

Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx and Negativity

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In 1844 a turning point occurs in Marx's philosophical development: for the first time he makes labour the central category of his social ontology (1) - a position of importance it was never to lose. Productive activity, and its alienation, are thematized in that most extraordinary document containing the results of Marx's first serious study of political economy: the economic and philosophical manuscripts written in Paris in 1844. The development of this theme bears a striking resemblance to the movement from consciousness through to absolute knowing in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. The non-accidental character of this correspondence is confirmed when Marx turns aside to settle accounts with the Hegelian dialectic, and the Phenomenology in particular.

When Marx founds his new social ontology on the principle of an historically developing social whole centred in human practice, he could not neglect the inspiration of Hegel's dialectic of negativity, together with the problematic of estrangement and its overcoming, present in the Phenomenology. Feuerbach's blunt naturalism contains no such principle of development, and - in spite of his materialism - he considers the problem of alienation only under the rubric of 'illusions of speculation'. The main object of this paper will be to explain how, on the one hand, Marx can praise Feuerbach for counterposing to Hegel's negation the 'self-sustaining positive', while, on the other, he can praise Hegel for expressing in his dialectic of negativity the process whereby man produces himself through his own labour.

In the first section of this paper I will rehearse the movement of Marx's investigation of alienated labour; next I will examine his critique of Hegel's Phenomenology; finally I will consider the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach on Marx and demonstrate the true originality of Marx's dialectic.

1 Marx's Theory of Alienation

(a) Labour under the rule of private property

Marx's 1844 Manuscripts are justly famous for conceptualizing the situation of the wage-labourer as one of alienation. At first sight, it appears that the worker's alienation in his labour is due to the subordination of labour to private property; because the worker has no property in the means of production his labour-power is excluded immediately from the instrument and object of production owned by another; his labour realizes itself therefore only through the mediation of the wage-contract whereby it is alienated to the master and works in his behalf. The labourer treats his labour as a commodity; as a consequence he has no interest in the work itself but only in the wage; labour does not belong to itself but to private property. Marx comments trenchantly on the situation endured by the worker: he executes plans he does not

form; he objectifies himself in his product only to have it taken from him; he produces palaces but lives in hovels; his labour creates beauty but deforms himself; the more intelligence is embodied in the design of a factory system the more machine-like and stupifying the routine of work, so much so that the labourer faces machinery as a competitor for his place; at work he does not feel at home; he feels himself only when he is not working; his labour is therefore not voluntary but forced labour; in it the worker belongs not to himself but to another. Since, for Marx, activity is the central determinant of human being, for as men express their life so they are, the alienation of labour is at the same time self-estrangement. (1844 Manuscripts, pp.322-326 in Early Writings)

All this follows from the separation between labour and private property, and the power of private property over the immediate producer. The only certainty in the worker's life is that his destiny depends upon private property - on whether it has any use for the labour he offers. The immediate precondition of alienated labour appears to be private property in the means of production.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that Marx commonly speaks of the power of property or of capital, rather than the domination of the property-owner or the capitalist. Much more is involved here than a rhetorical figure. This usage represents Marx's insight into the real character of social relationships in bourgeois society. This is: that the nature of the relationships between persons follows from their relationship to things. If one asks of two people going into a factory why it is that one can boss the other one around, the answer cannot be given in terms of the personal qualities of the individuals concerned but only in terms of their differing relation to capital. The one who owns (or acts on behalf of) capital is thereby the master of the other. Marx says:

Capital is ... the power to command labour and its products. The capitalist possesses this power not on account of his personal or human properties but in so far as he is the owner of capital. His power is the purchasing power of his capital, which nothing can withstand. (p.295)

Throughout his work Marx never tires of contrasting the relationships of personal dependency in pre-capitalist society with the liberation from personal dependence established by the bourgeois revolution; but then there comes the common dependence on impersonal relations; through the mediation of money and capital new social dependencies arise. In feudalism there is the appearance of a meaningful unity between the individual and the means of production in that the land is individuated with its lord and its serfs - just this particular estate is his and they belong to it. Hence the proverb: 'No land without its lord' (p.318). Modern private property, by contrast, has an abstract universal form: value. One can put one's wealth

'into' anything - factories, land, works of art - without ceasing to be 'worth' so much. Money dissolves all feudal fixity and we find the modern saying - 'Money has no master' - expressing the absolute contingency of the relationship between property and personality. We no longer bow the knee to princes, but now, says Marx, 'an impersonal power rules over everything' (p.366).

(b) Private property as the consequence of alienated labour

Unwary readers of the section on 'estranged labour' in the 1844 Manuscripts, then, assume that what is being claimed is that the worker is alienated because he works under the sway of capital; they are then astonished when Marx suddenly turns round and says that private property is not so much the cause as the consequence of alienation. Here is the passage in question:

Private property is ... the product, result, and necessary consequence of alienated labour (der entäusserten Arbeit), of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.... It is true that we took the concept of alienated labour ... from political economy as a result of the movement of private property. But it is clear from an analysis of this concept that if private property appears as the ground, the basis of alienated labour, it is much more its consequence, just as the gods were originally not the cause but the effect of the confusion in men's minds. Later, however, this relationship becomes reciprocal.

(pp.331-32)

It is of the first importance to understand what Marx is saying here, and the significance of his view of private property as the realization of alienated labour (2). A clue to the direction of his thought is given a few lines later when he comments: 'In speaking of private property one imagines that one is dealing with something external to man. In speaking of labour one is dealing immediately with man himself' (p.333). Nonetheless, as we shall see in a moment, in the case of pre-capitalist society one is not going too far from the truth in seeing property, e.g. landed property, as an external condition of labour's realization: but modern private property, held as capital, is different. Capital, as a store of value, is internally related to value-creating labour. Let me explain.

In the first part of the Mss. Marx stays close to his sources in political economy and shows from facts admitted by political economy itself that the more the worker produces the less he can call his own and 'the more he falls under the domination of his product, of capital' (p.324). In its theory political economy says that labour is the basis of production and exchange; Adam Smith is quite clear that the real 'wealth of nations' lies in the labour force and in improvements in productivity brought about by the division of labour. The economy appears to be founded on the movement of private property, on buying, selling, investing, profiting, but in truth the essence of these relationships lies behind them in labour and its relations and development. Marx says that there is a paradox in that: 'political economy starts out from labour as the real soul of production, and yet gives nothing to labour and everything to private property!' (p.332). 'Proudhon has dealt with this contradiction,' Marx continues, 'by deciding for labour and against private property'; but that is insufficiently dialectical; what we are faced with is 'the contradiction of estranged labour with itself' (p.332). Today, private property is, paradigmatically, capital, which is nothing but a store of value. What is the origin of value? What is its substance? Labour! Every time the worker labours, therefore, he creates a value which, when realized on the market by the employer, adds to his store of capital. The worker produces and reproduces that which dominates him - capital.

The relation of cause and consequence is grasped here from the point of view of the being-in-process of the totality rather than as an external conjunction of antecedent and consequent. Abstract alienated labour, and self-expanding value, capital, stand in an internal relation which structures the whole of capitalist society in such a way that its reproduction depends on the constant reflection-in-process of these moments into each other. To prioritise labour is not to deny the reality of capital; but its effectivity as the proximate moment in the worker's self-estrangement does not prevent Marx from grasping it as the mediating moment in labour's self-alienation, posited by labour itself as its own otherness.

In grasping this dialectical relation of reflection in otherness we are not dealing with the constant conjunction of otherwise unrelated elements but with a polar relation in which, if one can follow the movement of private property as if it were the principal aspect, the ultimately overriding moment must be labour, which alienates itself in the capital to which it is subordinated.

In relating labour in its alienation to fully-developed private property, that is, capitalist property, in this way, Marx is well aware that relationships were different in previous social formations. It is for this reason that I must insist that when Marx gives priority to labour over property he is not posing it as historically antecedent but rather as ontologically more fundamental in the social totality established by their dialectic. The elements of the relationship may well exist separately before entering on this dialectic. Property may well have established itself originally in the manner projected by Rousseau in his second discourse (at least as plausible as anything in Locke, Smith, and company), imposing itself by force and fraud. It is essential then to bear in mind that when Marx speaks of labour as the basis of private property, this results from an analysis of modern private property, property held as capital, and, more particularly, means of production held as capital.

If one looks, as Marx does at length, at pre-capitalist social formations, there is no internal link between labour and property as there is between labour as the substance of value and capital as accumulated value - or as 'dead labour' (as Marx sometimes calls it). The dialectical relationship between labour and private property is itself an historically developed product. Hence it had not merely to be discovered, but to be created.

In the main form of pre-capitalist property, namely landed property worked by serfs or yielding tithes, there is certainly an opposition between labour and property in that, in virtue of the political ties of lordship and bondage, the exploitation of the propertyless mass of labourers is effected. But this process of exploitation does not sustain the property relation itself. From an economic point of view feudal property is an externally enforced condition determining one's place in production and the possibility of gaining wealth (for example, the serf is condemned to be an appurtenance of the land, the land itself is inalienably linked to the system of primogeniture).

However, when private property is fully developed, it is free from all restrictions and is universally alienable. Along with the development of markets in all kinds of commodities goes the reduction of land and labour themselves to alienable commodities. Possession now depends no longer on political mediation, but on the effect of the purely economic movement. It becomes inevitable, Marx says,

that the rule of the property owner should appear as the naked rule of private property, of capital, divested of all political tincture; that the relationship between property owner and worker should be reduced to the economic relationship of exploiter and exploited; that the personal relationship between the property owner and his property should come to an end, and that property itself should become purely material wealth....

(p.319)

What Marx traces in his treatment of pre-capitalist forms is a movement from a situation where property is an external condition of labour, that is to say, one just 'finds' that one is landless and must work for the propertied, to that in which property is labour's product in the capital relation. There is a shift from a state of estrangement between labour and its conditions of actualization (appearing externally to it as another's property) to the constitution of a process of alienation sustaining the system of estrangement of labour from its object and itself. Now the first relation may well be taken as an historically prior condition of the second complex, but, when the movement of the totality that is now constituted by the relations of labour and capital develops, it is labour that posits private property as its estranged self. Marx says:

It is only at the culminating point of the development of private property that this its secret re-emerges, namely, that on the one hand it is the product of alienated labour, and on the other it is the means through which labour alienates itself, the realization of this alienation.
(p.332)

The relation of immediate externality between labour and its object remains in the new dynamic, not now as a pre-condition, but as the recurring moment at which the worker is forced to sell his labour-power because he has no other property; the whole system, including the reproduction of this very moment, is sustained by labour's continual self-alienation (3). Private property, originally other than labour, becomes in practice private property as alienated labour. Private property is unmasked as itself a structure of alienation, not merely the (external) cause of estrangement.

(c) Communism as the negation of the negation

Marx states that only that political economy which, from Smith, took labour as its principle, and which no longer regarded private property as nothing more than a condition external to man, can be regarded as a product of modern industry (p.341).

In a very suggestive comparison, Marx, following Engels, says of Smith that he was 'the Luther of political economy' (p.342). Just as Luther attacked external religiosity in the form of fetish-worshipping, priests, ritual, churches, etc., in order to implant God all the more firmly in the hearts of the religious, so Smith mocked the mercantilists' illusions about gold and other external forms of property, in order to put labour as such all the more firmly under the category of property as the inner essence of value. However, this political economy cannot conceptualize the matter in a critical way because it takes property in all factors of production for granted. It sees labour as necessarily gaining social recognition only as the value of its product. It sees the social synthesis as achieved only through money and exchange on the market.

Marx's position allows us to grasp private property, not as given, but as a historically specific set of relationships to labour. Moreover, only Marx's position, taking man and his labour as the basis, can envisage as a practical task the overcoming of alienation. It is to be expected that those who hold property to be the basis of alienation can only conceive of the transition to socialism as an externally structured 'final crisis' of an economic character where the working class and its struggle is put in a secondary place. As the obverse face of this, transition is posited as the result of an 'intervention' by individuals or self-proclaimed vanguards, who are mysteriously exempt from the one-dimensionality of capitalism's social consciousness. Marx grasps the dialectical process of self-alienation, and reappropriation, in the movement of living labour as the basis for a self-transcending historical practice.

In modern industry we find, Marx claims, that the antithesis of propertylessness and property is not 'an in-



different antithesis' lacking any 'active inner relation' but, grasped as the antithesis of labour and capital, it is a contradiction, 'a vigorous relation, therefore, driving towards resolution' (p.345). However, only if labour is grasped as the over-riding moment in the alienated labour/private property complex can the conditions of a real transcendence of estrangement be established. The immanent movement of private property cannot abolish itself, albeit that it produces its own grave-diggers. In the dialectical opposition of private property and alienated labour, the principal aspect of the contradiction becomes the latter, so that Marx says that the fall of wage-labour and private property - 'identical' (p.332) expressions of estrangement - takes place 'in the political form of the emancipation of the workers' (p.333).

The pattern whereby labour grasps its other as its own self in estrangement from itself, and negates this negation, has obvious parallels with Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, as does the positive meaning Marx attributes to this abolition of private property. However, in order to comprehend what Marx intends in speaking of 'the positive supersession of private property' (p.348), we must first review the central role of labour in Marx's new philosophy.

Through labour, through material production, humanity comes to be what it essentially is. 'The product of labour,' says Marx, 'is the objectification (Vergegenständlichung) of labour' (p.324). Through this process of production, therefore, the labourer realizes his potential and becomes objective to himself; but it is important to stress here (because we will have to come back to it when we make a comparison with Hegel) that this is possible only because there exists external material with which to work; Marx says: 'the worker can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world' (p.325). It is the material in which his labour realizes itself and, in the absence of any distortion of the relationship, this material production is the mediation in which the unity of man with nature is established. 'It is therefore in his fashioning of the objective world that man really proves himself' says Marx. 'Through it nature appears as his work and his reality ... and he can therefore contemplate himself in a world he himself created' (p.329).

However, this happy lot is hardly that of the wage-labourer. In the conditions dealt with by political economy - that is to say where labour is separated (through 'second order mediations' (4)) from its objective conditions of realization (the material and the instruments of production) - the objectification of labour is at the same time its alienation, and the outcome is the estrangement of the worker from the material basis of his existence and life-activity (p.324).

Overcoming estrangement through communism means the reappropriation of the 'ontological essence' of humanity which has constituted itself 'through developed

industry, that is through the mediation of private property', objectively as an external alien power (p.375).

Marx believes that the alienation of labour is the historically necessary process in which the richness of its productive power emerges; private property is not a mistaken detour but the historically necessary form of development of wealth. Marx clearly distinguishes the ontological necessity of objectification from the historical fact that this sphere has constituted itself in the shape of private property as a world of estrangement founded on the alienation of labour. This means there is something positive in property, disguised by its alien form as the power of capital, namely the wealth of human self-development. Marx says: 'The meaning of private property, freed from its estrangement, is the existence of essential objects for man, both as objects of enjoyment and activity' (p.375). Previous communist doctrine, he points out, had not 'grasped the positive essence of private property' (p.348). It is not a question for Marx of annulling private property and all its works, then, but of taking possession of the immensely powerful modern productive forces by and for society. As he puts it, very generally:

Communism is the positive supersession of private property as human self-estrangement, and hence the true appropriation of the human essence through and for man; it is the complete restoration of man to himself ... which takes place within the entire wealth of previous periods of development.... The entire movement of history is therefore both the actual act of creation of communism - the birth of its empirical existence - and, for its thinking consciousness, the comprehended and known movement of its becoming. (p.348)

It is obvious, Marx points out, that communism understood in this historical light does not amount to a revulsion from the achievements of the epoch of private property, 'an impoverished regression to primitive simplicity', as he puts it (p.395), but the reappropriation of the objective expression of mankind's essential powers through the destruction of the estranged character of this reified world in which they are embodied.

In contrast to this picture of communism as the result immanent in history, crude communist ideology seeks an empirical proof for itself in isolated examples of co-operation torn from their historical context. As Marx observes:

All it succeeds in showing is that by far the greater part of this development contradicts its assertions and that if it (communism) did once exist, then the very fact that it existed in the past refutes its claim to essential being (Wesen). (p.348)

We have seen that Marx starts from the objective power of capital over the labourer. This alien power, upon investigation, turns out to be the product of labour itself in its estrangement. When Marx turns to the question of the overcoming of alienation, therefore, this must take the form, not of a mere abstract negation of private property, but of a determinate negation which incorporates the positive appropriation of the estranged essence of man objectified in developed industry under the guise of private property alien to the worker.

However, note Marx's conclusion:

Communism is the act of positing as the negation of the negation, and is therefore a real phase, necessary for the next period of historical development, in the emancipation and recovery of mankind. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism is not as such the goal of human development - the form of human society. (p.358)

It is important to understand this point if we are to see why Marx's dialectic differs from that of Hegel.

Marx illustrates the point with the example of atheism. This is a peculiar kind of humanism because it depends for its sense on first of all positing what it denies. It asserts the autonomy of man only through the negation of God. First man is negated through being reduced to the creature of God; but then the negation of the negation reasserts the essentiality of man. This humanism is thoroughly infected by the opposite through which it developed itself. This is very clear in the Sartrean man who says to himself 'God is dead; I am abandoned; I am alone; there is no commandment, I must take complete responsibility for my destiny.' This kind of consciousness is that of the man who first believed in God and then lost his faith. It is quite different from that of the humanism that never knew God in the first place and hence could never feel lost without him!

In the same way, socialism as 'positive humanism' stands on the ground of the essential relations of man to himself and to nature. It does not require to be perpetually mediated through its understanding of itself as the opposite of private property, although this is a necessary historical stage (5). (We will have to recur to this topic, and develop it, after we have discussed Hegelian 'negativity', and again in relation to Feuerbachian 'positivity'.)

2 The Critique of Hegel's Phenomenology in Marx's Manuscripts

It is time now to turn to the question of Marx's understanding of his relationship to Hegel (6). We find that he writes a special section in the Mss. on the critique of Hegel's dialectic. This turns out to focus on the Phenomenology, which he says is 'the true birthplace and secret of the Hegelian philosophy' (p.383). In fact the most detailed discussion is on the closing chapter, Absolute Knowledge, which, he says, 'contains the concentrated essence of the Phenomenology, its relation to the dialectic, and Hegel's consciousness of both and their interrelations' (p.386) (7).

Let us first recall then the upshot of the Phenomenology, picking up especially the theme of alienation (Entäusserung) (8).

(a) Hegel's Phenomenology

In the Phenomenology, Absolute Knowledge comprehends that 'objectivity', standing over against a 'subjectivity' estranged from it, is brought forth only within the self-alienating movement of spirit. Marx points us (pp.387:93) to the following crucial passage from the last chapter, in which Hegel employs this term in summarizing his conclusions:

Surmounting the object of consciousness is not to be taken one-sidedly to mean that the object showed itself as returning into the self ... but rather that it is the alienation (Entäusserung) of self-consciousness that posits thinghood (die Dingheit) and that this alienation has not merely a negative but a positive meaning ... for self-consciousness ... because it posits itself as object, or the object as itself.... At the same time ... self-consciousness has equally sublated (aufgehoben) this alienation and objectivity too ... so that it is at home with itself in its otherness as such.' (9)

It follows from this that the estranged forms taken on by spirit in its objectification remain as they are; spirit can feel at home, notwithstanding this estrangement, because, in it, it is in its own other.

Indeed, the alienation of self-consciousness is given a positive significance above in that it posits the self as objective. Hegel insists that there is no need for spirit to be afraid of such objectification:

Neither has the I to cling to itself in the form of

self-consciousness as against the form of substantiality and objectivity, as if it were afraid of alienating itself; the power of spirit lies rather in remaining the self-same spirit in its alienation (Entäusserung) and ... in making its being-for-itself no less merely a moment than its in-itself (10).

(b) Marx's assessment of Hegel

We are now in a position to consider Marx's praise of Hegel. He says:

The great thing in Hegel's Phenomenology and its final result - the dialectic of negativity as the moving and producing principle - is that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, objectification (Vergegenständlichung) as loss of object, as alienation (Entäusserung) and as sublation (Aufhebung) of this alienation; that he therefore grasps the nature of labour and conceives objective man ... as the result of his own labour ... which is at first only possible in the form of estrangement (Entfremdung).
(pp.385-86)

Marx is impressed by the dialectic of spirit's actualization of itself through positing itself in the form of objectivity as the negative of itself and then negating this negation. Marx sees in this the hypostatization of the abstract reflection in philosophy of man's objectification through his own labour. One should note particularly that he praises Hegel for grasping objectification as alienation. Since it is the historical experience of mankind that is reflected here, Hegel's greatness consists precisely in his granting it recognition instead of glossing over it, and Marx generously credits Hegel with working out the elements of criticism of entire spheres, such as religion, the state, civil society, and so forth - even if in mystified form (p.385).

However, Hegel has no solution to offer other than that pseudo-movement which preserves the realm of estrangement as a moment. As he puts it, spirit is 'at home in its otherness as such'. Simultaneously, spirit overcomes its estrangement from its world through knowing it as its own work, while preserving that world of estrangement in the immediacy of its otherness. This 'recollection', as Hegel calls it (11), leaves everything as it is. Hence Marx says that, despite the 'thoroughly negative and critical appearance' of the Phenomenology, the 'uncritical positivism' of Hegel's later works shines through (p.384). This pseudo-solution arises because, consistently with his idealism, Hegel identifies the human essence with self-consciousness. Marx points out the following consequences:

All estrangement of human nature is therefore nothing but estrangement of self-consciousness... The estrangement of self-consciousness is not regarded as the expression ... of real estrangement... Instead, actual estrangement ... is in its innermost nature - which philosophy first brings to light - nothing more than the appearance of the estrangement ... of self-consciousness. The science which comprehends this is therefore called phenomenology.
(p.387)

Despite the wealth of content in the Phenomenology everything is treated under the form of consciousness or self-consciousness. This makes a big difference. Marx points out that a natural being endowed with material powers works upon real objects and in its alienation produces in this process a real world of estrangement; but 'a self-consciousness, through its alienation, can posit only thingness (Dingheit)' (p.389), an abstraction, a mere postulate of self-consciousness. It is clear that 'thingness' has no independent being and as a postulate of self-consciousness is at the mercy of a retraction by the self-consciousness that postulated it. Hence a change in attitude abolishes the consciousness of estrangement because estrangement itself is understood only as an attitude taken up by self-consciousness.

In a part of the manuscript that has been damaged it is possible to reconstruct an argument whereby Marx compares a real historical solution to the problem of estrangement with a typically Hegelian idealist solution. If one wanted to sublimate the property in the manner of Hegel's Phenomenology, he seems to say, one might be satisfied with the consciousness that private property is the estranged essence of social man and believe that thereby it is finished as a 'conquered moment'; but in fact 'real estrangement remains and remains all the more, the more one is conscious of it as such'; hence the abolition of estrangement can only be attained through communism (12). Marx concludes: 'In order to abolish the idea of private property the idea of communism is quite sufficient. It takes actual communist action to abolish actual private property.' (p.365). Revolutionary practice, not speculative reconciliation, reconstitutes reality through an objective reappropriation of the estranged object, thereby producing a new objectivity free of estrangement from its producers.

As Lukacs says, Hegel's mistaken view of alienation in society has two aspects:

On the subjective side, there is the mistaken identification of man and self-consciousness demonstrated and criticized by Marx; on the objective side there is the equation of alienation and objectification in general (13).

Hegel cannot conceive of objectification except as resulting in estrangement; but he sees this as necessary to spirit's actualization of itself. Hegel speaks of this process as one of 'pure simple negativity ... which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of opposition'. In itself, he goes on, 'the life of God and divine cognition' is one of untroubled unity with itself in itself 'for which otherness and estrangement and the overcoming of estrangement are not serious matters'. But its actualization is marked by 'the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative' (14). Spirit must posit itself in the form of otherness. This negation of itself is subsequently negated in its turn, when spirit recognizes itself in these objective shapes, but this cycle of negations is eternally necessary. Spirit can come to itself only as the negation of the negation.

In so far as Hegel accepts the necessity for such objectification he becomes uncritical of the sphere of estrangement brought to life within that development. Thus Marx can say correctly that 'Hegel sees ... self-objectification in the form of self-alienation and self-estrangement as the absolute, and hence final, expression of human life which ... has attained its own essential nature' (p.396).

In the middle part of the Phenomenology, masses of concrete historical material, involving actual estranged spheres of existence, are brought within this framework, and the practical problems are provided with a pseudo-solution when spirit reconciles itself, both with objectivity in general and with historically created objective estrangement in particular.

(c) Hegel's negation of the negation

Marx is prepared to give credit to Hegel for giving philosophical expression in the movement of 'negation of the negation' to the historical achievement of labour in its alienation. He says: 'In grasping the positive significance of the negation which has reference to itself ... Hegel grasps man's self-estrangement (and) alienation ... as self-discovery (and) objectification....' (p.395).

However, the incorporation of the problematics of estrangement within the conceptual framework of absolute negativity (p.396) means that Hegel's critical apparatus is quite unable to identify the specific historical origins of alienation or the concrete historical conditions of its supersession; thus he endorses the moment of estrangement

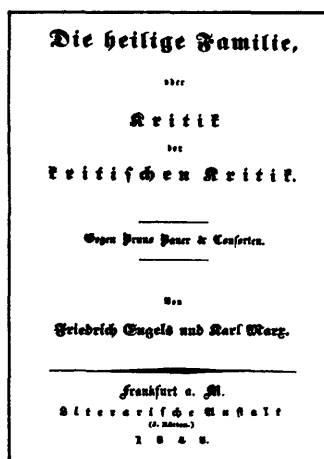
as an ontological necessity. Marx says: 'Since this negation of the negation is itself still trapped in estrangement, what this amounts to is a failure to move beyond the final stage, the stage of self-reference in alienation....' (p.398).

As we have seen, for Marx communism is the positive supersession of private property as human self-estrangement. We have seen also that he characterizes 'communism itself - because of its character as the negation of the negation, as the appropriation of the human essence through the intermediary of private property - as being not yet the true, self-originating position but rather a position originating from private property' (p.365). He concludes: 'Only when we have superseded this mediation - which is, however, a necessary precondition - will positive humanism, positively originating in itself, come into being' (p.395).

This is the crucial difference between Marx and Hegel: Hegel stays within the circle of circles of his absolute while Marx wants to open out a new historical perspective subsequent to the supersession of alienation. Marx sums up the relation of Hegel's philosophy to real history as follows - there are two aspects to it:

- (1) 'Hegel has merely discovered the abstract, logical, speculative expression of the movement of history.'
- (2) 'This movement of history is not yet the real history of man ... it is simply the process of his creation, the history of his emergence.' (p.382)

The first point is that the abstract expression of the process of man's creation of himself, through labour and its alienation, is given in Hegel under the concept of 'absolute negativity', an abstract speculative version of activity which is empty of content and can be supplied with any content accordingly. The other point is that in the cycle of negation, and negation of the negation, Hegel states as an absolute what is in real history relative only to the process of emergence which culminates in the communist revolution; but 'communism is not as such the goal of human development'.



3. Feuerbach and Marx

The influence of Feuerbach on Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts is indubitable, and acknowledged by Marx himself when he speaks of him as 'the only person who has a serious and a critical attitude to the Hegelian dialectic and who has made real discoveries in this field' (p.391). What is more difficult to assess is the extent of the convergence and divergence of the two thinkers in their appreciation of Hegel and, more especially, in their materialist programmes (15). Of particular interest - because of its relevance to the perspective we have been considering - is Marx's judgment that a 'great achievement of Feuerbach is to have opposed to the negation of the negation which claims to be the absolute positive, the positive which is based upon itself and positively grounded in itself' (p.381).

(a) Feuerbach's critique of Hegel

How did Feuerbach argue against the 'negation of the negation which claims to be the absolute positive'? To begin with, Feuerbach does not accept the substantiality assigned to the mediated being, spirit, as opposed to that which is immediate - the concrete and sensuously manifest. If the natural, material and sensuous is merely the self-alienation of spirit, then it is only 'something to be negated', he says, 'like nature which in theology has been poisoned by original sin' (16). Feuerbach says that 'according to Hegel it is only the negation of the negation that constitutes the true positing' (17). But, he argues, 'a truth that mediates itself is a truth that still has its opposite clinging to it' (18). Spirit can come to itself only through its mediation in its other, the material world. But, Feuerbach asks rhetorically: 'Why should I not proceed directly from the concrete? Why, after all, should that which owes its truth and certainty only to itself not stand higher than that whose certainty depends on the nothingness of its opposite?' (19). The Hegelian philosophy, he comments, 'lacks immediacy unity, immediate certainty, immediate truth' (20).

Feuerbach argues at length that sensuous intuition does possess immediate truth. Of course he is well aware that the Phenomenology begins precisely with a refutation of the standpoint of sensuous certainty; although sensuousness claims immediate certainty, it lacks the form of truth; it is sublated in higher forms of cognition and grasped ultimately in terms of spirit's own objectification of itself, its free product constituted as an otherness to be intuited. Feuerbach responds that all that is refuted in the Phenomenology is the logical 'Here' and 'Now' - which does not touch the real sensuous object (21).

The second objection to the Phenomenology is that it rests on the presumption of the identity of thought and being. Feuerbach argues that the circle of thought-determinations can never reach the other of thought and must collapse to formal identity merely; difference is unreal where there is no objective ground for it. Hegel fails to produce an actual substance because it relies for its content on forms of alienation, but, since these are denied their independence from spirit, this means that spirit is denied real substantiality. Feuerbach says:

Absolute thought, that is, thought which is isolated and cut off from sensuousness, cannot get beyond formal identity ... for although thought or concept is determined as the unity of opposite determinations, the fact remains that these determinations are themselves only abstractions, thought determinations - hence, always repetitions of the self-identity of thought.... The Other ... posited by the Idea itself, is not truly and in reality distinguished from it (22).

Feuerbach concludes that:

The identity of thinking and being expresses, therefore, only the identity of thought with itself. This means that absolute thought is unable to cleave itself from itself, that it cannot step out of itself to be able to reach being (23).

This problem Feuerbach had very early identified as a crucial limitation, in his first doubts about the vexed question of the transition in Hegel from Logic to Nature. He says: 'If Nature did not exist, the logic, this immaculate virgin, would never be able to produce it out of itself.' (24)

Marx takes over this whole line of criticism more or less intact. He says of this transition to Nature:

The absolute idea ... 'resolves to let the moment of its ... other being, the immediate idea, as its reflection, issue freely from itself as nature', this whole idea, which conducts itself in such a strange and baroque fashion, and which has given the Hegelians such terrible headaches, is purely and simply ... abstraction which, taught by experience and enlightened as to its own truth, resolves ... to

relinquish itself and ... in place of its self-absorption, to let nature, which it concealed within itself as a mere abstraction, as a thing of thought, issue freely from itself, that is to say ... it resolves on intuition.... The mystical feeling which drives the philosopher from abstract thinking to intuition is boredom, the longing for a content. (pp.397-98)

Marx follows Feuerbach too in saying that 'The abstract thinker who decides on intuition, intuitively nature abstractly' (p.398); hence 'the whole of nature only repeats to him in a sensuous external form the abstractions of logic'; it follows that 'nature as nature ... distinct from these abstractions ... has no meaning, or only has the sense of an externality to be superseded....' (p.399).

(b) The Dialectic of History

The difficulty in interpreting Marx's position arises when we see that, although he does not explicitly say so, he takes up a fundamentally different position from that of Feuerbach with respect to materialism; and this in turn allows Marx a deeper appreciation of Hegel's merit. The issue turns on the centrality of material labour in Marx's social ontology. For Feuerbach, whatever the qualifications he introduces, the main drift of his positive doctrine is the assertion of an immediate unity between man and the rest of nature. He seems to identify mediation as such with the distance thought introduces between man and the object and to reject it accordingly. For Marx, by contrast, the unity of man with the rest of nature is not immediate, but established by labour, and hence changes and develops with new forms of labour. The unity of man with nature is always mediated in industry (p.355) and incorporates within itself equally a struggle to bring into human use the recalcitrant forces of nature. This gives rise to a historical dimension, which depends on changes in the mode of production. This dimension is lacking in Feuerbach but Marx finds it in Hegel, albeit raised to the level of purely philosophical reflection which has lost touch with the real basis of history in material labour. Nonetheless, Hegel's philosophy contains the idea of activity and, moreover, an activity which develops through a stage of alienation and estrangement.

Feuerbach sees Hegel's negation of the negation only as a contradiction of philosophy with itself: to this he counterposes the positivity of sensuous immediacy. However, Marx looks deeper than Feuerbach into the historical content of Hegel's work, and its real achievement. Feuerbach sees in Hegel's problematic of alienation only the self-delusion of a philosophy estranged from the real world - one which refuses to abandon itself to sensuousness. For Marx, Hegel's speculative problematic is an attempt to pose, and hence to solve, within philosophy a real historical problem, which Marx sees in terms of the necessity to supersede the rule of private property. Hegel's speculative solution is inadequate because the problem is not so much a theoretical one as a practical one (p.354).

But Feuerbach's standpoint too cannot link up with practice. He interprets the problem of estrangement as the view of nature as the 'otherness' of the Idea (25); and the theological as opposed to the human. This is interpreted again as exclusively a problem of the consciousness of theologians and philosophers. To this speculative illusion Feuerbach counterposes the immediate truths of naturalism and humanism; he sets out to reform consciousness to this effect. This makes him an idealist in practical philosophy - as he himself naïvely confesses (26).

For Marx 'positive humanism' is a result of a real historical development, a necessary sequence in the self-production of the ontological essence of man (p.349), whereas for Feuerbach it is seen in ethical terms. Feuerbach posits the 'communal essence' of man as a fixed abstraction based simply on the capacity for universal mutual recognition on the part of individuals. At best this

allows for an equally abstract criticism of the perversities of theology and philosophy. In Marx the communal essence is established through production in society (p.349). Its estrangement is expressed in the development of the 'division of labour' (p.369) and 'the money system' (p.323); money is the mediation which both ties and separates the individuals (the 'cash-nexus' of the Manifesto); it is the 'estranged and alienating species-essence of man' (p.377); a person's bond with society lies literally 'in his pocket' (27). However, this critique is not an ethical-anthropological one, for it is grounded in an ontology which allows for the development of alienation and its supersession to be grasped as historical necessities. Thus Marx can assert 'both that human life needed private property for its realization and that it now needs the abolition of private property' (p.374).

In effect, Feuerbach falls below the level of historical concreteness already attained by Hegel. One is inclined to agree with Lukac's verdict (28) that Hegel poses the problem of estrangement as a problem of the structure of social being, and in the development of the stages of spirit the reality of the historical periods breaks through their conceptual expressions in the aprioristic framework. But, although Feuerbach uses a methodological dialectic in evolving and situating his thought in the history of philosophy (29), his positive doctrine in effect rejects objective dialectic altogether (30). (Marx, in later years, when Germany treated Hegel's dialectic as a 'dead duck', will observe: 'Feuerbach has much on his conscience in this respect' (31))

In this light, one must enter qualifications about Marx's (genuine) enthusiasm for Feuerbach at this stage of his development. When he says Feuerbach's great achievement is to have counterposed to the negation of the negation the self-subsistent positive, he has in mind primarily the way in which Hegel uses the negation of the negation to affirm the absolute as spirit (32). Marx agrees with Feuerbach that this means Hegel's problematic is essentially religious. In the second place Marx has in mind the way in which the idealist negation of the negation fails to move beyond the stage of self-reference in estrangement to a positive supersession. These two aspects of the matter are connected, of course. However, on the first point, Feuerbach rejects dialectics along with idealism; while on the second point, Marx diverges at least as far from Feuerbach as he does from Hegel, because for Feuerbach 'positive humanism' is merely a philosophical perspective produced by inverting religion and philosophy so that speculative thought is brought down to earth, while for Marx it is historically produced through the supersession of real objective estrangement.

Marx is primarily interested in the historical dialectic, and he wants to root communist revolution immanently in it - hence his recuperation of Hegel's dialectic of negativity in historical and materialist terms. Feuerbach rejects Hegel's negation of the negation altogether because he is primarily interested in nature, which idealist dialectic reduces to the status of an 'externality' to be sublated. Here Marx is bound to go some of the way with Feuerbach. However, although the Mss. contain some pretty undigested lumps of Feuerbach's naturalism, it is already clear that Marx advances beyond Feuerbach's endorsement of the immediate unity of man and nature to pose labour as their mediation. This provides him with the ontological basis for his historical dialectic (33).

It has to be said that Marx fails in the 1844 Mss. to state his differences with Feuerbach in an explicit fashion (34). No doubt the general enthusiasm of Marx and Engels for Feuerbach's devastating critique of theology and philosophy in the early 1840s led to an over-estimation of his contribution and a lack of interest in taking any distance from him at the outset of Marx's own development of materialist criticism. Much later, Marx will offer the more nuanced judgment that 'compared with Hegel, Feuerbach is very poor' but that 'after Hegel' he

was important in opening the way out of the over-powering idealism of the absolute philosophy (35).

4. Marx and the 'inversion' of Hegel

The upshot of all this is that in 1844 Marx presents us with a synthesis of Political Economy, Hegel, and Feuerbach: in the conception of man producing himself socially and historically through material labour, within the dialectic of alienation and its supersession.

In the final section of this paper I wish to consider whether Marx's synthesis is coherent or not.

Louis Althusser holds that the 1844 Mss. represent nothing but an inversion of Hegel and that consequently the dialectical form remains the same. It is the same man that walks on his feet as when he stood on his head - whether his activity is grasped as material or as spiritual.

Althusser holds that in Hegel we have 'the simple unity of a totality produced by the negation of the negation ... a simple original unity which develops within itself by virtue of its negativity, and throughout its development only ever restores the original simplicity and unity in an ever more "concrete" totality' (36). Again: 'In a text as beautiful as the night' (an intentionally back-handed compliment!)

'the Phenomenology celebrates "the labour of the negative" ... and every philosopher trembles in his soul as if he were in the presence of the Mysteries. But negativity can only contain the motor principle of the dialectic ... as a strict reflection of the Hegelian theoretical presuppositions of simplicity and origin ... as a pure reflection of the principle of alienation itself....' (37)

Althusser alleges that 'it is this "Hegelian dialectic" that reigns in glory over Marx's 1844 Mss.' (38)

Let us consider this charge that the 1844 Mss., being nothing but a materialist inversion of Hegel, are open to the objections sustainable against Hegel's dialectic. To begin with: even a cursory reading of Marx's criticism of Hegel's dialectic discloses that it is just his self-identical totality that is the main object of attack. Only in a subsidiary place comes the criticism that Hegel does not know real material labour but only the movement of mind. The main thrust of the attack is on the way in which Hegel uses the concepts of negation of the negation, and of 'Aufheben', to present spirit as at home with itself in its otherness, having overcome, and yet preserved, estrangement as a moment in the absolute.

As we have seen, Marx follows Feuerbach in counterposing to Hegel's self-identical totality a view of man as an objective being constituted in and through objective relationships. There is no suggestion in the text of man as a subject requiring to negate objectivity as such through grasping it as its own. On the contrary, Marx carefully distinguishes objectification and objectivity as such, on the one hand, from alienation and private property as specific historical determinants, on the other. As far as Marx's concept of practice is concerned, we have seen that he pictures man as created in and through material production, but he stresses that the worker can create nothing without the sensuous external world (p.325) as material for production. He speaks of the necessity for a 'dialogue' with nature (p.328).

In order to solve the problem of Marx's conceptualisation of the totality within which material production goes on, it is necessary to distinguish between an 'identity' of opposites in which the 'other' is nothing but the self in alienation, and a unity of opposites in which the other is really distinct as a pole of the relationship, however transformed in it.

It is clear that Marx conceives the unity of man and the rest of nature as a unity of this latter type. The unity is grounded in man's natural origins ('for man is a part of nature' - p.328); but the synthesizing moment is human historical practice which takes up natural elements as

material in the development of industry, the ontological foundation of properly human existence. It is clear that this work is an open-ended, always to be furthered, project.

One can see now that the difference in content must make a difference to the general form of working of the dialectic when we stand it on its feet through grounding it materialistically. It is the irreducible distinction between man and the objective basis of his activity, however inter-mediated through labour and industry, that allows us to grasp the dialectic of human practice as historical and open-ended.

What then of Marx's appropriation of the 'negation of the negation' and of 'alienation' from Hegel? We have seen that there is a big difference between Hegel's absolutization of these moments and Marx's view that they relate only to the history of mankind's emergence, and are to be superseded in socialism positively grounded on itself. This is only possible in turn because his fundamental ontological frame of reference is the mediation of Man and Nature in industry, while the problematic of alienation is reduced to a historically relative stage - however prolonged - by inscribing within the fundamental mediations the distorting effect of the secondary mediations: wage-labour and private property.

The Mss. borrowing of 'negativity' from Hegel's Phenomenology does not signify therefore a general ontological category but a logic of origins only. In this dialectic Marx is very careful to distinguish his understanding of estrangement from Hegel's precisely in terms of its inscribing within the more fundamental reality of objectification. Spirit has as its negative something which is merely its own other because objectification can only be brought about within the absolute movement of negativity. The negative is easily negated in its turn simply through recollection of the process of its origination in alienation. For Marx the negative inheres in an objective world from which the self is estranged - specifically the alienation of labour produces private property; but private property is by no means 'nothing but' labour in estrangement because this labour becomes embodied in material form and the material, which is the stuff of the natural form of the commodity produced, is drawn from the naturally given object of labour. What one can say is that value is nothing but 'crystallized labour', that capital is nothing but 'stored-up dead labour'. Given that modern private property takes the form of a value-holding, we see that while, on the one hand, this may have a material embodiment (from land to works of art), on the other hand, it is realizable as exchange-value on the market in abstraction from its specific embodiment. With the abolition of private property, its material bases, for example the modern productive forces, are retained, but the alien form of their social existence as property is sloughed off.

Furthermore, overcoming alienation does not mean, as in Hegelianism, encompassing all otherness; it just means 'the destruction of the estranged character of the objective world' (p.395).

Ian Hunt and Roy Swan in Radical Philosophy 30 (Spring 1982) claim that Marx's concept of society in the Mss. is, 'after the Hegelian manner, conceived as encompassing ... nature and natural history', as taking up its origin into itself. This is to read the text in a partial manner. The crucial passage comes towards the end of the section on 'Private Property and Communism'. 'Society is ... the perfected unity (N.B. not 'identity') of essence of man with nature....' (p.349). The 'human essence of nature' is constituted through the real historical relationship of 'industry' (p.355); through this mediation of himself in nature man has 'proof of his self-mediated birth' (p.357), and questions about ultimate origins become redundant once one grasps that man creates himself through his own labour. The natural basis of human being which lies at the origin as a given condition becomes more and more the object of human practice with the consequence (as Marx

formulates it in *Capital*) that in acting on external nature man changes himself (39). Any 'naturalism' of the essence is thereby rejected in favour of a historically developing system of mediatedness.

However, it is important to distinguish the self-mediatedness of spirit established through absolute negativity from the self-mediatedness of human being established in and through material practice. Take this crucial passage cited by Marx (p.400) from Hegel's 1830 *Encyclopaedia*:

Spirit is nature's truth. In this truth nature is vanishing, and spirit has resulted as the idea which has attained being-for-itself, whose object as well as subject is the concept. This identity is absolute negativity, for whereas in nature the concept has its perfect external objectivity, its alienation has been sublated and the concept has become identical with itself. It is this identity only in that it is a return from nature (40).

Marx charges Hegel with characterizing the externality of nature as a defect, and with positing it as potentially superseded from the outset (pp.399-400). From this we must conclude that Marx could not simply replace the negating activity of thought with the material transformation of practice, while yet holding nature in the same contempt. If Marx insists, following Feuerbach, that man acts in the context of objective relationships, then his self-mediatedness cannot be absolutized in the manner of Hegel's spirit; rather it is always relative to the real progress of industry. This is because he bases himself, not on the identity of opposites, but on their unity, in this context. (Hunt and Swan agree this is true of the mature Marx.) The former conception always implies a return, however more developed - a closed circle. The latter conception implies a spiral progress which is open-ended. In spite of Hegel's incorporation of history within his system, his conception is ultimately ahistorical in that it requires a fixed 'end' to development. Marx's teleology, being immanentized in a self-mediating subject with objective relationships involves a perennial 'starting over' whenever the objective room for development of a given social totality is exhausted (41). Marx's inquiry is into the material stages of development of human history, not the moments of movement of spirit's production of itself out of itself. In the latter case the end bends back on the beginning which in some sense presupposes it. But Marx's inquiry into real history discloses the existence of distinct

stages of development which are complete in themselves and are separated by real discontinuities, by revolutionary transformations. The problem is to distinguish transitions within a self-developing totality from transitions of a more radical type - ontological breaks - which refound the fundamental determinants of social being.

But to conceptualize a transition from the 'relative ontological continuity inherent in the unfolding of capital' (Mészáros (42)) to a qualitatively new history raised the vexed question of 'Aufhebung' (sublation) in Hegel and in Marx. Marx points out that in Hegel's system sublation plays a special role in which negation and affirmation are brought together; thus, in spite of their sublation in the course of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, abstract right, morality, family, civil society, state etc., 'continue to exist', he points out, 'but have become moments ... which mutually dissolve and engender one another, moments of movement' (p.393). In order to indicate the difference between such preservation of a moment in a higher unity and his own conception of the transcendence of property, Marx resorts merely to the qualification 'positive', so that he calls for 'the positive sublation of private property'. But one wonders if this is not a fundamentally different concept. In my opinion this issue has been insufficiently studied in the literature (43) and I raise it now as an important question for future research. It has a bearing on the question of the transition to socialism. For example: in the transition from capitalism to socialism the achievement of capitalism in developing the productive forces is to be appropriated and preserved, not by incorporating their alien form as private property within a higher totality, but by divesting them of their alien form through abolishing private property; it will not be the case that socialism will recognize its productive forces as marked by their origins in private property (once the transitional stage passes), even though Marx believes the capitalist stage of their development was historically necessary.

Marx's use of negation of the negation does not effect a closure then - an end of history - because this specific dialectic is inscribed, as the estrangement of social being, within the more fundamental ontological intermediations of man and nature. Hence the negation of the negation brought about through communist revolution opens out the possibility of a real human history no longer carried on under the mark of estrangement.

Notes

Thanks are due to Gülnar Savran, Roy Swan, Jonathan Rée, and Roy Edgley.

Page numbers bracketed in the text refer to the English translation of the 1844 *Mss.* in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, Harmondsworth, 1975. Sometimes the rendering has been changed after consulting the German text in *Marx-Engels Werke, Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil*, Berlin 1968, and the translation in *Marx-Engels Collected Works Vol.3*, London 1975.

1. 'Social theory' might be preferred to 'social ontology' in the text. I use 'ontology' here to indicate that set of fundamental categories through which the character of the social sphere is delimited and the general framework for theory construction established. (I do not mean that *a priori* arguments can establish the necessity of these categories.) However, where idealist theorists try to purge social categories of the natural, and biological materialists evacuate the social mediations, the strength of Marx's category of 'labour' is precisely its double determination as the linking element.
2. Dirk Struik in the introduction to his edition of the *Mss.* (New York 1964) states: 'But the whole tenor leads to Marx's conclusion of the priority of property' (p.45). He says in a private communication to me that this was a slip. The text meant is 'the priority of alienated labour'.
3. It is not surprising that commentators of an analytical rather than dialectical turn of mind have proved unable to comprehend the interchanges of these determinations. The crucial passage is actually misquoted by Richard Schacht (*Alienation*, London 1971) when he says Marx 'contends that the dominance of the institution of private property "is the basis and cause of alienated labour", and thus also of the alienation of the product' (p.108). In a private communication to me he admits that 'is' should have been outside the quotation from Marx. However, he defends his interpretation as against the translation provided by Bottomore who gives: 'although private property appears to be the basis and cause of alienated labour, it is rather a consequence of the latter' (*Karl Marx Early Writings*, trans. T.B. Bottomore, London 1963, p.131). The German is: 'wenn das Privateigentum als Grund, als Ursache der entäußerten

Arbeit erscheint, es vielmehr eine Konsequenz derselben ist...' Schacht suggests an accurate rendering is: 'if private property appears as the ground, the basis of alienated labour, it is much more a consequence.' He draws attention to the fact that the phrase 'erschient als' does not have the same counterfactual import as would 'erschient zu sein' and that it is often used to suggest 'emerges as' - in other words factual rather than counterfactual import. It is certainly true that 'erschienen' does not have connotations of illusion in the same way as 'scheinen'; nevertheless in philosophical usage it is the appearance as opposed to the essence of the matter, albeit that essence must appear. What we have here, I suggest, is not the mere refutation of an illusion by Marx but a recognition that private property effects alienation, combined with an assertion that if one remains content with this, one has not gone beyond the surface of things to the essence of the relationship - which may well be the reverse of appearances (Marx says in *Capital* that if essence coincided with appearance there would be no need for science.) Schacht has to face the fact that Marx frequently says that private property is (not 'appears as') the consequence of alienation; for example just before the contested paragraph he says: 'Private property is therefore the product, the necessary result, of alienated labour, of the external relations of the worker to nature and to himself.' In a footnote (17 on p.108) Schacht comments on this: 'But here he is thinking of the accumulation of possessions and capital, rather than of the institution of private property.' In other words, given the institution of private property, then it can be accumulated by individuals through labouring or exploiting others' labour upon alienation. This interpretation is clearly untrue to the text; however absurd Schacht may suppose it to be, Marx clearly sees the institution itself as consequent upon alienated labour, and although he does not say much about the individual it would be more sensible in my view to see the latter's problem in having to alienate his labour as based on lack of property and the individual capitalist's ability to appropriate alien labour as consequent on his property, i.e. the reverse of Schacht's position. This is indeed the moment of truth in the statement that private property appears as the basis of alienation. However, to view this relation as static, and external, as a given, such that activity works in a pre-existing institution, relieves the living social relation, instead of seeing it as reproduced by that activity.

4. I take this happy expression from I. Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London 1970).

5. A complete failure to understand this dialectic allows the attribution by certain commentators of 'communism as such' to crude equalitarian communisms discussed earlier in Marx's chapter. This is obviously false because those are ideological stages in the development of communist ideas, whereas here we are talking of a 'real phase'. By 'communism as such' Marx understands 'communism as the opposite of private property'. Clearly the communist movement develops in opposition to private property. In some sense it is even the creation of the movement of private property. But in a higher phase of development socialism stands on its own feet so to speak (p.356) and 'no longer needs such mediation'. For the confusion on this issue see Early Writings (trans. Benton), p.358, fn.9; Collected Works 3, p.603, fn.87; Mézaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation - end of Chapter 5.
6. The argument of this section is very condensed. A full exposition is in my 'Objectification and Alienation in Marx and Hegel', Radical Philosophy 30, Spring 1982. To prevent misunderstanding, I should say that in what follows I am not especially concerned with the adequacy of my summary to Hegel's intentions, for I am primarily concerned with Marx's comparison of his standpoint with what he takes to be Hegel's phenomenology.
7. It is worth pointing out that Marx does not mention the Master-Servant section which so many commentators insist was an influence. See my 'Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic and a Myth of Marxology' (forthcoming, New Left Review).
8. A point of terminology to bear in mind is that the translators of Hegel, and of Marx, do not agree on the rendering of 'Entäusserung' - some give 'alienation' and others give 'externalization'. I prefer and give here 'alienation'. In Lukacs' masterly work The Young Hegel the last chapter is entitled "Entäusserung" as the central philosophical concept of the Phenomenology of Spirit. Lukacs writes: 'In themselves there is nothing novel about the terms "Entäusserung" and "Entfremdung". They are simply German translations of the English word "alienation"...' (The Young Hegel, trans. R. Livingstone, London, 1975, p.538). The alternative to 'alienation', namely 'externalization', is the closest rendering from a purely etymological point of view; and it is the usual choice of Miller in his translation of the Phenomenology. For further discussion see my 'Objectification and Alienation...'.
 9. G.W.F. Hegel, Gesammelte Werke Band 9 (Hamburg 1980), p.422; Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (Oxford 1977), trans. A.V. Miller, para.788.
 10. Gesammelte Werke Band 9, p.431; Miller trans. para 804.
 11. In the final paragraph of the Phenomenology (Miller, p.808).
 12. Werke, p.553; Collected Works 3, p.313.
 13. The Young Hegel, p.551. Lukacs repeats the point in the 1967 Preface to History and Class-Consciousness (English trans. R. Livingstone, London 1971, pp.xxiii-xxiv).
 In the Phenomenology Hegel does not use the term 'Vergegenständlichung' (objectification)! What we do find in a central place is the term 'Entäusserung'. I argue in my 'Objectification and Alienation ...' that when Lukacs complains that objectification is conceived by Hegel only as alienation, he is pointing to the absence of Marx's concept of the necessity of objectification - in the affirmative sense of the establishment by an objective being of its essential relationships in, and through labour upon, an objective world - and its replacement in Hegel's problematic by a sense of estrangement.
 14. Miller's translation, paragraphs 18 and 19.
 15. The 'official' story given by Engels in his well-known article 'Ludwig Feuerbach' is that the spell of Hegel was broken by Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity (1841) which 'placed materialism on the throne' (p.367 - Marx-Engels Selected Works in 2 vols, Vol.2). However, the picture is by no means so simple. I agree with Herbert Marcuse who writes in a 1932 article on the 1844 Mss. as follows: 'We know from the Theses on Feuerbach (1845) that Marx draws a line of demarcation between himself and Feuerbach through the concept of human practice. On the other hand, he thereby (more precisely through the concept of labour) turns back to Hegel over across Feuerbach.... The matter is therefore more complex than simply a straight line development from Feuerbach to Marx subsequent upon a renunciation of Hegel. What happens is rather that Marx at the origins of his revolutionary theory once again appropriates, on a transformed basis, the decisive achievements of Hegel' (quoted by Hanfi, Fiery Brook, pp.2-3). Moreover, Engels' account subtly misplaces the emphasis by presenting the Essence of Christianity as the key text - for its naturalism and humanism. More important to Marx than this was Feuerbach's critique of Hegelian philosophy in such texts as Principles of the Philosophy of the Future (1843). In 1843 Marx attempts a straightforward application to philosophy of law of Feuerbach's idea that the truth is present in Hegel - but in inverted form. In this study there is nothing about labour and a fortiori no praise of Hegel for grasping man as his own product. But central to the 1844 Mss. is the category of labour - which is missing in Feuerbach. I will show below that it would be wrong to characterize the Mss. as some kind of materialist inversion of Hegel's Phenomenology. This is Althusser's view. In a somewhat confused passage on Marx's development he says that a 'sudden and total last return' to the 'Hegelian problematic inspires one absolutely unique text, which is a rigorous attempt to "invert" Hegelian idealism: this text is the 1844 Manuscripts.' (For Marx, London 1965), pp.35-36.
 16. Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft (Principles of the Philosophy of the Future); Sämtliche Werke Zweiter Band (neu Herausgegeben von Wilhelm Bolin und Friedrich Jodl, p.276; Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1959; The Fiery Brook - Selected Writings of Ludwig Feuerbach, trans. and ed. Z. Hanfi (New York 1972), p.205.
 17. S.W.2, p.276; Fiery Brook, p.206.
 18. S.W.2, p.301; Fiery Brook, p.229.
 19. ibid.
 20. 'Preliminary Theses on the Reform of Philosophy'; S.W.2, p.227; Fiery Brook, p.157.
 21. 'Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy'; S.W.2, p.187; Fiery Brook, p.79.
 22. 'Principles...'; S.W.2, pp.310-11; Fiery Brook, p.237.
 23. S.W.2, p.282; Fiery Brook, p.211.
 24. 'Philosophische Fragmente'; S.W.2, p.363; Fiery Brook, p.270.
 25. See on this G. Lukacs, Political Writings 1919-1929, ed. R. Livingstone (London 1972), p.211.
 26. 'Preface to the Second Edition of the Essence of Christianity'; Fiery Brook, p.252.
 27. p.157, Marx Grundrisse (Harmondsworth 1973).
 28. Political Writings, pp.210-212.
 29. This aspect is well brought out in M. Wartofsky, Feuerbach (Cambridge 1977).
 30. Lukacs, Political Writings, pp.202-207; D. McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (London 1969), p.112.
 31. Marx and Engels, 11 Jan.1868; Marx-Engels Werke, Bande 32 (Berlin 1965), p.18.
 32. The Young Hegel, p.559.
 33. In their 1846 critique of Feuerbach, Marx and Engels write (with the Preface to his Essence of Christianity obviously in mind - see Fiery Brook, p.97): 'Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence.... This mode of production ... is a definite mode of life on their part.... What they are, therefore, coincides with their production' (Collected Works 3, London 1976, p.31). They take Feuerbach severely to task for his abstract contemplative materialism; the cherry-tree outside his window is only an object of sensuous certainty for Feuerbach as a result of world trade; nature just as 'given' exists only on a few coral islands; the progression of industry has thoroughly transformed the objective world. As Lukacs observes (Political Writings, p.190 and note; pp.202-203) to capitulate to intuition is to dissolve becoming into being and to identify existence and essence - another aspect of Feuerbach which Marx polemicalizes against in the German Ideology.
 34. Marx's only expressed doubt about Feuerbach before the famous Theses of 1845 is in a letter to Ruge of March 1843 in which he complains that Feuerbach 'talks too much about nature and too little about politics' (Marx-Engels Werke, Band 27, Berlin 1963, p.417). However, at this time Marx's own work on 'politics' is clearly following the Feuerbachian method of 'inversion' in a rather pure form. It is true, however, that Marx is very concerned to find the 'material force' (in the shape of the proletariat) to complement philosophical criticism so that he already goes beyond Feuerbach. On the other hand, in spite of his turn to 'civil society' as the 'real basis' there is as yet no properly materialist ontology grounding production - hence a turn from politics to nature in the 1844 Mss. could even be represented as an advance. Although I reject the Althusserian category of 'break' in the periodization of Marx's work, if I had to cite a date I would choose 1844 on this account. However, it is better to see Marx's whole development in terms of the effort to unify theory and practice and his theoretical work as moving towards an ever greater concretization. This does not mean, however, that Hegel is totally abandoned with the materialist turn. We see here Marx turning back across Feuerbach to Hegel's Phenomenology, while in the Grundrisse and Capital there is a 'second return' - this time to the Logic.
 35. Marx to Schweitzer, January 1865, Selected Correspondence (Moscow 1965), p.151.
 36. For Marx (trans. B.R. Brewster, London 1965), p.197.
 37. For Marx, p.214.
 38. For Marx, p.198n.
 39. Capital, ch.7 (1976 Penguin edition), p.283.
 40. Para.381. There is an English translation by W. Wallace of this part: Hegel's Philosophy of Mind (Oxford 1894).
 41. As Mézaros says, there cannot be 'a point in history at which we could say: "now the human substance has been fully realized"...' (Marx's Theory of Alienation, p.119).
 42. Marx's Theory of Alienation, p.45.
 43. Lukacs makes a helpful distinction between epistemological and ontological Aufhebung in his Ontology: Hegel (trans. D. Fernbach, London 1978), pp.112-113.



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