaken by political economy for an overwhelming natural fact. The structure of production stands behind and authorizes the system of exchange, but it is not comprehended historically. The structure of production assumes the status of the Dialectic of political economy, in the sense described: because it is the indisputable real precondition and the indispensable presupposition of the economics of generalized exchange; and because, at the same time, it is theoretically amorphous. Marx's critique, on this level, is the outcome of his resolve to bring the unique categorical structure of modern production within the scope of theoretical understanding.

Marx intended to proclaim the historicity of all economic categories and categorial relations. In particular, to cut a swathe through extensive, meticulous argument, Marx was concerned to demonstrate that the categories of capital and labour were the most fundamental, and that the relation they defined was the most problematic posited in modern production. Firstly, he argued that these categories and that relation were fundamental. For example, he says: "the

simple forms of exchange value and of money latently contain the opposition between labour and capital." ⁴⁴ Similarly, he insists: "It is the elementary precondition of bourgeois society that labour should directly produce exchange value, i.e. money..... Wage labour on one side, capital on the other, are therefore only other forms of ⁴⁵ developed exchange value and of money." Moreover, he adds, where exchange value does not arise on the basis of wage labour, but as in sixteenth century Spain, appears adventitiously, impoverishment and economic ruin ensue; such wealth is attracted to and absorbed by economies organized systematically for the production of exchange value. Again, in explanation, Marx says: "It is inherent in the simple character of money itself that it can exist as a developed moment of production only where and when ⁴⁶ wage-labour exists." Where a universal system of exchange has evolved, Marx continues: "Money must be the direct object, aim, and product of general labour, the labour of all individuals. Labour must directly produce exchange value i.e. money. It must therefore be wage-labour." ⁴⁷

In a market economy, labour becomes abstract labour. It produces the generalized form of wealth. ⁴⁸ "When labour is wage-labour," according to Marx, "and its direct aim is money, then general wealth is posited as its aim and ⁴⁹ object." With equal necessity, the product of labour appears as a commodity, intended for and realizable in exchange, as money. Says Marx: "All commodities are only

transitory money; money is the permanent commodity. Money is the omnipresent commodity; the commodity is only local money." ⁵⁰ What this signifies is that labour-power and the product of labour— labour, subjectively and objectively— bears the stigmata of capital. Behind the apparent harmonies of exchange, Marx means to emphasize, there skulks a profoundly asymmetrical relation in which capital posits ⁵¹ labour and its object as expressions of exchange value.

At a most general level, Marx, in characteristically antinominalist fashion, affirms the reality of the category of capital: that category which for him designates an historical mode of production. Thus he says, in what resemble prefatory remarks: "Before we go any further, just one remark. Capital in general, as distinct from the particular capitals, does indeed appear (1) only as an abstraction; not an arbitrary abstraction, but an abstraction which grasps the specific characteristics which distinguish capital from all other forms of wealth - or modes in which (social) production develops.....; however, capital in general, as distinct from the particular real capitals, is itself a real existence. This is recognized ^{" 52} by ordinary economics even if it is not understood. Here, Marx clearly expresses his conviction that distillation of the logic of positive forms of knowledge is at the same time illumination of the bases of social practice. He explains that, logically, abstraction should sharpen awareness of significant, categorial differences, so that,

substantively, theory can cut through a welter of insignificant differences to concentrate upon a common ruling principle, a structural fundament, so that it can supply the proper nomenclature for historical forces.

In this sense, immersion in the texts of political economy, reflection on that theory, has, as its main purpose, a sorting out of the several analytic concepts of that discipline into a definite hierarchy of categories.⁵³ Accordingly, Marx sketches the logic of nineteenth century economics in terms of a specific, unprecedented configuration and he works out a categorial system of stratification. Marx grasps the economic thought of the age as a novel form and as alluding to the emergence of a new and different economic order. Consequently, he approaches the economy, socio-economic existence, as a material substratum governed by the logic of a positive knowledge, for which political economy acted as trustee. So, the forces of production are understood to be roped together by a categorial imperative, and the structure of production, the concrete representative of that imperative, is understood to have dominated contemporary existence. However, although the historical structure of the relations of production have the force of a necessity for the forces of production, this structure does not represent an absolute necessity; it represents for Marx's practical philosophy, a 'vanishing' precondition of social production.⁵⁴

Capital appears at the apex of the categorial pyramid discovered by Marx. It is recognized as the ruling principle of an economic system completely given over to the production of exchange value. Capital mediates between production and consumption, it mediates between production and exchange; in fact, it connects, animates and posits all other categories as simpler aspects and representatives of itself.⁵⁵ In reality, Capital is the self-sufficient and self-identical subject of the process of production organized expressly to maximize exchange-value. It universalizes the commodity form, and it maximizes realization of exchange value in circulation. It strives obsessively to augment its value, which is to say: its purpose is profit. In almost mystical terms, almost in the form of an incantation, Marx defines the ultimate economic category thus: "Capital is now posited as the unity of production and circulation; and the surplus value it creates in a given period of time.... Capital is now realized not only as value which reproduces itself and is hence perennial, but also as value which posits value. Through the absorption of living labour time and through the movement of its own circulation (in which the movement of exchange is posited as its own, as the inherent process of objectified labour), it relates to itself as positing new value."⁵⁶ Moreover, as the subject of the process it strains to transcend its own historical limitation. It constantly posits itself as value in search of surplus value. Thus, remaining with the abstract category, Marx

says: "By describing its circle it expands itself as the subject of the circle and thus describes a self-expanding circle, a spiral."⁵⁷

The incarnation of this categorical system, the substantiation of this transcendental subjectivity, the materialization of the capitalist mode of production, is described as a positive historical force as follows: "Just as production founded on capital creates universal industriousness on one side - i.e. surplus labour, value-creating labour - so does it create on the other side a system of general exploitation of the natural and human qualities, a system of general utility, utilising science itself just as much as all the physical and mental qualities, while there appears nothing higher in itself, nothing legitimate for itself, outside this circle of social production and exchange. Thus capital creates the bourgeois society, and the universal appropriation of nature as well as of the social bond itself by the members of society. Hence the great civilizing influence of capital; its production of a stage of society in comparison to which all earlier ones appear as mere local developments of humanity and as nature idolatry. For the first time, nature becomes purely an object for human kind,⁵⁸ etc..." For Marx, capitalism accomplishes an historically unparalleled transformation of social conditions, and inaugurates a process of transformation that strives to overcome every obstacle to its own expansion.

Considered as a negative category, meanwhile, capital denotes overproduction. For the political economists, committed theoretically to a schedule of tautologies, the problem is illusory: since supply must always equal demand. As Marx explained, however, orthodox analysis rested upon a mode of abstraction that precluded the discovery of anomalies. In this case, because the peculiarities of the circuit of capitalist exchange remained a closed book, political economy could not recognize the phenomenon of overproduction as the result of an in-built constraint on (value) realization. Of fundamental significance, says Marx, is the fact that: "the demand created by the productive labourer can never be adequate demand, because it does not go to the full extent of what he produces. If it did, there would be no profit, consequently no motive to employ him."⁶⁰ It is here that the predisposition to overproduction is located by Marx. Imbalance propels the system. The labourer receives only part of the realizable value of his product, the capitalist contracts to take the remainder, some of which he appropriates as profit. Before the circuit of capital has been initiated, therefore, a decision has been made to withhold a measure of realizable value (some surplus), at the realization phase. The end point of the circuit for capital is not realization but⁶¹ production, or extended reproduction. Capital postpones realization, in perpetuity. At the realization phase, therefore, there is an inevitable disequilibrium. On one side of the equation, on the demand side, the

worker may realize his proportion of exchange value, the capitalist however will not realize his share of the value generated in production; on the supply side of the equation, meanwhile, there stands a product which is irreducibly the objective representation of the total value generated in production but which value is now distributed between the factors of labour and capital.

The problem of overproduction, then, is attributable to the overall structure of production that manoeuvres itself into an impasse at the moment of realization. The contradiction between production and realization is not a general effect of economic production but a problem specific to production dominated by the logic of capital. Nor is the contradiction between production and consumption ever a local economic difficulty; it is a constitutional structural fault. That is why Marx is scornful of the orthodox response: tinkering with the money supply.⁶² In fact, says Marx, the "great thunderstorms"⁶³ of overproduction proclaim the limit of capitalist production. Those difficulties that obstruct the realization of value; those difficulties designated (not without interesting ideological resonances) by the misnomer of overproduction, are symptomatic of the fourfold limit imposed by capitalist production. In explanation, Marx formulates the basic contradiction between production and realization at four levels of generality. (1) Capital will not provide the labourer with the value of his product, or: it prefers to

pay him a 'necessary' rather than an adequate remuneration. This means that the labourers' demand is never adequate at the moment of realization. (2) Capital will not mobilize the forces of production except to generate surplus value. Where the level of profit is absent, there is no production. (3) Capital will not part with its product except in exchange for money: which means that it distinguishes absolutely between need and monetary demand and dislocates need and production. (4) Capital will not produce use-values except as representatives of exchange values. The economy is subjugated to the production of the commodity form.

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Speculating on the transcendence of the limit of capitalist production, Marx says: "when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity, our nature?the development of all human powers as such..... not measured on a predetermined yardstick?"

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Equally fundamental to the structure of production that political economy regards ultimately as an incomprehensible natural force, is the category of labour. Labour, as such, labour in general, Marx recognizes as human effort that produces use values intended for consumption. It is

activity that confers upon raw material a form appropriate to the satisfaction of need. By way of a general definition there is this: "Labour is the living form-giving fire; it is the transitoriness of things, their temporality, as their formation by living time." Labour is the human power to conjure up the object of its desire in an inhospitable environment. Moreover, systematically, or viewed processually, labour has the capacity to preserve and augment use values in successive infusions of energy and purpose. "Material as well as form, substance like form is preserved by further labour - preserved as use-value, until they obtain the form of use-value as such, whose use is consumption. It is therefore already a part of the simple production process that the earlier stage of production is preserved by the later, and that positing the higher use value preserves the old..." Lastly, in terms of this most abstract category, use value, whether as raw material, instrument of labour or finished product, appears as a means at the disposal of labour.

Marx, however, is not concerned with labour, as such, but with labour as it is posited by capital: with wage labour. With regard to 'labour,' the gravamen of his critique is that social labour subsists as the negation of the general category. His analysis, at this final phase, recalls the demonstration that capital is the cardinal principle of a universalized system of exchange; it also carries forward the insight that capital denotes an historical not an

absolute mode of production of social wealth. Subsequently, Marx stresses that labour must perform its function in an historical context dominated by the logic of capital, so that: "to the extent that labour steps into this relation, this relation exists not for itself, but for capital; labour itself has become already a moment of capital."⁶⁸ Within these parameters, Marx is determined to break through the conventional aversion to the historical and to elucidate the principle of contemporary social labour. The first general implication of the supremacy of capital that he registers, is this: that "as use-value, labour belongs to the capitalist; it belongs to the worker merely as exchange value."⁶⁹ The second general implication is this: that "as ongoing labour it is itself already incorporated in capital, and a moment of the same. This preserving force of labour therefore appears as the self preserving force of capital."⁷⁰ Finally, on this rarified level, Marx insists that the rule of capital implies a separation between the worker and all those use values, the raw material, instrument of production and the finished product, that appeared in abstraction as his means of subsistence.

From this point onward, Marx merely amplifies his analysis in order to discover the secret significance of the historical category of wage labour. What is clear, from the outset, is that capital posits labour as wage-labour; that that by no means self-explanatory condition of capitalist

production has to be made logically transparent. To begin with, therefore, it must be remembered that capital sets labour in motion to generate exchange value: "as components of capital, the use values thus obtained from labour are exchange values."⁷¹ What this presupposes is the existence of a specific relation between use-value and exchange-value. As Marx explains: "The relation of necessary labour time to the superfluous (such as it is, initially, from the standpoint of necessary labour) changes with the different stages in the development of the productive forces. In the less productive stages of exchange, people exchange nothing more than their superfluous labour time ; this is the measure of their exchange, which therefore extends only to superfluous products. In production resting on capital, the existence of necessary labour time is conditional on the creation of superfluous labour time."⁷² This argument is developed at another point where it is said: "capital forces the workers beyond necessary labour to surplus labour. Only in this way does it realize itself and create surplus value. But on the other hand, it posits necessary labour only to the extent and in so far as it is surplus labour and the latter is realizable as surplus value. It posits surplus labour then as the condition of the necessary.... As soon as it cannot posit value, it does not posit necessary labour."⁷³

Where capital posits wage labour the presumption of a natural relation between mere and exchange value must be

relinquished. Marx emphasizes three aspects of the condition in which wage labour produces surplus value for capital. "Firstly" he says "surplus value or the surplus product are nothing but a specific sum of objectified living labour...."⁷⁴ Secondly: "the particular forms which this value must adopt in order to realize itself anew, i.e. to posit itself as capital - on the one side as raw material and instrument, on the other as subsistence goods for labour during the act of production - are likewise, therefore only particular forms of surplus value itself."⁷⁵ Thirdly, "The product of labour appears as alien property, as a mode of existence confronting living labour as independent, as value in its being for itself; the product of labour, objectified labour, has been endowed by living labour with a soul of its own, and establishes itself opposite living labour as an alien power: both these situations are themselves the product of labour. Living labour therefore now appears from its own standpoint as acting within the production process in such a way that, as it realizes itself in the objective conditions, it simultaneously repulses this realization from itself as an alien reality.... This realization process is at the same time the de-realization process of labour.... because the whole of real wealth, the world of real value and likewise the real conditions of its own realization are posited opposite it as independent existences."⁷⁶ Thus the relation of use value to exchange value, of necessary labour to superfluous labour, characteristic of capitalism is

logically the inverse of a natural situation in which use value determines surplus value and in which surplus-labour is contingent upon necessary labour.

Bluntly, Marx urges, the secret of wage labour is that it is the regulative principle, the modus operandi, of an historically specific form of property relation. "The greater the extent to which labour objectifies itself, the greater becomes the objective world of values which stands opposite as alien - alien property."⁷⁷ The laws of capitalist production, whose logic is discernible in the categories of political economy, are shown by Marx to express abstractly the rationale of a practical philosophy which actualizes and presides over a particular property relation. As such, capitalism attests to the annulment of simpler, more natural, property relations. In fact, the supremacy of capital is said to presuppose that in historical terms: "the right of property undergoes a dialectical inversion, so that on the side of capital it becomes the right to an alien product or the right of property over alien labour... and on the side of labour it becomes the duty to relate to one's own labour or to one's own product as to alien property... the right of property originally appeared to be based on one's own labour. Property now appears as the right to alien labour and as the impossibility of labour appropriating its own product."⁷⁸

More precisely, looked at more minutely, wage labour is the mechanism whereby capital perpetuates itself as "command over alien labour."⁷⁹ It is the contrivance whereby capital situates or deposits the bearers of labour power, the populations whose energy it transforms into value, entirely outside those processes that produce social wealth. In Marx's own words: "The worker (therefore) sells labour as a simple, predetermined exchange value, determined by a previous process..." - (i.e. he enters the production process entirely on its terms which have a socio-historical authority and exercise a direct and undifferentiated compulsion over him) - "he sells labour itself as objectified labour, i.e. he sells labour only in so far as it already objectifies a definite amount of labour, hence in so far as its equivalent is already measured, given; capital buys it as living labour, as the general productive force of wealth; activity which increases wealth. It is clear therefore that the worker cannot become rich in this exchange, since, in exchange for his labour capacity as a fixed, available magnitude, he surrenders its creative power, like Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage."⁸⁰ Labour power is incorporated by the process of capitalist production but the individual who supplies that labour power is refused access to the social wealth to which his effort contributes. It is as, such, in the sense that the logic of wage-labour effects this alienation that Marx nominates wage-labour as the only real and indispensable precondition of capitalist production. It is

in the light of this knowledge that Marx disparages the "illusion that the capitalist in fact practised self-denial - and became capitalist thereby - a demand and a notion which only made any sense at all in the early period while capital was emerging from feudal etc. relations."⁸¹ Confident in that knowledge, he comments, similarly: "the condition that the capitalist in order to posit himself as capital, must bring values into circulation which he created with his own labour - or by some other means, excepting only already available, previous wage labour - belongs among the antediluvian conditions of capital, belongs to its historic presuppositions, which precisely as such historic presuppositions, are past and gone and hence belong to the history of its formation, but in no way to its contemporary history, i.e. not to the real system of the mode of production ruled by it etc."⁸² All of which is covered by the general conclusion: that where the production process is dominated by the logic of capital that "process, in and by itself, posits the real objective conditions of living labour (namely, material in which to realize itself, and accessories with which to stoke the flame of living labour capacity...)⁸³ and posits them as alien, independent existences." Or, repetitively: it is integrally true of the structure of capitalist production that it perpetually reconstructs as its fundamental precondition the historically unique system of wage-labour.

The capitalist mode of production, then, is understood not

to depend upon any logic but its own. It reconstitutes in the present all that it needs of the past. What it retains in historic detail owes its survival entirely to the exigencies of the present. This is a principle fully appreciated by Althusserian structuralism. However, structuralism completely overlooks the not inconsiderable result of Marx's hermeneutic construction of the logic of capital, namely: that he was thereby enabled to review economic history and to extrapolate from the structure of capitalism to a disillusioned, demystifying history of property relations. The relation of labour to its conditions of production under capitalism is that of superannuated alienation. Under capitalism Marx writes: "The objective conditions of living labour appear as separated, independent values opposite living labour capacity."⁸⁴ Now, it follows from that fact, Marx insists, that the historical route to the present must have been a debacle, a rampage which ensured that populations tied productively to the land were disinherited.

Historically, Marx writes, on a trajectory neglected by structuralism: "What we are concerned with is this: the relation of labour to capital, or to the objective conditions of labour as capital; presupposes a process of history which dissolves the various forms in which the worker is a proprietor, or in which the producer works."⁸⁵ In an equivalent construction, Marx says: "The formula of capital, where living labour relates to the raw material as

well as to the instrument and to the means of subsistence required during labour, as negatives, as not-property, includes, first of all, not-land-ownership, or negation of the situation in which the working individual relates to land and soil, to the earth as his own, i.e. in which he works, produces, as proprietor of the land and soil." ⁸⁶

Subsequently, Marx announces that the 'formula of capital' also supposes dissolution of the guild system, whose craft work posited the worker as owner of the instrument of production, though the raw material was already forfeit. ⁸⁷

The reality of capitalist relations, however, implies "the process of dissolution, which turns a mass of individuals of a nation etc. into free wage labourers..... individuals forced solely by their lack of property to sell their labour." ⁸⁸

The history of property is the process of transformation that effects "complete dissolution of the ties between the workers and the conditions of production." ⁸⁹

If, from the standpoint of capital, history has delivered the masses into the condition of free labour; from the standpoint of labour, history has been a process of dislocation, dispossession, demoralization and devastation. Capitalism, for Marx represents a culminatory point in this drama of expropriation, since it is in the relation of wage labour that the worker loses possession of the use value of his labour power. "What the worker exchanges with capital is his labour itself (the capacity of disposing over it); he divests himself of it." ⁹⁰

Conclusion: From the Grundrisse to Capital

The Grundrisse contains Marx's critique of the texts of political economy. That work records Marx's hermeneutic confrontation with the premisses and predicates of nineteenth century economic theory: it chronicles the discovery of a new knowledge imprisoned by the prejudices of an authoritative framework. The Grundrisse details the success of critical activity over epistemological convention in strictly logical terms; and in so doing it provides the only reliable account of how Marx attained a philosophical position from which he could write Capital, and submit there a systematic and comprehensive knowledge of the objective dialectic of capitalist production. In other words, understanding of Capital, and of Capital Vol. I in particular, is only possible where the Grundrisse is recognized as comprising the necessary theoretical groundwork. It must be appreciated that the knowledge generated critically in the Grundrisse was transcribed in the form of the objective dialectic of capitalism in Marx's ⁹¹ masterpiece.

Thus, the two thematic figures dominating Capital Vol I were constructed in the Grundrisse. The structure of the objective dialectic that emerges in Capital is developed along two dimensions; firstly, structurally, the laws of capitalist production which were deduced in the Grundrisse appear subsequently only in the shape of an implacable objectivity; secondly, genetically, the history of property

relations was similarly deduced in the Grundrisse, but is also considered in Capital Vol I, entirely, as the real process of primitive accumulation that necessarily preceded capitalism. In its final form, the critique of political economy combines a comprehensive knowledge of the logic and structure of capitalist production and a condemnation of the objective repercussions of that logic and structure. Capital Vol I is simultaneously an account of the "economic law of motion of modern society"⁹² and a demystification of the pre-history of modern society. From Chapter 25 onward Marx expands upon his observation that for political economy: "as soon as the question of property is at stake it becomes a sacred duty to proclaim the standpoint of the nursery tale as the one thing fit for all age groups and all stages of development. In actual history, it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in fact force, play the greatest part. In the tender annals of political economy, the idyllic reigns from time⁹³ immemorial."

The connection between the two central theoretical figures of Capital Vol I becomes intelligible only in the light of the hermeneutic of the Grundrisse. Methodologically, the Grundrisse holds the key. The corollary is this: that Capital does not signal the philosophic victory of materialist metaphysics. Nor, methodologically, though he claims to offer an unimpeachable objective knowledge, does Marx rely upon the protocols of empirical science, however

defined. The critique of political economy is not the result of a scientific method of man-watching: observation, experimentation, empirical verification, play no part. Neither can Capital be said to be the end-product of an epistemologically vindicated science of historical materialism, of an irreproachable variant of economic determinism. In fact, Marx does not subscribe to realism, where realism is the generic name for the epistemological prejudice; for what Adorno calls identitarian thinking: the claim variously made for knowledge, that it represents the real exhaustively.⁹⁴ Marx's thought runs counter to that whole dominant trend. Capital presents a knowledge (in the shape of the laws of capitalist production) that systematically misrepresents the real.

Least of all does Marx resort to naturalism. Without doubt he clouded the issue when he wrote that economic development was to be regarded as a "process of natural history." As Adorno explains, however, the allusion to natural laws is not to be understood literally: "least of all is it to be ontologized in the sense of a design, whatever its kind, of so-called "man" - this is confirmed by the strongest motive behind all Marxist theory: that those laws can be abolished."⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Adorno continues, Marx was aware and meant to convey the conviction that the objective dialectic of capitalist production, describes "a law of motion for the unconscious society."⁹⁶ This interpretation is borne out in Marx's

descriptions of the existential horizon defined by capital for both capitalist and worker. Of the capitalist he says: "the immanent laws of capitalist production manifest themselves in the external movement of the individual capitals, assert themselves as the coercive laws of competition, and therefore enter into the consciousness of the individual capitalist as the motives which drive him forward..."⁹⁷ Of the workers he says: "The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements⁹⁸ of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws." In short, Marx raised the spectre of a possible, practical transcendence of natural history.

It is essential to an understanding of Marx's method of enquiry to turn to the Grundrisse. The answer to that methodological question cannot be found in Capital. It is available only in the Grundrisse and in similar exploratory works like the Theories of Surplus Value, which record Marx's explorations in the texts of political economy and outline the process of transformation that contemporary knowledge in the field underwent at Marx's hands. "The footnote apparatus" Alfred Schmidt observes, "especially in Volume I of Capital, contains a record of the residues of these studies. Their results disappeared into Marx's system⁹⁹ as the work of a tailor disappears into a finished coat." For an insight into the enigma of the methodological criteria of the critique of political

economy, therefore, it is necessary to look behind the footnotes, as it were, to return to the primary sphere of intellectual production.

An attempt has been made, here, to encapsulate the intent of the Grundrisse by insisting that Marx consistently levelled his criticism of political economy not only against economic theory but simultaneously against the practical philosophy of the bourgeoisie. Developing this idea a distinction was made between Marx's critiques of the analytic and of the dialectic of political economy. Subsequently it was argued that the critique of the analytic discovered in political economy a theory unable and unwilling to recognize itself as a positive science; and, as such, inextricably implicated in the formation of objective conditions. Marx discerns in the nominalism of political economy a refusal to accept responsibility for the real consequences of the practice that supervises the substantiation of its central categories: a practice over which it exercises a significant measure of control. Marx's critique of the analytic of political economy also refutes the naturalistic epistemology upon which an identity of concept and reality, logic and ontology are postulated. Marx's analysis shows that while his adversaries regard their categories as unproblematic representations of natural phenomena, the materiality of those categories, their social existence, implies the abrogation of a natural economy. To put this another way:

while, analytically, political economy claims to know reality as Nature, considered as a synthetic knowledge, its categories, wage labour, interest and profit, the world market, and so on, all presuppose that the natural cycle of production and consumption is interrupted and mediated by an historically specific categorical relay.¹⁰⁰

The critique of the dialectic discovers that the laws of capitalist production are advocated by the political economists as the algebraic form of an absolute development of productive capacity; whereas in fact, the logic of capital issues inexorably in overproduction, which betrays its imposition of a precise limit on the production of social wealth. According to Marx, capitalism denotes "a mode of production in which the worker exists to satisfy the need of the existing values for realization, as opposed to the inverse situation, in which objective wealth is there to satisfy the workers' own need for development."¹⁰¹ In addition, the critique of the dialectic reveals that while the history of property is romanticized by political economy, the historical precondition of capitalism was a process of expropriation. In Capital, Marx remarks that the bourgeois historians construe the phenomenon of wage labour as "emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds";¹⁰² but, that they do not write the history of property relations in terms of "the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation."¹⁰³ Most of all, Marx insists, it is never admitted that: "The process,

(therefore) which creates the capital relation can be nothing other than the process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of his own labour." 104

Reconsideration of the argument and intention of the Grundrisse is meant to underscore the importance of Marx's hermeneutic research. The point being made has an almost idiotic simplicity: it is that Marx's social theory, his critique of political economy, was originally and fundamentally a critique of an extant social theory; it was not immediately or straightforwardly a critique of social structure. This implies, incidentally, that the methodological key to Marxist thought is not a base-superstructure metaphor. Ultimately, of course, Capital presents an indictment of real social conditions. Beforehand, in their inception, however, Marx's researches exhaustively delimit the theoretical scope of the positive science, political economy. The Grundrisse proceeds from criticism of economic theory to criticism of economic realities, from criticism of logical categories to criticism of the corresponding social-structural categories of capitalist production. To begin with, Marx condemns the economic theory of political economy as a knowledge that inevitably confounds consciousness in contradiction. Next, he condemns the categorical framework of political economy in the sense that it designates an irrational society: he condemns that framework because its continued existence sustains social being in contradiction, because it realizes

an antagonistic society. The critique of the analytic of political economy discovers its theoretical limit (the reason why it is logically, inevitably contradictory), in its failure to recognize itself as a positive knowledge. The critique of the dialectic, which understands political economy precisely as a positive science, defines the practical or historical limit imposed by that categorical configuration. At that second phase in its development, Marx's critique delineates the specific categorical structure that exists as the objective representative of the laws of political economy. The Grundrisse comprehends the reality of capitalist society as: dominated by the economic imperative represented objectively by the capitalist mode of production. Subsequently, from that philosophic position, armed with a knowledge of the structure of capitalist production, Marx condemns the practical limit, determined by that imperative and implicit in the laws of political economy, as an affront to the developmental potential, to the energy and imagination, of mankind.

For Marx, "Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand." ¹⁰⁵ Society understood historically, is a certain disposition of individuals, it is a categorical framework that subsumes, incorporates and excludes individuals: positively, it promotes, directs and distributes individual energies; negatively, society

dissipates, deforms and denies. Marx conceives of modern society as the power of capital to dispose of human and natural resources. Capital is the transcendental subject of modern society. In these terms, Marx repudiates the structure of capitalist production. It is in this light that he writes: "That monstrosity, the disposable working population held in reserve, in misery, for the changing requirements of capitalist exploitation, must be replaced by the individual man who is absolutely available for the different kinds of labour required of him; the practically developed individual, who is merely the bearer of one specialized social function, must be replaced by the totally developed individual, for whom the different social functions are different modes of activity he takes up in turn."¹⁰⁶ Capital signifies repression.

In the manner discussed, Marx's critique of political economy extrapolates from a theoretical criticism to a substantive criticism of social structure. In a final turn of the screw, knowledge of the limitation of the structure of capitalist production becomes the basis of a re-interpretation of the genesis of that structure. As Marx explains, in the Introduction to the Grundrisse: "Bourgeois society is the most developed and the most complex historic organization of production. The categories which express its relations, the comprehension of its structure, thereby also allows insight into the structure and the relations of production of all the

vanished social formations out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up, whose partly still unconquered remnants are carried along with it, whose mere nuances have developed explicit significance within it, etc. Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape. The intimations of higher development among the subordinate animal species, however, can be understood only after the higher development is already known. The bourgeois society thus supplies the key to the ancient etc. But not at all in the manner of these economists who smudge over all historical differences and see bourgeois relations in all forms of society. "

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All that remains to be done is to reiterate that there is no epistemological secret formula behind the critique of political economy. It must be made clear that Marx's ideology critique rests upon an aesthetic principle rather than on an epistemological one. This is apparent in Marx's reflection and in his speculative philosophy: in his hermeneutics and in his phenomenology. Firstly, reflectively, in the hermeneutic rummagings in which Marx fathomed the unexplicated presuppositions of political economy, the precedence of the aesthetic manifests itself in the fact that Marx invariably presents not only a knowledge but also an inseparable criticism of that knowledge. This effect is accurately captured by Ernest Mandel when he remarks how Marx, early in his studies, grasped Ricardo's labour theory of value, ambivalently, as

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the "cynical expression of an economic truth" and as "a frank recognition of the realities of the capitalist mode of production, which other writers seek to conceal." Marx welcomed Ricardo's theory as an accurate description but he deplored the social mechanism that it explained. Later, when the pattern is firmly established, throughout the Grundrisse, for example, Marx always offers a knowledge whose objective implications he abhors. Methodologically the upshot is that the truly enigmatic figure in his discourse is Marx's theory of criticism.

Speculatively, too, the aesthetic principle predominates, but in a different way. The knowledge and criticism of the laws of capitalist production elaborated reflectively in the notebooks, are projected outward in his speculative masterpiece. Capital Vol I is in this sense the result of a process of cutting and editing for which the Grundrisse, at least, supplied what may be compared to the exploratory footage of celluloid rushes from which cinematic representations of reality emerge. The aesthetic criterion appears in Marx's characterization of the objective dialectic of the logic of capital: in that it does not culminate in an absolutist claim to knowledge, but in an appeal to experience. Marx's speculation presents the structure of society dominated by capitalism as an affront to mankind. Ultimately, he appeals to the contradictory experience of his readership as the vindication of his criticism of the knowledge and structure that confronts

them. The knowledge presented in Capital is not submitted in the form of an ontology: it is offered as an incitement, a provocation. It is expected to sow consternation and provide enlightenment.

In both dimensions it is the aesthetic, the theory of criticism, that proves to be the theoretically underdeveloped but fundamental factor. What has to be explained is the structure of the appeal to experience made by Marx's critique of political economy. Basically, what is involved is this: Marx's hermeneutic apprehends the categories of consciousness and the categories of social being, the logical and the historical, as they are set out in political economy, and he declares that they systematically misrepresent, suppress and deform individual and collective existence. Marx understands that the logic of capital and the structure of capitalist production impose themselves upon the minds of individuals and constrain their social relations.¹¹⁰ These frameworks are comprehended as epistemological and sociological systems which claim merely to represent the reality, both individual and collective, that they actually subsume and arbitrarily deploy. For Marx, these systems presume, epistemologically, to arrogate the power of judgment and to pre-empt critical thought: and at the same time incline, sociologically, to naturalize or mythologize finite social conditions, the better to preclude the intrusion of oppositional practices. Theoretically, they intrude to

establish the horizon of consciousness, just as in practice these structures establish a political perimeter for action. In other words, Marx's critique of ideology illustrates how the historical has been contained and denied. He discloses a prohibition on judgment, on the possibility of extrapolation from experience to knowledge or from knowledge to experience; and he documents the tyranny of the structure of production over the forces of production. Repudiating these tendencies, Marx invites the reader, as empirical subject, to examine the gulf between knowledge and experience that his criticism evokes; and he appeals to the working class, as the empirical subject, to whose experience of exclusion and exploitation he aims to give theoretical expression. He offers the working class a knowledge that will heighten their experience of contradiction to the extent that it will become politically effective. At that point, however, the methodological questions end.

Economic Determinism and Economic Reductionism

If Marx's early social theory is vitiated by Feuerbach's naturalism, by the time he came to compile the material in the Grundrisse, that Feuerbachian influence had been completely eradicated. Any theoretical dependency upon Feuerbach in his initial encounter had been outgrown in Marx's "second appropriation of Hegel." Similarly, if the base-superstructure metaphor does epitomise Marx's methodological position, at any stage, it must be

appropriate to a formative stage, since the critique of political economy is grounded, not a prioristically in materialist metaphysics, but hermeneutically in an intense dialogue with contemporary nineteenth century economic theory. Marx's sociology emerges in the course of a demonstration of what, logically, is required to eliminate the anomalies and contradictions of political economy. Sociologically, the critique of political economy owes nothing to an imbecilic two-tier model of society. In short, if there is an unremitting economic determinism in Marx's early social criticism, the same cannot be said of his later work. To account for the distinctiveness of the critique of political economy, without subscribing to the "epistemological break" thesis, it is expedient to differentiate economic determinism and economic reductionism. Accordingly, economic determinism is regarded as implying mechanistic sociology that explains all social phenomena as effects of economic causes. Something resembling a base-superstructure model is indicated. Economic reductionism, on the other hand, designates not a methodological foible but an historical movement. Economic reductionism figures in the critique of political economy not as a methodological formula but as a substantive theme. It is the central theme of Marx's phenomenology of capitalist production. Methodologically, Marx's researches represent a tour de force because ultimately they proved capable of comprehending the reductive logic of capital in its phenomenological aspect.

The socio-historical narrative of Capital recounts the reductive effect of the law of value imposed by capitalist production. In the first place, Marx relates how the structure of modern production recognizes individuals solely as personifications of economic categories. He stresses that the system of wage labour posits the social relation of capital and labour. Secondly, Marx ponders the social repercussions of the logic of capitalist production. He emphasizes that the aggrandisement of capital entails the attenuation of the value of labour. He observes how the logic and structure of capitalist production increasingly marginalize the working population in relation to those processes and powers that generate social wealth. In structural terms, Marx registers the tendency to reduce social relations to an economic relation. In historical terms, Marx envisages a centrifugal effect that progressively propels the mass of the population beyond the sphere of social production, and which deposits them without proprietary rights, as surplus population.

Structurally, the critique of political economy explains that the reproduction of capitalism depends upon the wages-system. It becomes clear in Marx's exposition that by means of the wages-system, capital incorporates labour-power without admitting the worker in person, as beneficiary, into the production process. The system of wage-labour operates to maximize the extraction of

unremunerated labour-power. Ideally, it delivers to the capitalist all labour-power over and above that required to maintain and reproduce the worker as mere wage labour. Production is so organized that the worker simultaneously realizes and relinquishes the surplus value that engenders social wealth. The systematic marginalization accomplished through the wages system is described in the Grundrisse like this: "all the progress of civilization," Marx writes, "or in other words every increase in the powers of social production, if you like, in the productive powers of labour itself - such as results of science, inventions, division and combination of labour, improved means of communication, creation of the world market, machinery etc. - enriches not the worker but rather capital, hence it only magnifies again the power dominating over labour." ¹¹¹ Making the same point in Volume I of Capital, Marx complains that production is so organized: "that within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productivity of labour are put into effect at the cost of the individual worker; that all means for the development of production undergo a dialectical inversion so that they become means of domination and exploitation of the producers; they distort the worker into a fragment of a man, they degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine; they destroy the actual content of his labour by turning it into a torment; they alienate from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in the same proportion as science is incorporated into it as an independent

power..."

Succinctly, Marx's analysis announces that the connection between capital and labour posited in the wages system establishes a property relation. In particular, it reduces the worker to mere wage labour; it defines him as possessor only of wage-labour. Labour is available to the worker only abstractly, as the exchange-value of his labour capacity. In short, the worker is "compelled by social conditions to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for labour, in return for the price of his customary means of subsistence..."¹¹³ By implication, so Marx proceeds, in view of the structure of contemporary production organized under the rule of the law of value, the historical genesis of current property relations can involve nothing besides the systematic separation of the worker from the objective conditions and pre-requisites of production. "What does the primitive accumulation of capital i.e. its historical genesis, resolve itself into?" Marx answers immediately that: "In so far as it is not the direct transformation of slaves and serfs into wage labourers, and therefore a mere change of form, it only means the expropriation of the immediate producers i.e. the dissolution of private property based on the labour of its owner."¹¹⁴ More bluntly, Marx observes that a necessary presupposition of wage-labour is "the separation of free labour from the objective conditions of its realization -¹¹⁵ from the means of labour and the material of labour."

Deduction of the historic presupposition of current property relations; extrapolation from the present structure of the relations of production, is subsequently followed through minutely. Separation of the labour force from its objective conditions of realization, Marx maintains, means: "above all, release of the worker from the soil as his natural workshop." At the same time, the condition of free labour testifies to the dissolution of anything resembling a natural community. The society based on communal property must have been superseded. The system of wage labour is antithetical to and therefore implies the prior "dissolution of small, free landed property as well as of communal land ownership resting on the oriental commune." The reason is that: "In both forms the worker relates to the objective conditions of his labour as to his property." Capitalism, in contrast, posits the worker without proprietary rights to land or raw material, and it propels the collective life of society towards the point where it becomes: "The abstraction of a community in which the members have nothing in common but language etc., and barely that much..."

Next, Marx explains that wage labour implies for the worker: "Dissolution of the relation in which he appears as proprietor of the instrument." The "essential character of the guild-corporation system,can be resolved into the relation to the instrument of production - the instrument of labour as property - as distinct from the relation to

the earth, to land and soil (to the raw material as such) as one's own."¹²¹ For Marx, the skill nurtured by the pre-capitalist guild system of production, is strangled by capitalism. "With craft production," he writes "the main concern is the quality of the product and the particular skill of the individual worker..... With the production of capital and from the very outset, the point is not this half artistic relation to labour - which corresponds generally with the development of the use value of labour, the development of particular abilities of direct manual work, the formation of the human hand etc. The point from the outset is mass, because the point is exchange-value and surplus value. The principle of developed capital is precisely to make special skill superfluous."¹²²

The chain of historic presuppositions of capitalist production also includes that of the emergence and disintegration of handicraft production, the elementary form of factory production. At that stage, the main benefit to capital derived from the collective power of the workers: brought under the immediate supervision of capital and whose productivity was enhanced by the division and combination of labour described by Adam Smith. At that stage of manufacture, Marx pointed out: "the mode of production is not yet determined by capital, but rather found on hand by it."¹²³ Nevertheless, another phase of the inexorable estrangement of the workforce from its condition of production is irreversibly accomplished at that stage.

As Marx says: "The association of the workers, as it appears in the factory, is (therefore) not posited by them but by capital. Vis-a-vis the individual worker, the combination appears accidental. He relates to his own combination and cooperation with other workers as alien, as modes of capital's effectiveness."¹²⁴ Personally, the worker loses his control of the instrument of labour; collectively the workforce is required to surrender control of the purpose and direction of the productive apparatus. Factory conditions realize the negation of a productive community.

In time, however, capital's insatiable appetite for surplus value effects a truly epochal transformation. It results in the mechanization which causes a vast diminution in the value of wage-labour. "The struggle between the capitalist and the wage-labourer," Marx writes, "starts with the existence of the capital relation itself. It rages throughout the period of manufacture. But only since the introduction of machinery has the worker fought against the instrument of labour itself..."¹²⁵ Capital installs machinery as the successor to wage labour. "The instrument of labour, when it takes the form of a machine immediately becomes a competitor of the worker himself."¹²⁶ More accurately, automation inaugurates a competition with regard to which the worker is not so much ill-equipped as ineligible. Mechanization proves irresistible, as the "gradual extinction of the English hand-loom weavers"¹²⁷ made clear. Says Marx: "The working population (therefore)

produces both the accumulation of capital and the means by which it is itself made relatively superfluous..."¹²⁸ Even more starkly, he says: "The degree to which the means of production are means of employment for the workers lessens progressively as those means become more extensive, more concentrated and technically more efficient."¹²⁹

With mechanization, the process of expropriation reaches its climax. Firstly, the working population is more thoroughly de-skilled. "Along with the tool" Marx writes "the skill of the worker in handling it passes over to the machine. The capabilities of the tool are emancipated from the restrictions inseparable from human labour power. This destroys the technical foundation on which the division of labour in manufacture was based. Hence, in place of the hierarchy of specialized workers that characterizes manufacture, there appears, in the automatic factory, a tendency to equalize and reduce to an identical level, even the kind of work that has to be done by the minders of machines."¹³⁰ There is a kind of impoverishment accompanying this loss of skill whose signature is written across a society in which: "in place of the artificially produced distinctions between specialized workers it is natural differences of age and sex that predominate."¹³¹ Moreover, because he is deskilled he is devalued: "The worker becomes unsaleable, like paper money thrown out of currency by legal enactment. The section of the working class thus rendered superfluous by machinery, i.e. converted into a

part of the population no longer directly necessary for the self-realization of capital, either goes under in the unequal contest between the old handicraft and manufacturing production and the new machine production or else floods all the more easily accessible branches of industry, swamps the labour market, and makes the price of labour fall below its value."¹³²

Obviously, Marx does not condemn mechanization, per se. In fact, he is inclined to regard its tendency to render wage labour obsolete as a propitious portent of the collapse of capitalism.¹³³ Marx's complaint is that under the rule of capital, machinery, instead of promoting the general good, acts like a centrifuge discharging human labour from the active life of society. Not only does mechanized production confirm and consolidate capital as alienation of raw material, instrument of labour, skill and collective purpose; not only does mechanization ensure that the relative contribution of the worker becomes infinitesimal.¹³⁴ Additionally, capital in the form of machinery, deliberately applies scientific knowledge to production as an esoteric knowledge, even as private property. That is, the process of production as it becomes a scientific process, neither makes itself intelligible to the worker, nor places itself at his disposal. In the one case, Marx says: "The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction, to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness

but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself." ¹³⁵ In the other case, he says: "It is a result of the division of labour in manufacture that the worker is brought face to face with the intellectual potentialities of the material process of production as the property of another and as a power that rules over him. This process of separation starts in simple cooperation.... It is complete in large scale industry which makes science a potentiality for production which is distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital." ¹³⁶

Economically, in its relevance for capital, mechanization represents competitive capital's victory over wage-costs through magnification of the productivity of labour-time. Sociologically, in its relevance for labour, it signals the complete alienation of the conditions of production. As a result, machine production posits the individual worker as helpless and dependent, while it posits the working population in its entirety (the ratio of population to surplus population) as a function of capital. In other words (and this is the last and most general conclusion of Marx's phenomenology), automation normalizes and perpetuates the formation of surplus population in accordance with the imperatives of capitalist production. In explanation: Marx begins by stating, contra Malthus, that there are no natural laws of population. ¹³⁷ Different modes of production impose different demographic limits. ¹³⁸ What is

peculiar, in demographic terms to the capitalist mode of production, he adds, is that it defines surplus population by means of two criteria. Firstly, surplus population is that population which has been totally expropriated and marginalized in the course of the pageant of primitive accumulation. Secondly, surplus population is that whose labour capacity can find no avenue to its realization. It is incorrect, Marx continues, to regard a consumer class or leisure class as surplus to requirement; and he notes that the political economists properly regard the consumer class as a necessary sector.¹³⁹ The point is not that surplus population does not directly produce its own means of subsistence. Surplus population means surplus labour, exclusively; it means labour not required by capital. Surplus population denotes labour, the labour of a population, which cannot, due to the interdict of capital (to the structure of the relations of production that represent that prohibition objectively), transform the labour necessary to its reproduction into use-value. Demographically, the surplus quatum has been evacuated and evicted from the sphere of social production and left out of account in those processes productive of social wealth.

This assault on Malthusian population theory and this analysis of the demographic effect of capitalist production, constitutes Marx's final and most generalized criticism of the practical philosophy of the bourgeoisie. Under capitalism, he declares, social reproduction is

fraught with contradiction: the relations of production pretend to be and are misrepresented as being deployed at an optimal level of efficiency; meanwhile there is everywhere evidence of the barbaric segregation of the population into necessary and surplus sectors. Marx explodes the implicit claim of the capitalist mode of production to the status of concrete universality. He depicts capitalist society as one which maintains a ratio of necessary to unnecessary people as a prerequisite of its own continued existence. The conditions of the excess population may be ameliorated from the revenues of all classes but that population remains marginalized. Its labour capacities are never exercised, sponsored or developed as the necessary condition of its own existence. In the nineteenth century, when Marx wrote, the production of 'supernumeraries' at home prompted emigration, which contained the possibility of rehabilitation in the sphere of production.¹⁴⁰ In the post-colonial era, in the age of Immigration Law, the emigration option has been written out of the redundant workers' eviction order. Now technicians and the professional classes, the intellectual elite, emigrate and circulate in the international labour market. However, in the colonial era (and since), Marx observed, the workers "are merely following capital, which has itself emigrated."¹⁴¹ Which means that while colonization effected a displacement of overproduction crises, the basic contradictions of capital remained unresolved. The law of value, the logic of capital and its concrete structural

representative, the capitalist mode of production, notwithstanding its ability to displace the effects of crises, to insure itself against every contingency, reproduces society as the negation of a community. Economic reductionism is a socio-historical power that subordinates every consideration to the maximization of surplus value.

Notes

1. Habermas, Jürgen, Knowledge and Human Interests, London, Heinemann, 1973, p 63.
2. Ibid., p 62.
3. Schmidt, Aldred, History and Structure, Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1981, p 61.
4. David Rubenstein's comparative analysis of Marx and Wittgenstein concentrates entirely upon the transcendence of nominalism common to both authors. Nothing is made of Marx's transcendence of essentialism. See Rubenstein, David, Marx and Wittgenstein, London, R.K.P., 1981.
5. Adorno, Theodor, W., Negative Dialectics, London, R.K.P., 1973, p 328.
6. Ibid., p 148.
7. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p 254. See also pps. 789 ff.
8. Ibid., p 351.
9. Ibid., p 351.
10. Ibid., p 249.
11. Ibid., p 193.
12. Ibid., pps. 90-93.
14. Ibid., p 89.
15. Ibid., p 94.
16. Ibid., p 87.
17. Ibid., p 240.
18. Ibid., p 241.
19. Ibid., p 241.
20. Ibid., p 241.
21. Ibid., p 241.
22. Ibid., p 242.
23. Ibid., p 241.

24. See especially Marx's comment: "Now Ricardo. With him, however, wage labour and capital are again conceived as natural, not as historically specific social forms for the creation of wealth as use-value; i.e. their form as such, precisely because it is natural, is irrelevant..... and thus, although exchange value is the point of departure, the specific economic forms of exchange themselves play no part at all in his economics." Ibid., p 331.
25. Ibid., p 156.
26. Ibid., p 83.
27. Ibid., p 83.
28. Ibid., pps 247-48.
29. Ibid., pps 163-64.
30. Ibid., p 164.
31. Ibid., pps 156-57.
32. Ibid., pps. 158-59.
33. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol. I, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p 332.
34. See Martin Nicolaus's Foreword to the Grundrisse, p 40.
35. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 257.
36. Ibid., p 331.
37. Ibid., p 407.
38. Ibid., p 408.
39. Ibid., p 227.
40. Ibid., p 226, p 740.
41. Ibid., p 256.
42. Ibid., p 256.
43. Ibid., p 257.
44. Ibid., p 248.
45. Ibid., p 225.
46. Ibid., p 223

47. Ibid., p 224.
48. Ibid., p 233.
49. Ibid., p 224.
50. Ibid., p 231.
51. Ibid., p 230.
52. Ibid., p 52.
53. For a discussion of how logical systems tend to fall into either systems of coordination or subordination: simple binary-classificatory systems and operations or more complex hierarchical classificatory systems see: T.K. Seung, Structuralism and Hermeneutics, New York, Columbia University Press, 1982, pps 22-34.
54. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, pps 831-32.
55. Ibid., pps 330-32.
56. Ibid., p 745.
57. Ibid., p 746.
58. Ibid., pps 409-10.
59. Ibid., p 412.
60. Ibid., p 418, p 420.
61. "With capital the consumption of the commodity is itself not final, it falls within the production process; it itself appears as a moment of production." Ibid, p 536.
62. Ibid., p 434.
63. Ibid., p 411.
64. For a commentary on the logic of over-production as explicated by Marx in the Grundrisse, see: Nicolaus, Martin, 'The Unknown Marx,' In Ideology in Social Science, edited by Robin Blackburn, Glasgow, Fontana, 1972. pps 306-33.
65. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 488.
66. Ibid., p 361.
67. Ibid., p 361.
68. Ibid., p 364.

69. Ibid., p 364.
70. Ibid., p 364.
71. Ibid., p 363.
72. Ibid., p 398.
73. Ibid., p 461. Also p 604.
74. Ibid., p 451.
75. Ibid., p 451.
76. Ibid., pps 453-54.
77. Ibid., p 455.
78. Ibid., p 458. Also p 470.
79. Ibid., p 330.
80. Ibid., p 307.
81. Ibid., p 285.
82. Ibid., p 459.
83. Ibid., p 401.
84. Ibid., p 461.
85. Ibid., p 497.
86. Ibid., p 498.
87. Ibid., p 499.
88. Ibid., p 503.
89. Ibid., p 589.
90. Ibid., p 322.
91. Thus it follows that knowing Marx is not essentially a question of reading Capital.
92. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol. I, p 92.
93. Ibid., p 874.
94. Realism is the generic name for the epistemological prejudice. It is the vaguest of the forms in which epistemological absolutism appears. But it makes identity the basis of its claim to knowledge. It

proclaims the complete unassailable truth of a categorical framework and it represents reality in the form of an ontology. Roy Bhaskar's books pursue the inexorable logic of methodological realism from a critical realism (the critique of empiricism in A Realist Theory of Science, Leeds, Alina Books, 1975) to a positive naturalism (in The Possibility of Naturalism, Brighton, Harvester, 1979). Realism reformulates the possibility of the methodological unity of the natural and social sciences that it first alleges that empiricism or positivism have not established. (Other examples of this approach are: Benton, Ted, Philosophical Foundations of the Three Sociologies, London, R.K.P., 1977; and Keat, Russell and Urry, John, Social Theory as Science, London, R.K.P., 1975) The kind of immediate or (unmediated) and comprehensive and final (ontological) knowledge that these positions imagine is not what is produced in Capital Vol. I however. That text arises out of the hermeneutic exercises of the Grundrisse, and it is presented as a counter-knowledge which only the negative experience of a subjugated population can actually confirm.

95. Adorno, Theodor, W., Op. Cit., p 355.
96. Ibid., p 356.
97. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol I, p 433. See also: "Except as capital personified, the capitalist has no historical value, and no right to that historical existence....." etc. Ibid., p 739.
98. Ibid., p 899.
99. Schmidt, Alfred, Op. Cit., p 99.
100. "One thing, however, is clear: Nature does not produce on the one hand owners of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their own labour power. This relation has no basis in natural history, nor does it have a social basis common to all periods of human history." Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol I, p 273.
101. Ibid., p 772. The problem is put more simply where Marx refers to: "These formulas, which bear the unmistakable stamp of belonging to a social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the opposite...." Ibid., pps 174-75.
102. Ibid., p 875.
103. Ibid., p 875.

104. Ibid., p 874.
105. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 265.
106. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol I, p 618.
107. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 105.
108. If there is an enigma here it concerns not the foundations of the possibility of Marx's science (his theory of knowledge or epistemology) but the possibility of Marx's social criticism (his theory of criticism or his aesthetic).
109. Mandel, Ernest, The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx, London, NLB, 1971, p 43.
110. The categories of bourgeois economics consist precisely of forms of this kind. They are forms of thought which are socially valid, and therefore objective, for the relations of production belonging to this historically determined mode of social production, i.e. commodity production.
111. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 308.
112. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol I, p 799.
113. Ibid., p 382.
114. Ibid., p 927.
115. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 471.
116. Ibid., p 471. See also p 497.
117. Ibid., p 471.
118. Ibid., p 471.
119. Ibid., p 490.
120. Ibid., p 497.
121. Ibid., p 499.
122. Ibid., p 587.
123. Ibid., p 586.
124. Ibid., p 515.
125. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol I, p 554.
126. Ibid., p 557.
127. Ibid., p 557.

128. Ibid., p 783.
129. Ibid., p 778.
130. Ibid., p 545.
131. Ibid., p 545.
132. Ibid., p 557.
133. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 749.
134. Marx, Karl, Capital Vol. I, p 549.
135. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 693.
136. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol. I, p 482.
137. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, pps 604-10. Also Capital Vol. I, pps 781.
138. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol. I, pps 783-84.
139. Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, p 608.
140. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol. I, p 579.
141. Ibid., p 794.