

Marx's Social Ontology
Individuality and Community in
Marx's Theory of Social Reality

Carol C. Gould

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To my mother and in memory of my father

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Introduction

This book proposes a new approach to the understanding of Marx. Unlike the usual approaches, which take him to be a political economist, a revolutionary ideologist, or a philosophical humanist, I present Marx for the first time as a great systematic philosopher in the tradition of Aristotle, Kant and Hegel. Yet I show that Marx's philosophical system is distinctive in that he develops it as a framework for his concrete social theory and his critique of political economy. Thus this book also reveals Marx's work to be a radical transformation of traditional philosophy. This transformation is accomplished by means of Marx's striking synthesis of systematic philosophy and social theory.

In this book I reconstruct this synthesis as a social ontology, that is, a metaphysical theory of the nature of social reality. Such a metaphysical theory would give a systematic account of the fundamental entities and structures of social existence—for example, persons and institutions—and of the basic nature of social interaction and social change. Such a social ontology is only implicit in Marx's work. Nevertheless, my thesis is that his concrete analysis of capitalism and of the stages of social development presupposes such a systematic ontological framework. Thus, for example, Marx's account of the transition from pre-capitalist societies to capitalism, his theory of surplus value, his analysis of technological development and his outline of the communal society of the future cannot be adequately understood apart from his metaphysical system, that is, his fundamental philosophical ideas about the nature of social reality and the systematic interrelations among those ideas. Specifically, an ontology whose basic categories

are individuals, relations, labor, freedom, and justice is necessary for comprehending Marx's concrete social theory.

The reconstruction of the ontological foundations of Marx's social theory allows us to approach in a new way a fundamental question of his work, namely, the relation of the individual to the community. There is an apparent dilemma between Marx's insistence on the ideal of the full self-realization of the individual and his insistence on the ideal of the full realization of community. I shall show that to see this as a dilemma, however, is to interpret these concepts of individuality and community in terms of the limited forms that they take in both social life and social theory under capitalism. Here, as Marx himself pointed out, these values appear in a dichotomous form, in terms of the opposition between the individual and society. Thus in practical life, conflicts arise between requirements of individuality and those of society—between individual rights and preferences on the one hand, and social justice and social constraints on the other. This opposition is also manifest in liberal social theory, which conceives of society as external constraint standing over and against individuality. Against this dichotomous view of the individual and society, I interpret Marx as developing an ontology that sees the individual as intrinsically social and communal, but that also takes the individual to be the fundamental entity of society. It is on the basis of a reconstruction of this ontology of individuals in social relations that we can resolve the apparent dilemma between the ideals of individuality and community in Marx. It will be seen that Marx projects a concept of community as constituted by the activities of free individuals each of whom realizes his or

her own possibilities and who relate to each other in terms of mutual expectations and goals and mutually enhance each other's individuality.

This book is a work of interpretation. Interpretation is understood here not as mere exposition or commentary, but rather as critical reconstruction. Such a reconstruction does not simply give an account of what Marx said, but aims at the discovery and evaluation of his philosophical system. I shall also attempt to clarify what remains obscure in Marx's thought and to develop further some of the conceptions that are only suggested in his system. This system includes his first principles, his method or mode of inquiry, and the conclusions that are derived from these principles by means of this method. I would claim that such a coherent structure may be discovered in each of Marx's theoretical works—for example, in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, as well as in *Capital*. Yet there is one work that presents Marx's basic principles and their application in an especially complete and integrated way and from which his ontological conceptions emerge most clearly. This book is the *Grundrisse*. Here Marx grapples with fundamental theoretical and methodological problems and works out his fully elaborated critique of capitalist political economy and his theory of the stages of historical development. This work was largely overlooked until very recently.¹ It has now become a subject of widespread discussion, although up to now there have been no major studies based on it. My reconstruction of Marx's social ontology is based primarily on this work.

I shall argue for five theses:

My first thesis is that Marx uses Hegel's dialectical logic both as a method of inquiry and as a logic of history. That is, not only is Marx's analysis ordered in accordance with a Hegelian dialectic, but the actual development of historical stages itself is seen to have such a dialectical form. Thus, on the one hand, Marx derives the specific structure and development of social forms from the concepts of these forms, but, on the other hand, he sees this derivation as possible because the concepts are themselves abstracted from the concrete social development.

My second thesis is that in construing Hegel's logic of concepts also as a logic of social reality, Marx becomes an Aristotelian. He holds that it is real, concretely existing individuals who constitute this social reality by their activity.

My third thesis is that in his idea of self-creation through labor as the fundamental characteristic of being human, Marx introduces an ontological conception of freedom that distinguishes his ontology from those of Aristotle, Hegel, and other traditional philosophers. As against the view that human beings have a fixed or unchanging nature, Marx argues that individuals freely create and change their nature through their activity.²

My fourth thesis is that for Marx a just community is required for the full development of free individuality. Further, the value of free individuality and the value of community are consistent with each other.

My fifth thesis is that the *Grundrisse* constitutes the working out of Marx's early theory of alienation as political economy. Thus Marx's analyses of surplus value and of the function of machinery under

capitalism and his theory of crises cannot be understood without his concept of alienation.

In the following chapters, I shall argue for these theses by examining four major themes of Marx's work: society, labor, freedom, and justice. On my interpretation, these themes are not simply aspects of a social theory, but fundamental constituents of a systematic philosophical theory of the nature of social reality, that is, a social ontology.

In presenting such a social ontology, this book poses a new problematic for contemporary philosophy, namely the reinterpretation of such traditional philosophical disciplines as metaphysics and value theory in terms of their relation to social reality. At the same time, this ontological approach helps us to understand Marx's work in a new way. Therefore it would be helpful at the outset to specify the sense in which the term "social ontology" will be used in this book.

Social ontology may be taken in two senses: (1) It may mean the study of the nature of social reality, that is, the nature of the individuals, institutions and processes that compose society. This study attempts to determine the basic entities of social life—whether these are persons or institutions; the fundamental forms of social interaction; and the nature of social change. In this use, society is taken as a specific domain of existence, like nature, and social ontology forms a branch of general ontology. Or (2) it may mean ontology socialized, that is, a study of reality that reflects on the social roots of the conceptions of this reality. Thus, for example, the ontology that takes reality to be composed of separate, atomistic individuals is seen to have its roots in

a capitalist or free market society, in which persons are conceived as separate, isolated individuals who are related to each other only in external ways. In this conception of social ontology, theories of reality are seen as influenced by their social context. Further, the ontological categories themselves—for example, individuals and relations—are interpreted in the concrete and specific forms that they have in various historical social structures.

These alternative senses of the term social ontology are not mutually exclusive. Both may be combined in a third sense that I shall give the term and that will guide the interpretation in this book. In this sense, social ontology is the analysis of the nature of social reality by means of socially interpreted categories.

In this book Marx is seen as doing social ontology in this third sense. Thus, like the traditional ontologists, Marx is concerned with the study of the nature of reality; but unlike most traditional ontologists, the reality he is concerned with is social reality. Even here, Marx makes a radical departure from the tradition: He interprets the ontological categories concretely as having social and historical meaning. Thus, for example, in Marx's analysis of capitalism, the traditional metaphysical distinction between appearance and essence shows up as the distinction between the free market and exploitation, in which the appearance or phenomenon of exchange is taken to mask the essential social relations of exploitation.

But to read Marx from the point of view of his systematic social ontology is to give an interpretation of Marx. Since this book is such a work of interpretation, it is important to make clear what an interpreta-

tion is and also whether the method of interpretation used in this book is the most appropriate one for understanding Marx's work.

The most general aim of an interpretation of Marx is to provide an understanding of his work. In my view, such an understanding requires grasping his work as a coherent whole and not merely as a collection of themes and ideas. This requires an ordering of the complex and seemingly disconnected elements of Marx's thought. I do this by setting out the structure of Marx's work in terms of his first principles, his method, and his conclusions. By focusing on these basic parameters of his work, we are able to see the interconnections between the various aspects of Marx's argument—for example, between his theory of alienation and his theory of surplus value. This interpretation therefore provides a guide for reading Marx. In addition, it enables us to discern what Marx's approach would be to issues that he did not deal with explicitly by applying his method and first principles to other contexts. Such a projection of Marx's own thinking not only permits us to fill in the gaps in his work in a way that is plausible, but also to assess the fruitfulness of Marx's method in its application to such contemporary issues as the theory of economic crises and the character of socialist society.

This reading of Marx is a way of making explicit what is implicit in the work. That is, it elicits from the mass of detail the logical structure and development of Marx's argument. This aspect of my approach, like the previous one that emphasizes taking the work as a coherent whole, is comparable to what is called hermeneutic method.³ Both approaches try to give an internal interpretation of a work by explicat-

ing the structures and meanings inherent in it and attempt to understand it as a whole.

My interpretation may be compared with hermeneutic method in yet another way: in its emphasis on a text. The hermeneutic method depends on a close reading of a text, usually of a single text. Similarly, my reading is based primarily on the *Grundrisse*, the work in which the systematicity of Marx's thought emerges most clearly. However, I do not consider the *Grundrisse* as a single text in isolation from the rest of Marx's writings. Rather, I see it as one that integrates his earlier "humanist" writings with his later political economy and permits us to grasp the continuity of his ideas throughout his works.

One may turn to the special circumstances of the *Grundrisse*'s composition in order to explain its distinctive place among Marx's works. I suggest that the *Grundrisse* is the most evidently philosophical of Marx's works precisely because he did not write it for publication but rather for his own self-clarification.⁴ In these notebooks, Marx employs Hegel's dialectical method (with references to Hegel's *The Science of Logic*) as his own method for analyzing capitalism and also develops his own philosophical ideas about such topics as freedom and history. One may suppose that because the *Grundrisse* was not intended for publication, Marx saw no need to restrain his philosophical reflections and his use of an explicitly philosophical method and terminology. By contrast, in his works intended for publication, for example, *Capital*, Marx tended to avoid such an explicit use of Hegel because these works had practical or political purposes as well as theoretical ones.

That is, they were intended to persuade both the working-class readership and the radical intelligentsia of the time. Hegelian language and modes of thought were alien to the working-class readers and were in disrepute among the radical intelligentsia, who objected to the conservative implications of Hegel's "speculative philosophy."

I claimed above that my interpretation attempts to make explicit what is implicit in Marx's work. But it would be incorrect to conclude that in explicating his text in this way, my interpretation simply reads off what is given in the text. Rather, I would hold that an interpretation requires a selection of those features of the work that most clearly illuminate its meaning and structure. In my interpretation of Marx, it is his social ontology that I select as the feature that most clearly illuminates his work.

However, one may ask how such a selective interpretation can avoid being a merely arbitrary one that the interpreter simply imposes on the work from without. In other words, how can such an interpretation be internal to a work? One criterion for such internality, although a problematic one, is proposed by the hermeneutic school of interpretation. In this view, an interpretation may be regarded as internal if it reveals the work to be a coherent whole, such that all of its various elements are accounted for. But this approach presupposes that any given work is coherent because it necessarily exhibits the unity of the author's project. It is claimed that such a unity or coherence is the mark of any human creation. The difficulty with this view is its circularity, that is, it presupposes the very coherence of the work that the interpretation is

supposed to reveal. This circularity is acknowledged by the hermeneutical methodologists but is regarded as a necessary feature inherent in all interpretation.

A second criterion that may be proposed for the internality of an interpretation is the extent to which the interpretation succeeds in illuminating the text for the reader. Here the question is whether the interpretation guides the reader to a recognition of the sense or meaning of the work.

However, the interpretation I offer here attempts to be internal to the text not only in these two ways but in yet a deeper sense. In this sense, the internality of my interpretation resides in the fact that the method I use in setting forth Marx's thought is the very method Marx himself uses in the construction of his system. Thus my interpretation seeks to be not only internal to the content of Marx's thought, but beyond this, seeks to be internal to his mode of inquiry itself.

It would be useful to consider briefly here what Marx's method is and how I propose to use this very method in the interpretation of his work. In this discussion I will also make clear how my approach differs from and goes beyond hermeneutical methodology.

Marx's method, as he outlines it in the introduction to the *Grundrisse* and exemplifies it in that work, is one that treats its subject matter as a totality. Specifically, Marx begins from what he calls a "concrete whole," that is, a given and complex subject matter, of which we have only an amorphous conception. The concrete whole that Marx studies is that of capitalism. He then proceeds to analyze this concrete whole to discover fundamental principles or conceptual

abstractions from which one can derive a comprehension of its workings and the interrelations within it. Thus in his analysis of capitalism, Marx arrives at such conceptual abstractions as exchange value, capital, and labor, in terms of which he then reconstructs the workings of the system, including such phenomena as exploitation, crises, technological innovation, and so forth. Such a conceptual reconstruction of the given subject is what he means by comprehending it as a totality. My study, in comparable fashion, treats Marx's work itself as such a concrete whole. Thus the *Grundrisse* at first appears to be a complex and relatively unstructured mass of details. Following Marx's method, I attempt to analyze Marx's own work to discover fundamental principles in terms of which one can reconstruct this work as a systematic totality in which the various dimensions of his analysis are seen in their relation to each other.

A second feature of Marx's method is that it is not a mere reconstruction of its subject, but a critical one. That is, Marx goes beyond an account of the workings of the system of capital to discover its limitations. Thus he argues that the wage labor-capital relation is one of increasing exploitation and leads to recurrent economic crises. His critique proceeds in terms of a theory of value in which freedom and justice are taken to be the central values. Marx holds that these values are not imposed by him on the social reality which he analyzes. Rather Marx claims that these values emerge in the course of the development of society itself, but that present social forms hamper the full realization of these values. In this way, the critical or normative dimension of Marx's thought is not something added on to his descriptive analysis of

social processes, but rather is integral to his reconstruction of these processes themselves.

Similarly, my method of interpreting Marx's work is that of critical reconstruction. Thus I not only reconstruct Marx's social ontology, but I do so critically. My critical approach to Marx's theory focuses first on determining whether Marx in fact has such a philosophical theory of social reality and what exactly it is. Because Marx does not articulate this theory of social reality explicitly, this limitation in his work needs to be overcome by means of a creative reconstruction of what this explicit theory would be. In this book I shall attempt to show that such a theory can be elicited from Marx's work and I shall attempt to articulate it in a systematic way.

Further, I shall be concerned to go beyond what Marx did say to what I think he would have said on certain crucial questions had he more fully developed some of his own suggestions and had he been more consistent and rigorous in drawing the full implications of his own principles. The main concepts that I expand in this way, on the basis of what Marx does say, are causality, freedom, and justice. I believe that my reconstruction of these concepts carries forward the main thrust of Marx's thought.

However, I do not remain within the limits of Marx's own problematic in my reconstruction of his system and in my further development of his basic concepts. That is, the critical approach I take here is based on the external standpoint of my own understanding of social reality and my own interest in the problem of how individuality is related to community.

Two additional tasks in approaching Marx's work critically are to assess whether Marx gives a true account of the workings of the capitalist system and also whether he gives an adequate ontological characterization of the nature of social relations and of human activity. I do not take up these critical tasks directly in this book. However, I believe that my critical reconstruction of his theory, in which I articulate and develop his views further, provides a basis for such an assessment.

The method of interpretation that I have described as one of critical reconstruction may be called a dialectical method of interpretation. By way of summary, one may say that such an interpretation of a work not only treats the work as a totality, but also approaches it critically. In this last respect, a dialectical method of interpretation goes beyond a hermeneutic method which restricts itself to the problem of understanding the meaning of the text itself. While the dialectical method also gives a reconstruction of the meaning of the text, it does so both from the standpoint of an internal understanding of the project that the text embodies and from an external critical standpoint based on knowledge and interests that are independent of the framework of the text.

In addition to the foregoing considerations on the specific use of the dialectical method of interpretation in this book, one may point to another feature of this method that further distinguishes it from the hermeneutical approach. I would hold that the hermeneutical method presupposes the view that one cannot get beyond interpretations, and that alternative frameworks of interpretation set the limits for what we can claim to be true. A dialectical method, by contrast, attempts to get

beyond alternative frameworks of interpretation by critically examining a given interpretation in terms of what we know independently of that framework. Through such critical examination of alternative interpretations, the dialectical method in its fully ramified form aims at establishing the truth. These claims obviously raise a number of serious epistemological difficulties, which I will not deal with here.

In addition to its other aims, the dialectical method of critical reconstruction has the aim of guiding practice. In this work, the contribution that I hope to make in the interest of a more rational social practice is to clarify the ideals of individuality and community and to show how they do not conflict but rather mutually enhance each other. In this interest of guiding practice, this book shares the aim of Marx's own critique.

The interpretation that I give of Marx by means of this method sees him as effecting a synthesis of systematic philosophy and social theory. My interpretation may be contrasted with the two prevailing interpretations of his work. The first interpretation focuses on Marx's critique of alienation and treats him principally as a humanist philosopher. This view is based primarily on the early writings and especially on the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Here Marx is held to be philosophical, although not systematic. This "humanist" interpretation emphasizes Marx's concern with social oppression and exploitation and with the possibilities of human freedom.⁵ The second interpretation focuses on Marx's political economy and treats him not as a philosopher but rather as an economic theorist. This view is based primarily on the later writings and especially on *Capital*.

Here Marx is held to be systematic, but not philosophical. This second interpretation emphasizes Marx's analysis of capitalist economy and specifically his theories of surplus value, capitalist accumulation, and economic crises.⁶

By contrast, my interpretation sees the continuity between these two aspects of Marx's work and indeed shows how, in the *Grundrisse*, Marx develops his theory of alienation as political economy. Further, my interpretation allows us to see how in his concrete social theory, whether in his early or later works, Marx remains both philosophical and systematic.⁷ Indeed, I would claim that it is his philosophical systematicity itself that accounts for Marx's development of his theory of alienation as political economy. That is, Marx's concern for systematicity leads to his construction of a social ontology that provides a single foundation both for his analysis of capitalism and of other social forms, and for his theory of being human—of the nature of human activity, its alienated forms and the possibilities that may be realized by this activity. Thus Marx treats human activity in terms of the concrete forms that it takes in social life, and human possibilities in terms of their development through various historical stages. Conversely, Marx treats capitalist economy in terms of the forms of human activity and the human possibilities it both realizes and constrains. Thus Marx shows how capitalist production involves the alienation of human capacities as well as the development of new capacities.

My interpretation of Marx thus attempts to transcend the one-sidedness of each of the two prevailing interpretations. It does so,

however, not simply by adding together the two aspects of Marx's thought that each of the alternative interpretations emphasizes, but rather by showing how Marx's concern with human possibilities, on the one hand, and his economic critique of capitalism, on the other hand, are unified in his systematic philosophical theory of social reality.

1 The Ontology of Society: Individuals, Relations and the Development of Community

In this chapter I show that for Marx the fundamental entities that compose society are individuals in social relations. According to Marx, these individuals become fully social and fully able to realize human possibilities in the course of a historical development. Thus in this chapter I also trace Marx's account of the emergence of such universal social individuals through various historical stages.

Surprisingly, Marx claims that it is the capitalist mode of production that is the primary condition for the development of this social individuality. In the *Grundrisse* Marx presents in striking fashion a vision of the human potentialities that capitalism unleashes and that form the basis for the society of the future. In his phrase "The great civilizing influence of capital" consists in

the cultivation of all the qualities of the social human being, production of the same in a form as rich as possible in needs, because rich in qualities and relations—production of this being as the most total and universal possible social product, for, in order to take gratification in a many-sided way, he must be capable of many pleasures, hence cultured to a high degree—is likewise a condition of production founded on capital. (p. 409)*

Further, he writes,

Universally developed individuals, whose social relations, as their own communal relations, are hence also subordinated to their own communal control, are no product of nature, but of history. The degree and

*Page numbers in parentheses in the text refer to Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, translated by Martin Nicolaus, New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

the universality of the development of wealth where *this* individuality becomes possible supposes production on the basis of exchange values as a prior condition, whose universality produces not only the alienation of the individual from himself and from others, but also the universality and the comprehensiveness of his relations and capacities. (p. 162)

One may ask how it is possible for Marx to be critical of capitalism and at the same time to see in it the sources for the emergence of social individuality. The answer to this questions lies in the fact that Marx sees capitalism as a stage of historical development. Thus in the *Grundrisse* Marx traces this development through three social stages; (1) pre-capitalist economic formations, (2) capitalism and (3) the communal society of the future. The universal social individual described in the quotations above is presented as a product of this historical development.

In the first part of this chapter, I shall trace the emergence of this social individuality and show how Marx characterizes the different stages of history in terms of the different modes of social relations among individuals that obtain at each stage. I shall argue, in accordance with my first thesis, that in Marx's account of the development of these stages, the logic of this historical process follows the Hegelian form of the dialectic.¹ I shall then consider the question of whether Marx imposes this logic on history as an *a priori* form or whether he sees history as having an internal logical necessity in itself. I shall argue that Marx rejects both of these views and holds a third view of the relation of logic and history. In order to be able to determine what

Marx's view is, we must first examine the Hegelian dialectic and Marx's use of it in his theory of historical development.

The analysis of Marx's theory of the changing social relations that characterize the historical stages is essential for the reconstruction of his ontology of society. For unlike traditional ontologists, Marx conceives of the fundamental entities of his ontology—namely, individuals in social relations—not as fixed, but as historically changing. On the basis of a reconstruction of this historical development, it becomes possible to abstract a philosophically coherent account of Marx's ontology of society. This is the task of the second part of this chapter. There I shall show that, like Aristotle, Marx gives ontological primacy to individuals—that is, he takes them as the ultimately real beings—and sees both history and society as constituted by their activities. But in addition, he holds that individuals cannot be understood apart from their relations. In this connection I shall examine what Marx means by talking about an individual as “universal” and “social” and by his description of this individual as the “most total and universal possible social product.” It will be seen that Marx's conception of individuality is not an individualist conception (as is, for example, that of classical liberal political theory).

Social Relations in the Three Stages of Historical Development

Some preliminary work is necessary in order to establish my first thesis, namely, that Marx sees the Hegelian form of the dialectic as the logic of historical development. This involves tracing the form of this

Hegelian dialectic in some detail. This effort, undertaken in the following pages, will permit us to discern the ordering principle that underlies Marx's concrete discussion of historical stages.

It may be useful to construct in advance a set of schemata that represents Marx's interpretation of Hegel's dialectic as a logic of historical development. These are intended as a guide to the reconstruction of Marx's argument. But the elaboration of these schemata will be undertaken only after the discussion of Hegel's dialectic and of Marx's concrete historical analysis. The three historical stages are those of

1. Pre-capitalist formations
2. Capitalism
3. Communal society

The forms of social relations that correspond to these are

1. Personal dependence
2. Personal independence based on objective dependence
3. Free social individuality

These stages can be further characterized as

1. Internal relations that are concretely particular
2. External relations that are abstractly universal
3. Internal relations that are concretely universal

With respect to the characteristic of equality, the three historical stages may be ordered in terms of

1. Relations of inequality
2. Relations of formal equality
3. Relations of concrete equality

Finally, the social relations in the three stages may be characterized as

1. Community
2. Individuality and external sociality
3. Communal individuality

Each of these schemata emphasizes an aspect of the logic of social development.

My claim is that the logic that is exemplified in this social development as Marx reconstructs it is Hegel's dialectical logic, as it is found in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, *The Science of Logic* and other works.² Marx interprets Hegel's dialectical logic as a logic of historical development and adopts the form of this logic in characterizing the various stages of social life. However, as will be seen, for Hegel the dialectic is fundamentally the logic of consciousness, whereas for Marx it fundamentally characterizes the development of practical activity and social relations.³ For Hegel, the dialectic may be characterized as a process in which the stages, or as Hegel calls them, "moments", are (1) Being in itself or immediacy, (2) Being for another or mediated being, and finally (3) Being in and for itself or mediated immediacy.

The terms "Being in itself" or "immediate unity" designate the case in which something is taken in its immediacy, that is, as a unity unrelated to anything external to it. However, according to Hegel, this being in itself already contains an implicit self-differentiation, for this something taken in itself is a determinate being, namely, it is this being and not some other being. As such, it presupposes other being as different from it. For Hegel, this is not simply a logical claim, but an

ontological one,⁴ namely that the being of anything as a concrete being presupposes a relation to what it is not and therefore posits this difference from itself as its own condition for self-identity. Its being determinate therefore means literally its being limited by, or negated by, an other. Hegel quotes Spinoza's phrase to this effect: Every determination is a negation.⁵ (I might add that in the *Grundrisse* Marx also quotes this phrase from Spinoza approvingly.) Insofar as the being in itself now stands in relation to this other, it is no longer being in itself but being for an other, just as the other is now a being for it. Now for the first time we can introduce the terms subject and object: The other, insofar as it is an other for the being in itself is an object for this being, with respect to which the being in itself is now a subject.⁶ Insofar as the subject stands in relation only to itself, it is as Hegel says "for itself" or "bare subjectivity." But insofar as this subject stands in relation to an other, it is an object for this other and therefore is not for itself, but only for another. According to Hegel, since the object in this stage is external or wholly other to the subject, it "stands over against" the subject or, as he says, is "antagonistic" to the subject. Therefore, being in itself is now no longer an immediate unity, since it is mediated by this relation to another. (To be mediated is to be changed or qualified by the relations into which something enters.)

In this second stage, consequently, the original unity has become a disunity in which the things appear to be related as external to each other. However, as we have seen, this otherness between subjects and objects is generated by the original being's own self-differentiation in which it posited the other as the condition of its own self-identity. Thus

the separation of subject and object is not really a separation between two wholly different things as it appears, but is conceived by Hegel as the self-separation of being. In reality, therefore, this disunity is transcended by the deeper unity in which the object is realized as the subject itself in its otherness. In this final stage, the disunity is, so to speak, negated and transcended and the unity of the first stage is re-achieved as a differentiated unity. The immediacy of the first stage has now been mediated, that is, differentiated, in the second stage and this immediacy reappears in the third stage but as a mediated immediacy.

This dialectic may also be understood as a process of growing self-consciousness or self-realization of a subject, as Hegel presents it in, for example, *The Phenomenology of Mind*. In this process, a subject that comes to know itself, or comes to self-consciousness, knows itself at first only in the form of an other, or as Hegel and Marx both say, in its objectified form. In order to come to know itself in the form of an other, it must transform or externalize itself into its own "otherness" or its own "other-being." But in this way it knows itself as an external or alien object and does not know itself as itself. That is, there is a mistake being made in which the subject takes the other as wholly estranged or wholly external to it. This stage is one of alienation. In the third stage the subject achieves self-knowledge in the recognition that what it knew in the second stage as an other is nothing but the subject itself in its objectified or externalized form. It may be seen that the dialectic presupposes an activity by the subject, namely, one in which the subject creates its own objects, in terms of which or through which

it then comes to know or recognize itself. This activity is called by Hegel and Marx the activity of objectification.

Finally, the stages in the dialectic are characterized by different kinds of relations which obtain at each stage. In the first stage, which is an immediate unity (or being in itself), the relations are within the unity or are internal to it. This unity is in effect an organic whole. As we have seen, there are implicit differentiations within it; but these have as yet no independent character, that is, they are not individuals but only dependent aspects of the being in itself or the whole. These differentiations are the implicit others of being in itself, but others that have not yet separated from it as objects separate from the subject. They are, so to speak, submerged in the whole from which they also derive whatever character they have. The relations within this whole are not part-part relations, but rather part-whole relations. As such, the relations among parts are not external relations among individuals, but rather are dependent relations which derive from their being parts of the whole. The relations at this stage are therefore internal relations, that is, internal to the whole. In the second stage, the unity or being in itself is negated and transformed into a disunity in which there are only separate subjects and objects. The only relations that obtain at this stage are relations among these apparently discrete or separate individuals. Therefore, the relations between them are external relations in the sense that each is outside the other, or only for an other. Thus each appears alien to the other. The only unity that remains, therefore, is neither that of a totality, nor of an organic whole, but of an aggregate. It is therefore, a system of merely external relations. However, accord-

ing to Hegel, the externality or disunity at this stage is merely an appearance, for it is only the objectified form of the original unity, which has transformed itself into this aggregate of external relations.

In the third stage, the separate subjects who were related to each other only as objects, namely, as beings for another, now recognize themselves in these objects or recognize these objects as like themselves. Therefore they recognize each other as subjects, and the unity between subjects and objects is reestablished in this recognition. The subjects are then related to each other not as alien external others, but as aspects of a common species subject. The relations are therefore internal, since they are the interrelations within this common or communal subject which is now no longer made up of discrete individuals in external relations, but rather of individuals who are unified through their common subjectivity. Further, it is in the very fact of the recognition of each other as subjects that their species or common character resides—that is, one comes to recognize oneself as a subject through the recognition by the other that one is a subject. Here the alienation is overcome. The subjects are therefore mutually interdependent and the relations between them are internal because each subject is what it is—a subject—through its relation to the other, namely, through being recognized as a subject by the other. These individuals therefore form a communal but differentiated subject that expresses itself in and through each individual. The whole or unity that is reconstituted in these internal relations among the individuals is thus mediated or differentiated by their individuality, but unified by their communality.

Having reviewed the Hegelian forms of the dialectic, we may turn to Marx to see whether his concrete analysis of stages of social development does in fact follow the formal structure of Hegel's dialectic.⁷ It will be recalled that this was my first thesis.

In the *Grundrisse* the pre-capitalist stage of society—including the Asiatic, the ancient classical and the Germanic forms—is described as a stage of community in which the individual “appears as dependent, as belonging to a greater whole” (p. 84). In Marx's characterization, this stage appears as what we may call an immediate unity, for on his view, although there are internal differentiations within this community—for example, between master and slave or between lord and serf—the community as a whole is self-sufficient, is an organic totality and constitutes a relatively static or stable entity.⁸ Further, at this stage, where landed property and agriculture form the basis of the economic order, there is a unity between labor and its objective conditions, or between the individual and nature. Thus the producer is identified with and bound to both the materials of his or her production, that is, primarily the soil (and tools), and to the mode of his or her production, that is, his or her craft or skill. The relation of producer to product is also direct and immediate: he or she produces in order to consume and consumes what he or she produces.⁹ Because of this immediate unity between labor and the natural conditions of production, both the mode of production and the relations within which the individual stands appear as natural; that is, they appear as being the way things are, as pregiven to individuals, not as created by them. In reality, according to Marx, these relations are social and historic prod-

ucts. Because of this, this stage should be qualified as a relative immediate unity, that is, this stage can be seen in retrospect as an immediate unity relative to the next stage of social organization.

However, production by individuals is at this stage always mediated by the producer's relation to the *community*, in which and for which he or she produces, for example, the clan, the tribe, the feudal manor. Indeed, according to Marx, it is the community itself that is “the first great force of production.” Production takes place through a division of labor and through hierarchical relations determined by the community; property also is held by virtue of membership in the community, whose power may be symbolically vested in a chieftain, a feudal lord, or a king. The aim of production in these pre-capitalist forms is the reproduction of the individual in his or her specific relation to the community. Thus these relations take on the force of tradition.

The relations among individuals within this organic community are internal relations. That is, individuals here relate to each other personally and in accordance with their status, role and function within the community. According to Marx, they “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 members of a caste, etc. or as members of an estate, etc.” (p. 163). Thus the identities of individuals, as well as the character of their relations to each other, are determined by their place within the totality. Moreover, in these communities—for example, under feudalism and the early forms of tribal community—the forms of obligation and of legal right do not function primarily through an objective instrument that enforces them

from without, for example, a state or legal system institutionalized in the form of courts, judges, and so forth. Rather, these social relations are internalized in the traditional relations among persons in the local community and have their force almost as a natural condition. By contrast, relations between one community and the next are bound, by and large, only by whatever agreements the communities choose to make or are forced to make (by negotiation, contract, or war and conquest). In this sense, Marx notes that it is only at the periphery of the community in its exchange with other communities that the notion of contract or of relations between two independent parties begins to appear. Such relations between communities may be understood as external.

The internal relations within such an organic community are further characterized by Marx as relations of personal dependence and as relations of domination or as master-slave relations. Thus the social relations in pre-capitalist society are unfree and unequal. The form of personal dependence that is rooted in the bond between the slave, serf, or member of the commune and the soil or nature is always identified with the domination of a master—the slave owner, feudal lord, tribal leader, or king—and with the personal rendering of service or work to this master. Moreover, such relations of domination more generally refer to the dependence of the individual on the totality or community, in which he or she is “imprisoned within a certain definition” (p. 163). In this sense, even the “free citizens” of ancient Athens or Rome are personally dependent. Furthermore, these relations of domination are themselves internalized. They constitute a set of static and

traditional relations which appear to be natural relations, for example, they are based on blood ties, kinship, sex, or hereditary right.

Thus finally at this stage, individuality remains bound to particularity, namely, to serving a particular function or role without any change or possibility of change. Individuals cannot pick up and leave or take on a different social role. They are fixed in a stable set of social relations and in a particular and concrete mode of fulfilling a function. In this sense the individual is concrete, particularized and unfree. Universality belongs only to the community and this universality is limited to the local, the regional, the traditional, and is thus not fully universal. Thus insofar as the community constitutes the whole universe of life activities for one generation after the next, this universe of life is severely bounded both in geographical and cultural terms. It is, Marx says, merely local. The full development of individual human capacities therefore cannot take place because the range of required human activities is fixed within these narrow confines.

To summarize, then: Stage 1, the stage of pre-capitalist economic formations, is an immediate unity. Its social form is that of community and the social relations are internal relations that are concretely particular or merely local. These are characteristically relations of personal dependence and are unequal and non-reciprocal. Finally, in this stage the social relations appear as natural relations.

According to Marx, the second stage of social organization, namely, that of capitalism, presupposes the dissolution of the immediate unity characteristic of pre-capitalist community, both the unity of the producer with the community and with the soil. Thus a condition for its

development is the emergence of the landless, propertyless worker. This worker is no longer a participant in communal production, nor is he or she rooted to the source of his or her subsistence in the soil by personal relations of slavery or serfdom, nor does he or she own the instruments of production. The only thing such an individual has left to do is to separate his or her ability to work from his or her person as his or her only property. This becomes possible only if he or she can exchange it for the means of his or her subsistence. He or she becomes a wage laborer.¹⁰ This presupposes on the other side the availability of a fund, of capital, which can buy this labor. A further presupposition for the emergence of capitalism is the existence of a system of simple exchange. This system, which proliferates with the development of capitalism, presupposes that the agents in the exchange possess what they exchange and are free to contract in the marketplace, that is, to agree in exchange on the equivalents. Neither the slave nor the serf possessed this freedom.

However, for Marx, these individuals are not fully independent. Rather, he suggests that their independence is “more correctly called indifference” (p. 163). Thus the unity of pre-capitalist community is replaced by the disunity of these indifferent individuals. Further, they are no longer immediately related to each other as before through internal relations. Rather, they are mediated or socially related through external relations. Thus Marx says, “the reciprocal and all-sided dependence of individuals who are indifferent to one another forms their social connection” (p. 156). And as he explains earlier, “this recip-

rocal dependence is expressed in the constant necessity for exchange and in exchange value as the all-sided mediation” (p. 156). In exchange, the personal or internal relatedness of pre-capitalist society is replaced by external relations in the marketplace, that is, between values of commodities. In capitalism, “The general exchange of activities and products, which has become a vital condition for each individual—their mutual interconnection—here appears as something alien to them, autonomous, as a thing” (p. 157).

Exchange is therefore an external relation between personally independent entities. The independence or freedom of these entities consists in their status as legal persons. Marx describes the freedom to exchange in terms that draw heavily on Hegel’s discussion of Abstract Right in *The Philosophy of Right*. According to Marx, “Although individual A feels a need for the commodity of individual B, he does not appropriate it by force, nor vice versa, but rather they recognize one another reciprocally as proprietors, as persons whose will penetrates their commodities” (p. 243). Thus the worker who sells his or her labor time is not coerced to do so, but rather divests him or herself of it voluntarily. (Such a free act of divesting oneself of property is the mark of a legal or juridical person for Hegel and Marx.)

In like manner, the system of simple exchange introduces *equality* and *reciprocity* between the producers. Just as in Hegel’s analysis of abstract right, the act of contracting establishes the equality of the persons who contract, so for Marx, “As far as the formal character is concerned . . . each of the subjects is an exchanger; i.e. each has the

same social relation towards the other that the other has towards him. As subjects of exchange, their relation is therefore that of *equality*” (p. 241).

Thus in contrast to pre-capitalist societies, which were characterized by personal dependence and relations of domination, the second social stage, that of capitalism, is characterized by personal independence. However, this transformation is an illusion to the extent that the dependence is not eliminated, but rather continues in objective form. Thus in speaking of the relations between the producers in exchange, Marx writes, “These external relations are very far from being an abolition of ‘relations of dependence’; [rather] . . . these objective dependency relations appear in antithesis to those of personal dependence in such a way that individuals are now ruled by *abstractions*, whereas earlier they depended on one another” (p. 164).

The objective dependence that emerges in capitalism takes three forms: first, the objectivity of money or exchange; second, the objectivity of capital, which stands over against labor; and third, the objectivity of the machine. These three forms designate three moments or stages within capitalism itself, which therefore should be regarded as itself undergoing internal change and development.

We may begin with the first form—the money form. Marx characterizes the first new form of dependence that emerges with capitalism as an abstract relationship that becomes universal. What does he mean by this?

In exchange, the exchangers are free to relate to each other in terms of an abstract medium of exchange, that is, the equivalent value of the

goods they exchange, which is an abstraction from the particular concrete form of use value these goods have for the consumers. Thus the relations between these free persons are all translated into a universal medium, or a universal language, that is, value or its embodiment in a symbolic form in money. Thus the individuals who remain individually different outside of exchange and whose different needs and different products are the very basis for exchange come to exist for each other not in their personal relations, but only in the objectified form of their value to each other in the marketplace, namely, as abstract quantities.

With this development of production for the sake of exchange, objective dependence develops into the domination of labor by capital. This constitutes the second moment of objective dependence. As we have seen, the pre-capitalist small proprietor or serf now appears as the propertyless, free worker and all property—all materials for production and subsistence—is possessed by capital. The worker becomes (objectively) dependent not on an individual, since the particular person to whom the worker sells his or her labor is indifferent, but rather on the system of capital. The worker must sell the only property he or she has, namely, his or her capacity to work, in order to gain the means of subsistence. This act of selling the capacity to work is an exchange. But this particular commodity—what Marx calls labor power—is different from every other commodity, and as a consequence this exchange is different from every other. Marx analyzes the supposed exchange between labor and capital into two separate acts. The first is the sale of the commodity labor power for a price, a sum of money, namely, the

wage. This is indeed an act of exchange. The second act “in which . . . apparent individual equality and freedom disappear” (p. 247) Marx calls the appropriation of labor by capital. This is the use of labor by capital in which labor is “value-positing labor, productive labor,” (p. 298); it is the “living source of value” (p. 295). In this act, the productive force of labor becomes the productive force of capital, a force that maintains and multiplies capital. This second act gives rise to the possibility that labor produces surplus value, more value than it costs to reproduce the worker, that is, to reproduce his or her labor power as a commodity.

The second act, in which labor produces new value that augments the value of capital, is an activity of objectification. According to Marx, the process of objectification is one in which labor forms objects in the image of its needs. It is a process of forming objects that have value. Thus value is objectified labor. In capitalist production, objectification takes the form of alienation. Alienation designates this separation or externality between living labor, which appears as pure subjectivity or as poverty, and capital, which appears as ownership of objective wealth or as property; here capital is “master over living labor capacity” (p. 453). Capital, which gets the use value of labor or value-creating labor, can realize surplus value and hence grows relative to labor. Thus for Marx, the worker “necessarily impoverishes himself. . . because the creative power of his labor establishes itself as the power of capital, as an alien power confronting him” (p. 307).

But we shall see that this alienated objectification by the worker of

his or her creative powers itself sets the conditions for the worker’s recognizing him or herself in this external objectivity. The third moment of objective dependence—namely, the dependence of labor on systems of machinery—is decisive for this recognition and thus for the transformation to the third social stage. But before proceeding to this transformation, I shall review the dialectical elements in the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist society, as I have presented them.

There are a number of ways in which this transition can be expressed and which are to be found in Marx. As we have seen, the general form of the dialectic is that each stage is the negation of the preceding one. That is to say, whereas in the first stage we have personal dependence, in the second we have personal independence and objective dependence. In the first we have internal relations that are concretely particular, and in the second we have external relations that are abstractly universal. Similarly, what appear as natural bonds in the first case give rise to social bonds created through exchange in the second. Another characteristic of the dialectic is that the undifferentiated unity or immediacy of the first stage becomes self-differentiated in the succeeding one. And the process of dialectic is seen as one of increasing differentiation. Thus, for example, the community as a relatively unmediated totality constituted by its internal relations is exploded into atom-like fragments which now stand no longer in internal relations, but which stand opposed to each other in external relations. However, there is a further dimension to this differentiation in the second stage. The differences that come to the fore here become openly antagonistic

and the apparent unity or community of clan or medieval society eventuates in the open antithesis of capital and labor which provides the moving force of capitalism.

Thus the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist society, as Marx describes it, can be understood in terms of a number of alternative categories, for example, internal relations-external relations, concrete-abstract. I have suggested that Marx's account of the transition is dialectical in his use of the Hegelian notions of negation and differentiation, according to which each stage arises out of the previous stage by such negation and differentiation. Were we to take Marx's account of the three stages of historical development as the unfolding of a logical scheme, we would expect that the third stage is simply deducible from the first two. That is, one would expect that the third stage is a negation of the second, as the second is of the first; and thus what we would have in the third stage is a negation of the negation. And indeed Hegel's dialectical logic has such a form. But the concept of negation for Hegel is not to be taken in the traditional terms of formal logic, in which the negation of the negation would simply yield the originally negated first term, that is, where $\sim\sim p$ is equivalent to p . On this reading, one would have a circle in which the third stage would be a return to the first. Instead, Hegel sees this movement as a spiral where the third stage has some of the form and content of the first, but also takes up into itself the developments of the second stage. Therefore the third stage only has a superficial and partial resemblance to the first stage, or, to put it differently, repeats it at a higher level of development.

We have seen that in Marx's account the first and second stages of historical development follow the form of the Hegelian dialectic. However, as I shall argue, it would be wrong to see these stages as following each other out of any logical necessity or as exhibiting any laws of historical development. Again, Marx's projection of the third stage will be seen to involve a negation of some features of the second stage and to incorporate on a higher level some of the features of the first stage as well as of the second. But here, too, I shall argue that Marx's projection does not have the force of a logical deduction or of a historical prediction. Rather, I shall claim that in Marx's view the development of the social relations from one stage to the next is a contingent one and that it follows from human choices and actions. Thus, as we shall see, in Marx's work the dialectical form is not to be understood as an imposition of logic on history, but rather in a radically different way.

Keeping this caution in mind, we may yet see that in Marx's projection, the third stage stands in the dialectical relation of negation and transcendence to the first two stages. Thus in Marx's account the internal relations of the first stage may be regarded as negated by the external relations of the second, but in the second these external relations have the formal aspect of equality, whereas in the first they are relations of inequality and hierarchy of stations, duties and personal attributes. In the third stage Marx projects that internal relations may again be established, but now with a realization of the formal equality of the second stage as a real or substantive equality. Or again, the un-free social individuals in the organic communities of the first stage give

way to formally or abstractly free individuals who are social only externally (that is, relating only through laws or market relations). In the third stage Marx anticipates the reestablishment of a community of social individuals, but now as concretely free. Furthermore, in Marx's projection of this third stage, the individuals are characterized by the universality and differentiations that the second capitalist stage introduces into social life.

Now we are ready to return to the quotations with which we began, namely, Marx's account of the third stage as it is prepared for by the second stage (capitalism). Marx sees capitalism as developing the universality and sociality of human capacities, but only in external or objective form. This development can be understood from the fact that capital strives to increase surplus value and this can occur in two ways: first, through increasing absolute surplus value—by increasing the length of the working day—and, second, by increasing relative surplus value—by decreasing the proportion of total labor time that goes for necessary labor or the wage, which can be achieved by the increase and development of productive forces. Such an increase most often occurs through the introduction of large-scale machinery. In order to realize the surplus value, the capitalist must be able to sell the goods produced and put the surplus value to work again in new production. Therefore the increase in surplus value presupposes an increase both in consumption and in production.

According to Marx, the tendency of capital to create more absolute surplus value gives rise to the tendency to propagate production based on capital and thus to create the world market, a tendency “directly

given in the concept of capital itself” (p. 408). In increasing relative surplus value by increasing productivity, capitalism also produces more commodities which must be consumed. To expand consumption, the capitalist will strive to discover new use values and to create new needs. But this in turn leads to the development of new laboring capacities to meet these new needs. Thus labor itself becomes more diversified and more internally differentiated. Thus, according to Marx, capitalism produces

Universal exchange of . . . products . . . the exploration of the earth in all directions . . . the discovery, creation and satisfaction of new needs arising from society itself; . . . [further, capital creates] a system of general exploitation of natural and human qualities . . . the universal appropriation of nature as well as of the social bond 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*. (pp. 409–410)

But the new laboring capacities that are developed by capitalism are developed only one-sidedly, that is, each worker develops only one capacity. The universality characterizes only the objective processes of production and consumption as a whole. Further, although capitalism is the development of all human capacities, activities and needs, this is not yet to say that it is the development of the capacities of all humans.

Similarly, Marx describes capitalism as cultivating the social human being, but it does this, too, in a merely objective way. That is to say, it produces this sociality in increasing division of labor, in exchange and later in machines; but this socialization goes on behind the backs of subjects, as Marx says.

According to Marx, this social combination and cooperation required by the capitalist work process is embodied in the machine. The system of machinery may be regarded as the most extreme form of the worker's alienation or objective dependence. For "in machinery, labor no longer appears as the governing unity of the production process"; rather its unity exists in the living (active) machinery, which "confronts his individual, insignificant doings as a mighty organism" (p. 693). Indeed, in machinery even knowledge itself—in the form of the technological application of science—comes to appear as alien and external to the worker; the "general productive forces of the social brain" (p. 694) are thus absorbed into capital as against labor.

However, this development of machinery also has a positive moment. For machinery serves to increase abundance and, correlatively, to increase the workers' free time by reducing necessary labor time. In addition, automatic machinery increases the social combination of the workers. This capacity will "redound to the benefit of emancipated labor" (p. 701), as Marx says. Thus in large-scale industry, the product is no longer produced by an isolated worker but rather by the combination of social activity, a combination objectified in the machine. This sociality consists in the factory setup itself, in the organization of machinery that requires many hands, and in the combination of the work of scientists, machinists, miners, and so forth that makes the machine possible. Thus, machinery makes individuals interdependent in increasingly internal ways in contrast to the earlier external connection of individuals, who were social only through exchange.

The machine is thus the objectification of the workers' sociality, but

in alien form, that is, in a form belonging to capital. What remains is for the producers to recognize themselves in this alien object—to recognize the whole system of capital as their own work.

According to Marx, this recognition leads to the third stage, in which the individuals reappropriate this alien or objective sociality and universality.¹¹ They become subjectively social and universal, that is, they become communal individuals.

The subjectivity that was made penurious in the alienation of all its capacities in the second stage now has this richness restored to it. The many-sidedness of needs and gratifications becomes the cultivation of individuals, that is, their self-realization. As Marx says,

[W]hen 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's own nature? The absolute working out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a *predetermined* yardstick? (p. 488)

Thus individuals are now free to develop their capacities and are no longer constrained to develop those capacities demanded by the production process. They thus overcome their objective dependence. In doing so, social combination now becomes the immediate subjective relations of mutuality among individuals. The relations again become personal relations as in the pre-capitalist stage, but no longer relations of domination and no longer mediated, as in the second stage, by

external objects. The relations are therefore internal relations in that each individual recognizes the others as free individuals like him or herself. But in fact, it is this recognition of the other which is a condition for the full realization of the other's freedom. Thus freedom is realized through social interaction.

The formal freedom of the second stage becomes substantive freedom in the third stage in that the individuals become objectively independent. This independence, however, is not the elimination of the objective realm of production, but rather the assignment of this realm to the fully objectified form of automatic production which is now under the communal control of the individuals. They are therefore freed to relate to each other not out of needs of objective dependence but in terms of subjective needs—that is, in terms of their mutual enhancement as well as their personal qualities and achievements. The enrichment of this domain of free personal interaction thus encourages the full development of differences between individuals and the full development as well of differences within each individual. In this form of society, therefore, the individuals achieve both subjective and objective independence.

Universality here is therefore not abstract universality, that is, defined in terms of those qualities in which all individuals are the same, but rather a universality in the sense of a fulfillment of the concrete differentiation among individuals. Universality then is a concept of open-ended totality in which the potentialities of the species are fulfilled by the free development of each individual, and where each is free

to develop many-sidedly and in cooperation with others. In this sense, such universality is concrete and differentiated.

Thus Marx sees social development through these three stages as a process that takes the form of Hegel's dialectic. What is the significance of this for a social ontology? First, it is significant in that in Marx's view social reality itself is a process of dialectical change. The ontological character of this reality is that it is not fixed or static; rather its basic entities and relations are to be understood as changing. Thus Marx's theory of the nature of social reality is at the same time a theory of social change. That is, his philosophical ontology itself is inseparable from the applied description of social and historical development.

If social reality reveals a logic in its development, does this mean that Marx (as has often been alleged about him as well as about Hegel) simply imposes an *a priori* logical form on the social reality which history then has to fit? Or does it mean that Marx sees the logic of history itself as having the internal necessity of logical deduction, such that events entail other events? First, it is clear that Marx rejects an *a priori* conception of development and explicitly criticizes Hegel for this view. In the *Grundrisse* he writes, "Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real [that is, social reality] as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself" (p. 101).

In answer to the second question, it is clear that Marx also rejects the view that objective social development has an internal necessity of a logical sort. Rather, it is only in retrospect that one can reconstruct

this logic as a contingent one based on what has in fact happened. Similarly, it is only prospectively that one can project the future in terms of contingent possibilities prepared for in the present but to be determined by human choices and actions.

Thus, as against both of these views—attributing logical necessity to history—Marx argues for an alternative conception of the dialectical form of historical or social reality. First, as we shall see in the following chapters, Marx views the course of historical development as entirely dependent on the activity of agents who are fundamentally free. Therefore, his conception of historical development should be sharply distinguished from that of Hegel. Whereas for Hegel, history unfolds with an inner necessity such that the course of its development is deterministic, for Marx, by contrast, history is the product of the choices and actions of agents and the course of its development is therefore possibilistic and contingent on these choices and actions. Further, in distinction from Hegel, Marx sees the dialectic of social development not as a series of stages in the development of the Idea, that is, as a dialectic of thought, but rather as one generated by the actions of real, concretely existing individuals. In this respect Marx gives ontological priority to such active existing individuals, whereas in Hegel these individuals emerge simply as vehicles or agents in the service of an autonomous and independent Idea.¹² In giving priority to the activity of real individuals, Marx introduces a strongly Aristotelian element, which distinguishes his dialectic from Hegel's.¹³ I shall consider shortly the implications of this move for an ontological account of entities and relations. Its importance for an account of the logic of

social reality is that the dialectic is seen as produced by the actions of concrete individuals.

Thus Hegel's view seems to imply that what is grasped in thought is the beginning point and that the concrete development is only the explication of the determinations contained in the abstract conception. In a sense, Marx *also* seems to argue that we have to be able to form such abstractions that we will be able to deduce an account of the concrete reality from them. But his critique of Hegel bears precisely on how such abstractions may come to be formed. He argues in the section on "The Method of Political Economy" in the *Grundrisse* that all of these concrete determinations have first to be realized in social reality itself before the adequate conception of its dialectical nature can be realized in thought. It is on the basis of our experience and knowledge of these real social circumstances that we come to form such abstractions as will be adequate to explain them. Another way of putting this is that Marx is arguing that one cannot form an adequate principle of explanation until one knows what it is that has to be explained; and that one cannot know what is to be explained until one has the actual circumstances and the experience of them.¹⁴ Thus according to Marx it is only in the epoch of bourgeois society that social development has reached the point where it is possible to form an adequate abstract concept that will enable us to grasp the present stage of social development as a development from a previous stage and as containing within itself the conditions for a new stage.

This dimension of Marx's method introduces a further Aristotelian element into his analysis. Specifically, Marx's method is Aristotelian

in its notion that one cannot read forward, from potentiality to actuality, but only backward, from the actualities to the potentialities that eventuate in them. It is in this sense that Aristotle says that actuality is prior to potentiality.¹⁵ Thus for Marx,

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 insights into the structure and the relations of production of all the vanished social formations out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up.... 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 economy thus supplies the key to the ancient, etc. (p. 105)

This understanding of the dialectic as logical reconstruction also allows us to reject the view that social and historical development have an internal necessity. The only “necessity” is that the past is past and therefore fixed and thus the dialectic is taken as a description and explanation of this originally contingent process.

The Ontology of Individuals-in-relation

This contingency of social development for Marx has as its ontological foundation the actions of real individuals who produce history in and through their relations to each other. These relations are social relations, these individuals are social individuals, and society is what is constituted by these individuals in relations. The questions therefore arise: What is a social individual? What are social relations? And what

kind of an entity is society? Here I shall characterize Marx’s ontology of society in an abstract way, which will derive from my preceding account.

Let me begin with two quotations: In the sixth thesis on Feuerbach Marx writes, “The individual is an ensemble of social relations.”¹⁶ Correlatively, in the *Grundrisse* Marx claims that “Society expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations in which individuals stand” (p. 265). From these statements, it would seem as though for Marx there is no ontologically independent entity that one could characterize either as an individual or as society, but only a system of relations. On such a view, the being of the *relata* would be nothing apart from the relationship, nor would there be a “that which” stands in relation to something else. We would have an ontology of pure relations, with “entities” having no independent ontological status whatever except as nodes of relations or moments of relationship. Yet Marx talks about the real concrete individual and of society as a social reality constituted by individuals. One therefore might read him as holding the view that only individuals are real, and that relations are not real but only derivative ways of describing how such individuals stand to each other. I would argue instead, from a reading of the *Grundrisse* as well as Marx’s other works, that Marx is operating with an ontology of both real individuals and real relations. What we need to show is that the concepts “individual” and “relation” are not separable concepts, and that Marx regards the separation of individuals from relations posited by the two one-sided interpretations presented above as a conceptual abstraction from the concrete reality.

One way of interpreting the view that *both* individuals and relations are real would be to see each as a basic or independent ontological entity, which then are somehow coordinated. But if this were Marx's view, he would have the traditional problem, posed sharply by Bradley, of how relations could be related, either to each other or to substances.¹⁷ This would lead to an infinite regress of relations relating relations, and so forth. But this would be a misreading of Marx.

For Marx, relations do not exist apart from the individuals who are related; they are abstractable only in conception. He writes, "Relations can be established as existing only by being *thought*, as distinct from the subjects which are in these relations with each other" (p. 143). Relations as disembodied or uninstantiated universals exist only in thought as abstract universals. This is in agreement with Aristotle's conceptualist view of universals (for example, species and genus, which exist only as "secondary substances" and therefore only as what can be predicated of primary substances or individuals). Yet relations are not unreal or non-actual; rather, they exist in and through the individuals related, or as relational properties of these individuals.

On the other hand, these individuals are ontologically independent entities. But that is not to say that their existence can be abstracted from the relational properties that they have. Here Marx follows Aristotle closely. For both, the concretely existing individual is always a *this-such*, that is, an individual of a given kind. Thus in the *Categories* Aristotle says, "All substance appears to signify that which is individual"; and "Everything except primary substances is either predicated of a primary substance or is present in them, and if these last did

not exist it would be impossible for anything else to exist."¹⁸ The emphasis on the "this" is that the individual is a numerically distinct and self-identical entity, that is, a substance, but a substance with attributes. The "such" therefore designates those attributes that make the otherwise abstract particular into a concrete individual.

Furthermore, for Aristotle, each concrete individual has as its essence or its species-nature that in virtue of which it becomes in actuality what it is potentially. Thus for Aristotle, a thing achieves or realizes its nature in its characteristic mode of activity. For Marx, also, the individual is a concrete individual in being of a given kind, but always an individual, that is, a numerically distinct, concretely existing person characterized by a given mode of activity. If one abstracts this individual from his or her attributes or from the mode of activity, one has left only an abstract individual, namely, one that is numerically distinct from others but without concrete character.

Although Marx does not present an explicit ontological argument in the *Grundrisse* to the effect that concretely existing individuals are the basic entities of social reality, nonetheless such a view is clearly presupposed throughout the work. As I have indicated, such individuals are understood by Marx as individuals-in-relations or what he calls social individuals. The ontological primacy of such concrete individuals in Marx's ontology is evident both in his conceptual constructions and in his usage throughout the text. For example, in his general remarks about the nature of production at the outset of the *Grundrisse*, Marx writes, "All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society" (p. 87).

Or again, “Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development—production by social individuals” (p. 85). Further, Marx stresses the fundamental status of individuals whom he regards as constituting the social world through their activity. Thus he writes, “All production is an objectification of an individual” (p. 226). This emphasis on individuals is also evident in Marx’s understanding of social forms as forms in which “individuals reproduce themselves as individuals” (p. 832). Moreover, Marx explicates the meaning of “a social relation” as “a definite relation between individuals” (p. 239); in this way, he suggests that social relations do not exist as abstract entities apart from the individuals who are related.¹⁹

But now we may ask: What are the attributes and what are the given modes of activity of these individuals? Here Marx departs from Aristotle’s view (as well as from all views of a fixed human nature). Where Aristotle conceived of the essence of a given thing as a fixed nature, or a natural kind, Marx holds that individuals create this nature in their activity and therefore it is neither fixed nor presupposed. This eventuates in a conception of a changing and developing essence. He calls this creative activity labor, which should be taken in a broad sense that I shall specify in the next chapter.

Furthermore, for Marx, the fundamental mode of this activity is social. That is to say, the primary attributes that characterize the concretely existing individual and the primary activity of this individual involve his or her relations with other individuals. These relations constitute these individuals as social individuals. Since sociality is the

mode of being of these individuals, to take individuals simply as human and not social is to abstract them from the concrete context that makes them the individuals they are. Furthermore, for Marx, since these individuals create their mode of being and change it by their activity, and this mode of being is sociality, therefore this sociality must be taken as changing, that is, as developing historically. To take this sociality apart from a given historical and social form is also to abstract it. Thus in the *Grundrisse* Marx criticizes the view that in society there are only human beings as such; rather, according to him, “they are that outside society. To be a slave, to be a citizen, are social characteristics, relations between human beings A and B. Human being A, as such, is not a slave. He is a slave in and through society” (p. 265).

For Marx, therefore, the primary ontological subject is, properly speaking, a social individual. However, there appears to be an equivocation in the usage of the term “social” in Marx: On the one hand, human beings are essentially social through all historical periods, though in given forms; on the other hand, Marx often speaks about the fully social individual of the third stage as a product of history and therefore as existing only in potentiality earlier. In fact, in describing the stage of capitalism, he speaks of the social relations between persons becoming transformed into an alien form of relations between things (p. 157). In this second usage, the fully universal social individual may be seen as a teleological concept, like Aristotle’s notion of actuality, namely, it is the fully realized form of human development or its telos. Thus even though this sociality appears in all stages of

social development, these stages are also stages of the development of sociality itself.

To speak of developing sociality is to speak of individuals in developing or changing forms of social relations (created by these individuals themselves). And to speak of society, for Marx, is to speak of the product and the structure constituted by individuals in given relations. It thus consists fundamentally of the relations that these individuals establish among themselves and the institutionalized forms of these relations. Thus society is a constituted entity and not a basic entity; it exists only in and through the individuals who constitute it. This is not to say that because society is such a generated entity it is a mere appearance or a conceptual abstraction. Rather, it is a real entity like the individuals who constitute it. Furthermore, as the product of the interactions of these individuals, society is not understood by Marx as an aggregate or sum of parts, but rather as a totality or whole that is more than the sum of its parts. As such, society cannot be understood simply by understanding the individual entities that compose it. It requires beyond this an understanding of the interrelations among them. On the other hand, for Marx, since the society is the product or creation of such social individuals, it cannot be understood apart from these individuals and their activities.

In my analysis, social relations were seen to take three forms in the three stages I have examined: internal relations that are concretely particular in pre-capitalist community; external relations that are abstractly universal in capitalism; and internal relations that are concretely universal in the communal society of the future. For my pur-

poses in this more abstract ontological treatment, I shall distinguish between internal and external relations.

For Marx, all relations between concretely existing individuals are internal relations. Internal relations are those in which the individuals are changed by their relations to each other, that is, where these relations between individuals are such that both are reciprocally affected by the relation. In his understanding of social relations as internal relations, Marx adopts some of the main features of Hegel's analysis of internal relations. But Marx radically differs from Hegel in a crucial respect, as we shall see. Marx draws on Hegel's classic example of internal relations, namely, the master-slave dialectic in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. In Hegel's account, the subordination of the slave is as essential to the constitution of the master *qua* master as the domination of the master is essential to the constitution of the slave *qua* slave. In Hegel's terms, the internal relations here are phenomenological, in the sense that the relation consists in the conscious recognition of the other in a certain role and of oneself in relation to this role.²⁰ If the slave refuses to recognize the master as master, the slave is no longer a slave and the master is no longer a master; they have become changed in who they are by this change in their relations. This internality can also be seen in the logic of the concepts of domination and subordination in that these terms are dependent on each other for their meaning. Thus the term "domination" entails a relationship between one who dominates and one who is dominated, just as the relative term "larger than" entails a relation between something that is larger and another thing that is smaller.

For Marx, as for Hegel, the individuals in internal relations are each changed in the relation. However, Marx differs from Hegel here in that Marx does not regard the individuals as wholly interconstituted by these relations. Rather, as we have seen, Marx views these individuals as independently real and thus not as coming into being as a result of their relations. Thus for Marx, although such individuals do not exist apart from their relations, and in fact develop and change themselves through these relations, yet the existence and mode of activity of these individuals is the ontological presupposition of the relations into which they enter. These individuals, who are agents, according to Marx, may be regarded as constituting these relations by their activity and therefore cannot be seen as products of these relations.²¹ Thus these individuals have fundamental ontological status and are not to be understood as mere nodes of relations or as wholly constituted by their relations.²²

But if, according to Marx, in the case of internal relations, the *relata* are reciprocally changed with changes in their relations, what are external relations? For Marx, as for Hegel, an external relations is one in which each *relatum* is taken as a separate self-subsistent entity, which exists apart from the relation and appears to be totally independent of it. The *relata* are, in this sense, indifferent to the relation, which they can enter into without change in their nature or constitution. Thus the relation appears as if it could exist apart from the things that are related; both entities and relations are thus hypostatized. However, an external relation is only an appearance for Marx in the sense that

they are the way internal relations appear from a one-sided or abstract point of view.

But external relations are not a *mere* appearance; this appearance or abstraction becomes embodied in a given stage of the development of social relations. Specifically for Marx, society itself presents such an appearance in the system of exchange in capitalist society, where individuals appear as being “ruled by abstractions,” that is, where their relations to each other are presented only in alienated form. Thus for Marx, internal and external relations are not merely conceptual abstractions with no existence except in the head (as he says), but rather, as we have seen, they are *real* social relations, which characterize different stages of social development.

We may ask how it is that social life can come to take on different modes of relations and how it is that internal relations—that is, the immediate relations of a community—can become embodied in reality as external relations—that is, the alienated forms of exchange, capital, and machinery. How can relations among humans become changed into relations among things and how can relations among things be transformed into relations among humans? The answer lies in Marx’s account of the process of objectification, which is the topic of the next chapter.

2 The Ontology of Labor: Objectification, Technology and the Dialectic of Time

In this chapter on Marx's ontology of labor, as it is presented in the *Grundrisse*, I shall argue for the following theses:

1. For Marx, labor is an activity of self-creation, that is, an activity in which individuals create themselves or come to be what they are. This self-creation, however, takes place not immediately, but rather through interaction with other individuals and with nature. Marx characterizes this activity as objectification. In capitalism, however, according to Marx, this activity takes the form of alienation, in which the individual is separated from his or her own creative power.

2. In accordance with the theses presented in the first chapter, I shall show that the model of objectification and alienation, though clearly drawn from Hegel, is modified by Marx's Aristotelian emphasis on the reality of the individual and the independence of the object. But Marx goes beyond both Hegel and Aristotle in the notion that the individual creates his or her own nature by his or her activity and that this is not a fixed nature or essence, but rather one that is itself changing as a result of this activity.

3. The *Grundrisse* constitutes the working out of Marx's early theory of alienation as political economy. Whereas interpretations of Marx's discussions of alienation in the *1844 Manuscripts* and the *German Ideology* have most often taken it to be an anthropological, psychological or moral conception, I shall argue that the *Grundrisse* makes clear how for Marx alienation in capitalism must be understood in political economic terms.¹ Thus it will be seen that Marx develops his concept of alienation in the context of his analyses of surplus value, the function of machinery under capitalism and the theory of crises.

4. For Marx, labor is the origin of time—both of human time-consciousness and of the objective measure of time.

5. Marx interprets different modes of economic organization as different economies of time, and thus Marx regards time as a fundamental category in his theory of social development. Thus I shall present the three stages of social development described in the *Grundrisse* as a dialectic of time.

Objectification and Alienation

Marx characterizes labor broadly as the distinctive activity of human beings, that is, their species-activity. He regards this labor as an activity of objectification. This concept needs elucidation. According to Marx, objectification is a two-sided process in which an individual through labor forms objects in the image of his or her needs and in doing so, transforms him or herself. This model presupposes a distinction between the agent or subject of the activity and the object, but one in which the activity itself establishes an interrelation between the two terms. Thus the activity of objectification is one in which the subject's activity constitutes objects as what they are; that is to say, objects are not merely given to or discovered by the subject, but rather are made objects by the subject's activity. Objects are therefore constituted or given meaning by subjects. But they are not constituted out of nothing, that is, they are not merely projections of the subject. Rather, the subject works on that which is given to it, as external to it or other than it.

Thus far I have only characterized the terms of the relation but not yet the activity that relates these terms to each other. This activity is

essentially a form-giving or meaning-giving activity, where an agent transforms objects to his or her purposes. Therefore it is a teleological or intentional activity, and the objects created by the agent embody his or her intentions or purposes. This may therefore be characterized as an activity of self-realization. Further, insofar as these objects fulfill or realize the agent's purposes, the agent finds him or herself in a different situation at the end of the process from that in which he or she was at the beginning. Subjectively, the agent's situation is different because his or her purpose has now been realized in an object that satisfies it. Objectively, the situation is different because the object now confronts the agent not as simply other, but as his or her own; that is, the object becomes, as we say, good for something, it has a use or a value for the subject. The subject has thus created this value in its activity and recognizes this value in the object. This process of objectification is therefore one in which the world becomes endowed with values.

Furthermore, on this model, this activity of transforming objects is at the same time an activity that transforms the agent or the subject. As having realized his or her purpose, the agent comes to recognize his or her capacity to effect this purpose. Further, one recognizes that a certain kind of activity, which meets such purposes, is now at one's disposal and becomes part of one's repertoire. One therefore recognizes oneself as a different kind of agent, possessing new skills or new modes of action. The agent comes to know this about him or herself by recognizing his or her new capacity in the object, which he or she has created by means of it.² The agent thus recognizes him or herself through this objectification of his or her capacities and needs. Or as the

Bible says, "By their fruits shall ye know them." Furthermore, the agent becomes different through this objectification in that the circumstances of his or her agency, that is, the world in which he or she acts, have been transformed and now present the agent with a different range of problems and opportunities which give rise to new purposes and new modes of action.

For example, suppose the purpose is to get from one place to another quickly; the creation of an automobile satisfies this purpose. In addition, it opens up new modes of action and new opportunities by extending the regional limits of one's world and thereby the range of one's social contact. It gives rise to the feeling of freedom and control over one's environment. It also creates the requirements for a new technology of road building, the problems of the destruction of the countryside and of pollution, and the ubiquitous problem of traffic congestion, in which the original aims are thwarted. The agent is also transformed in this process, as anyone who drives an automobile can attest. For better or worse, a new human character is created.

We have thus far explicated the concept of objectification in terms of the abstract relation of an agent to an object. In Marx, this abstract model is interpreted as the relation of laboring individuals to nature and to other individuals. Thus the primary sense of objectification for Marx is production, where the subject is in his terms "humanity" and the object is "nature" (p. 85). However, this relation of humanity to nature is always interpreted concretely by Marx. Thus as we saw in the previous chapter, he writes, "Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social

development—production by social individuals” (p. 85). Thus although production as objectification may be described in terms of a general model, concretely it always appears in differential forms. But beyond being a model of production, objectification is also understood as a model of social relations among individuals, that is, as we shall see later, objectification is the way that individuals create their social life. And indeed, for Marx, production itself always takes place in and through specific forms of social relations.

For Marx, “Production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society” (p. 87). This process of appropriation forms objects for the sake of satisfying needs. Thus “labor is purposeful activity” (p. 311). This purposeful activity creates objects that are good for something or have value. Thus Marx talks of labor as “value-positing activity” (pp. 274 and 298) and of value as objectified labor. But labor itself is not the value; it is only the possibility of value or, as Marx says, “the living source of value” (p. 296). Value is therefore created in the activity as a property of the object and thus value takes an objective form. This objectification of value is of special importance for Marx’s account of alienation, for it makes possible the separation of value in its objective form from its source and from the activity of producing it; and this separation is what Marx characterizes as alienation.

Marx’s account of objectification is analogous to Aristotle’s account of made objects, that is, of productive activity or art. For Marx, as for Aristotle, laboring activity is a purposive activity that gives form to matter.

Thus, according to Marx, in its objectification “Labor is not only consumed but also at the same time fixed, converted from the form of activity into the form of the object; materialized; as a modification of the object, it modifies its own form and changes from activity to being. The end of the process is the product” (p. 300). For both Marx and Aristotle, produced objects are distinguished from natural objects in that the form is given by labor, which transforms nature in accordance with its purposes. Thus in speaking of the form of table for wood or the form of the cylinder for iron Marx writes, “No immanent law of reproduction maintains this form in the way in which the tree, for example, maintains its form as a tree (wood maintains itself in the specific form of the tree because this form is a form of the wood; while the form of the table is accidental for wood, and not the intrinsic form of its substance” (p. 360). This is strikingly analogous to the passage from Aristotle’s *Physics*, where in talking about the distinction between natural objects and made objects in terms of what constitutes their nature or form, Aristotle writes (citing Antiphon), “if you planted a bed and the rotting wood acquired the power of sending up a shoot, it would not be a bed that would come up, but *wood*—which shows that the arrangement in accordance with the rules of art is merely an incidental attribute, whereas the real nature is the other, which, further, persists continuously throughout the process of making.”³

But for Aristotle, this process of production, which gives an artificial form to natural material, preserves only the nature of the material itself through this transformation. Aristotle writes, “Nature means the primary material of which any natural object consists or out of which it

is made. . . e.g. bronze is said to be the nature of a statue and of bronze utensils, and wood the nature of wooden things, and so in all other cases when a product is made of these materials, the (primary material) is preserved throughout."⁴ By contrast, for Marx it is not only the natural substance or material but also the *value* that is preserved through these transformations. That is, as labor works up raw materials into successive forms (for example, cotton spun into yarn and then woven into fabric), the value of the cotton is preserved through these successive transformations. But the characteristic of the labor process for Marx is that the old value is not only preserved but is increased. Marx explains this using the model of determinate negation or *Aufhebung*, which he derives from Hegel. Thus Marx writes, "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 (or the value which the object has as satisfying a need in consumption) preserves the old, or the old use value is transformed only to the extent that it is raised to a higher use value" (p. 362). Thus, for example, labor preserves the utility of cotton as yarn by weaving the yarn into fabric.

Indeed, there is a broader sense in which the model of objectification is derived by Marx from Hegel. Marx follows Hegel in construing objectification as a process of self-realization of a subject through its transforming objects. But whereas Hegel interprets the object as the subject itself in its otherness, Marx regards the object as possessing a reality apart from the subject, at least initially. Thus for Hegel, nature

is nothing but Spirit's own other-sidedness and has no independent existence. But for Marx, nature is given as the material which the subject then transforms into his or her other in the image of his or her needs. Nature is initially independent of the subject, that is, the laboring individual, but becomes a humanized nature in and through the activity of labor.

Another difference between Marx's conception of objectification and Hegel's is the following: For Hegel, what is objectified is already "contained in" the subject or implicit in it, and therefore objectification is the dialectical elaboration of what is already present (that is, in the Idea.) For Marx, by contrast, objectification as labor is "a productive, creative activity" which creates something fundamentally novel, namely new value. But in this creative activity, the subject also creates him or herself as something new, that is, as a subject with a new or changed nature.

For Marx, the era of capitalism introduces a distinctive mode of objectification, which he characterizes as alienation. In the first chapter, the second stage of the dialectic was described as one in which the subject appears to be an isolated self or pure "subjectivity" standing against an object that is taken to be wholly other than it. The relations between subject and object are therefore seen to be external relations in that each stands to the other as an object. For Marx, as for Hegel, this relation is one of alienation. The subject is "estranged from" the object and does not recognize it as its own object or its own other. For Hegel, however, every objectification of the subject is an alienation,

since the other is nothing but the subject itself in its objectified form, and the other initially appears to the subject not as its own other but as an external object. The whole dialectic is a succession of such alienations constantly being superseded by other alienations, but which are finally overcome only at the end of the process (where the subject-object identity is reestablished). For Marx, on the other hand, objectification is the intrinsic character of every productive activity and is alienated only when the relation between the subject and the object becomes an external one. That is, objectification is not alienated when the object produced by the subject's activity is related to the subject as its own. It becomes alienated when the object is separated from the subject's activity that creates it, and is no longer related to the subject as its own, but as belonging to another. This alienation presupposes objectification as its condition, for the product of one's activity has to be distinct from that activity itself in order to be separable from it, and it can only be alienated from the subject if in fact this object is the product of the subject's activity.

In terms of an act-object analysis, alienation introduces the utter separation of the act from its object. In this separation the act itself becomes a mere capacity divorced from the conditions of its actualization. Marx interprets this separation in political economic terms as the hallmark of the capitalist form of social production.⁵ For Marx, alienation is the separation of living labor from objectified labor or of labor's capacity to produce value from the means for its realization in production (for example, land, materials and instrument) and from the prod-

uct of its activity. These means or conditions for labor's actualization belong to capital, which stands opposed to labor as its objective condition. Indeed, even the laboring capacity itself along with the products of labor stand over against labor as alien powers belonging to capital.

Thus the context in which Marx interprets alienation is political economy. Here his difference from Hegel can be seen at its sharpest. For Hegel, the process of alienation is seen as a process of consciousness, which then becomes embodied in external form. By contrast, Marx sees this process of alienation as a process of real social life, of which the agents become conscious in and through their activity.

In the *Grundrisse* several distinctive features of capitalism, including the specific nature of the exchange between labor and capital, and at a later stage the function of machinery, are presented as following from the alienation or separation between living labor and objectified labor or between labor and capital. Because the objective conditions of labor belong to capital, which here appears as wealth, the worker must sell the only property he or she has, namely his or her capacity to work, to the capitalist in exchange for means of subsistence. The worker sells this capacity in order to maintain him or herself as living labor. From the other side, capital as the set of objective conditions of labor, such as raw material and instrument, requires living labor for the work process to proceed; therefore capital needs labor as its use value. Capital and labor therefore enter into exchange with each other. In this exchange, the worker does not sell him or herself, but rather sells a temporary disposition over his or her laboring capacity to the capitalist.

In one respect, this laboring capacity or labor power is a commodity like other commodities; as such it has a price. Thus labor exchanges it for a specific sum of exchange values or for a wage.

Now this act is an exchange of equivalents like other exchanges on the market. But according to Marx, this exchange is only the surface process which masks or hides a deeper process that is not an exchange at all, in which Marx says, “apparent individual equality and liberty disappear” (p. 247). Marx calls the second process the appropriation of labor by capital. This second process results from the first exchange. For whereas the laborer sold his or her labor power as a commodity and thus for a price that amounts to the cost of its production, in this transaction the capitalist receives labor not as a mere commodity but in its aspect of being creative activity, “value-positing activity.” This follows from the distinctive quality of this commodity of being the only value-producing commodity. The capitalist obtains the productive force of labor, which as now belonging to capital serves to maintain and multiply capital. Through this exchange, capital becomes “mastery, command over living labor.”

According to Marx, the alienation of labor, or the separation between labor and wealth or between labor and property in the product of labor, is established in this act of exchange. Thus he writes “It is clear, therefore, that the worker cannot become rich in this exchange, since, in exchange for his labor capacity as a fixed available magnitude, he surrenders its creative power, like Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage. Rather, he necessarily impoverishes himself...because the

creative power of his labor establishes itself as the power of capital, as an *alien power* confronting him” (p. 307).

This alienation of labor’s activity and products which is established through this act of exchange becomes actual in the production process. In this process, the laborer produces both the value that reproduces him or her—paid to the laborer by the capitalist in the wage, as well as surplus value, or more value than it takes to reproduce him or her—which goes to the capitalist and increases the value of capital. The part of the worker’s time spent reproducing him or herself is called necessary labor time. The remainder of the worker’s time is called surplus labor time and is unpaid labor. The value produced during this time is called surplus value.

Through the alienation of this laboring capacity, the product of labor appears as belonging to capital. Further, every increase in the productive powers of labor “enriches not the worker but rather capital, hence it only magnifies again the power dominating over labor” (p. 308). The alienation of labor receives its culmination in automatic systems of machinery. Here alienation or the domination of labor by capital comes to characterize the production process itself. Thus Marx writes,

The appropriation of living labor by objectified labor—of the power or activity which creates value by value existing for-itself—which lies in the concept of capital, is posited, in production resting on machinery, as the character of the production process itself.... The production process has ceased to be a labor process in the sense of a process dominated by labor as its governing unity. Labor appears, rather, merely as a conscious organ, scattered among the individual living

workers at numerous points of the mechanical system; subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery, which confronts his individual insignificant doings as a mighty organism. (p. 693)

I have thus far treated objectification as in general a process of self-creation or self-transformation which proceeds through the production of objects in accordance with one's purposes. We have also seen that this activity of objectification takes the form of alienation in the capitalist stage, in which the individuals fail to recognize themselves in their own objectification, that is, capital. Their own objectification is taken as an alien other, seemingly unrelated to them. This account of objectification is not yet complete, however, for in my first thesis I claimed that the activity of self-creation proceeds not merely through the production of objects but through interaction with others. Thus I shall now sketch briefly Marx's account of this interaction as it relates to the process of objectification.

Marx holds that all objectification or productive activity takes place in and through specific forms of social relations.⁹ That is, the transformative activity of labor in which individuals work on objects takes place through personal relations to other individuals, through institutionalized social forms, and through given forms of property that mark social systems as a whole. In the *Grundrisse* such social relations are analyzed as relations of domination or as reciprocal relations. Moreover, social relations may themselves be objectified, that is, be embodied in external form in social institutions and rules and in social

systems as a whole. In chapter 5, I shall give a general treatment of Marx's theory of social relations in the *Grundrisse*. Here I shall only present a brief account of the forms of social interaction that characterize the second and third stages of historical development. This account will provide some basis for seeing how objectification takes place through definite forms of social relations.

I shall focus first on Marx's discussion of the reciprocity in exchange in capitalism. The first feature of the reciprocity of exchange is that it is mediated by the objects created by labor. That is, individuals relate to each other not directly, but rather by means of the products of their labor. The preconditions for this exchange are first, that each individual has different needs and different products to exchange that will satisfy these needs, and second, that each is free to dispose of these products as his or her property. Thus Marx sees this relation of exchange as possible only at a certain stage of social development, when these preconditions can be met. The act of exchange itself establishes the equality of these individuals as exchangers, that is, they are equal because they stand in the *same* social relation to each other. Furthermore, the exchange itself expresses the interdependence of one on the other and thus creates a social bond between them. This social bond expresses their common nature as needing each other and as being able to satisfy each other's needs. Thus Marx writes,

The fact that this need on the part of one can be satisfied by the product of the other, and vice versa, and that the one is capable of producing the object of the need of the other, and that each confronts the other as owner of the object of the other's need, this proves that each of them

reaches beyond his own particular need as a *human being*, and that they relate to one another as human beings; that their common species-being is acknowledged by all. (p. 243)

It can be seen that the relations between the individuals in this process of exchange are not immediate personal relations. Rather, each recognizes the other in exchange only in terms of their objectifications, that is, the products or commodities that they exchange. Thus the relations between persons appear as relations between things. Furthermore, insofar as each person represents to the other only the means by which his or her own needs are satisfied, the reciprocal relation within exchange is an instrumental one. Thus Marx writes, "individual A serves the need of individual B by means of the commodity *a* only in so far as and because individual B serves the need of individual A by means of the commodity *b* and vice versa. Each serves the other in order to serve himself; each makes use of the other, reciprocally, as his means" (p. 243). The individuals thus are represented to each other through their products and as means only and relate to each other only in the externality of exchange between commodities or things.

In addition to the social relations in exchange, there is another form of social bond in the production process of capitalism itself. This bond arises from the objectification of the joint or cooperative capacities of many individuals. As we saw in the previous chapter, this occurs in the division of labor and especially in the use of systems of machinery in large-scale capitalist industry. Both the common product of joint work and the common nature of the work process are objectifications of the combined laboring individuals.⁷

However, under capitalism this commonality appears only in its objectified form, for example, in machinery, and is not yet recognized as the subjects' (that is, workers') own social objectification. In Marx's view, the recognition of this commonality as the workers' own creation is the ground for the reappropriation of the objective community of labor as the property of the laborers themselves. The social relations would then become communal. The individuals would relate to each other no longer through the mediation of exchange or of the production process, but rather immediately in personal interaction.

In the second social stage, what is established is an increasing universalization and differentiation of human capacities and needs, but only in their alienated form in the production process. Once this differentiation of their capacities is seen as what it really is, namely, the objectified form of the workers' own capacities, it becomes possible for them to reappropriate it as their own subjective differentiation and universality. Furthermore, in Marx's discussion of a third stage of social relations, the social bond consists in part of a common capacity for this full self-differentiation or, to put it differently, their full individuation. Each individual, freed from the abstract one-sidedness of a "role" in the objective production process, now is free to choose and develop whatever aspects of individuality he or she wishes. As we shall see, a condition for this is that labor as a necessary activity has become completely transferred to machinery.

Reciprocal recognition therefore no longer takes place only through the external forms of exchange, but rather as the recognition of individual differences. The species nature of the individuals is recognized

as this very capacity for individuation. Thus each individual's self-development is recognized by each of the others not simply instrumentally as meeting a need of some other, but as an end in itself. Social relations in this third stage thus become communal and mutually enhancing relations.

In the relation to other individuals, as in the creation of objects, objectification becomes the necessary process through which self-creation and self-recognition are achieved. But as we have seen for Marx, this is a historical process in which labor as productive activity and the social relations within which this activity is carried out take on specific forms at different stages of development.

Labor and the Creation of Time

The terms process, development, and change all suggest a temporal dimension to the activity of labor. A close reading of the *Grundrisse* reveals that Marx suggests a view of time that is, on the one hand, wholly unexpected and original, yet on the other hand, coherent with the view of labor as objectification. Let me begin with a very strong claim: that for Marx, in the *Grundrisse* at least, labor creates time or introduces time into the world. Thus according to Marx, "Labor is the living, form-giving fire; it is the transitoriness of things, their temporality, as their formation by living time" (p. 361). Is this more than a metaphorical passage? I think it is and that it should be taken seriously.

On the notoriously difficult metaphysical question of the nature of time, one well-known view is that of Kant, and it is possible to interpret Marx's view of time in a Kantian fashion. For Kant, time is an *a*

priori form of perception and is introduced into the world as a condition of our perception and understanding of things. It is thus not a condition of things in themselves, but rather something that derives from our activity in constituting the world as an object of knowledge. But for Kant, this is a mental activity and the only agency involved in pure reason is the activity of consciousness. For Marx, however, the constituting activity that introduces time is labor, namely, real or practical activity of the subject in the world.

In what follows, I shall not be concerned with the question of whether time is intrinsic to nature, taken in itself apart from human activity. In particular, I am not denying that there is sequence and change in natural processes independent of human activity. However, I shall argue that human laboring activity is the origin of human time-consciousness; of time as an objective measure; and also that this activity is the condition for the understanding of sequences and changes in nature and in social life as temporal.

Laboring activity, as we have seen, is one that changes the world and also changes the subject. Furthermore, though it does not create from nothing but rather by transformation of what is given, laboring activity, according to Marx, introduces real novelty; that is, labor is an activity of creating or making new objects. This making of objects is a process; it has a distinctive form—determinate negation—which, as we have seen, is a concept that Marx borrows from Hegel. In determinate negation, a given or present stage or moment negates that which preceded it by preserving it in a new or higher form; but each such moment transforms itself in accordance with the Idea as its telos.

Marx introduces a very different interpretation of this process of determinate negation. For him it is the characteristic form of human activity. Such activity is guided by some purpose or end; in anticipation of the future, the agent changes the pre-existing object by giving it new form by means of present or, as Marx says, living, activity or labor. Thus he writes, "The transformation of the material by living labor, by the realization of living labor in the material—a transformation which, as purpose, determines labor and is its purposeful activation . . . thus preserves the material in a definite form, and subjugates the transformation of the material to the purpose of labor" (pp. 360-361). He goes on to say, "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, or, the old use value is transformed only to the extent that it is raised to a higher use value" (pp. 361-362).

My claim is that in describing activity as the synthesis or connection of these three moments, Marx is presenting this activity as the origin of the three constituents of time—namely, past, present and future—and sees it as providing the ground for their interconnection as the process of time. The ground is the synthetic unity of activity.⁸

This synthesis created through laboring activity is not an event, but a process. In the forming or making of objects, the given has to be worked up and a purpose realized in it. This movement from potentiality to actuality is unidirectional. The product or the made object is the result of the process of production which therefore precedes it. Thus

the relation of before and after is established as an asymmetrical one in this laboring activity. However, since this activity is human activity, it is purposive; therefore the anticipation of a future in the present establishes the present itself as projective or as directed toward the future. Thus the asymmetry of before and after is established with respect to the present and future, in that what is anticipated in the present as future is not yet.

All of this, however, presents an abstract structure or a logic of time-relation, but not real or living time. For Marx, the reality of time is introduced by the activity of living labor which creates the now. Such a now is not a static instant but a dynamic unity of past, present and future.

A problem arises here, however: Does this process that unifies or synthesizes past, present and future happen only once? To put it differently: Is time a one-time thing? No, for on this concrete analysis of time as generated by the activity of labor, the process is constantly renewed on two grounds: first, because of the boundless variety of purposes and modes of realizing purposes characteristic of human activity. That is, this laboring activity is creative in the ways in which it satisfies needs and in its generation of new needs and purposes. Second, this activity is constantly renewed because agents constantly have to reproduce themselves by this activity.

Whereas this constant renewal connotes a succession, or a repetition of the now, the continuity of time beyond this mere succession arises from the character of the activity as subsuming or preserving the past in

the present, and from the ingreience of the future in the present, by virtue of its anticipation in the present. That is, there is no cut between past and present and between present and future.

The apparent paradox in which time contains both what is and what is not, or that the present contains what is no longer and what is not yet, is already stated by Aristotle in his discussion of time in the *Physics*. After asking whether time exists or does not exist and what its nature is, Aristotle writes, "To start then: the following considerations would make me suspect that [time] either does not exist at all or barely and in an obscure way. One part of it has been and is not, while the other is going to be and is not yet. Yet time. . . is made up of these. One would naturally suppose that what is made up of things that do not exist could have no share in reality."⁹

This apparent paradox is resolved, however, when one takes change itself as the condition for the existence of time as Aristotle does. But then, too, so does Marx. For as we have seen, the activity of labor, which is the foundation of time, is the activity of changing things. To change something or to make an object, as we have seen, is a process in which the past or what comes before is subsumed or preserved in the present and is therefore not simply "left behind." Thus there is no sharp demarcation in this activity of creation between "what has been and is no longer" and what is now. On the other hand, since the made object is an intentional object and its presentness projects it as something to be used in the future, there is no sharp demarcation between the now and what is not yet.

The object itself, therefore, *qua* object is an objectification of the temporality of the activity of its production itself. It congeals these moments in itself. Things or objects are, in Marx's phrase, "brought to life" or animated by living labor.

In the meantime, the subject or the agent of the activity that creates time is him or herself, posited as temporal, since the subject is both created by activity and creative in his or her making of objects and remaking of him or herself. Therefore the agent is at once subject and object. Insofar as he or she is constituted in part by the objects of past making, that is, by the environment that has been created in the past, the agent incorporates this past in him or herself; and insofar as the agent is creative, that is, both world-transforming and self-changing, he or she incorporates his or her intentionality or future-directedness in present activity. Therefore the subject bears all the characteristics of time within his or her own being. The subject, like the objects he or she produces, is temporalized by the synthetic unity of activity.

It may be remarked in passing that Marx's conception of time as originating in the creative activity of a subject bears some resemblance to Heidegger's conception of time in *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, also, time originates in the being of *Dasein*, a being characterized by activity. The activity of *Dasein* is characterized as one of anticipating the future or "being ahead of itself" and in this anticipation incorporating one's past in a resolute act in which one makes oneself present. Temporality arises from the fact that human activity has these three moments. Objective time for Heidegger is based on this originative

activity of *Dasein* itself. However, whereas Heidegger identifies this activity with temporality, my interpretation of Marx would avoid the circularity implied in Heidegger by regarding activity not as time itself but as introducing time into things. Furthermore, there are crucial differences between Heidegger and Marx in the interpretation of the nature of this time-formative activity itself, but I shall not develop them here. I shall only suggest that for Heidegger the temporalizing activity of *Dasein* is not understood as an activity of objectification, that is, is not understood as a social activity of transforming nature.

It may be objected that this interpretation of Marx's theory of time makes time nothing more than a subjective feature of the agent or of his or her activity and that time has no objectivity. But for Marx, objectivity is what is achieved by an activity that objectifies the subject through transformation of a given world, which at least initially exists independently of the subject. The stubbornness of nature gives rise to an understanding of laboring activity as the overcoming of obstacles. This fact also contributes to making time not an event but a process. Furthermore, since the activity of objectification is for Marx not an activity of an isolated individual but rather a social activity, time is to be understood as more than a subjective feature of the agent. The sociality of this activity contributes to making time into a common measure of this laboring activity itself and of the objective conditions of this activity.

What, then, is objective time? It is the objectified form of the activity of labor. To give an example, we might initially suppose that the time established by the change in seasons, which marks the activities

of planting and harvesting, is measured by an independent measure, namely, the change of the seasons itself. However, on the view presented here, the choice of the seasons as ways of marking time is itself made on the basis of the activities of planting and harvesting. The external reference is therefore an externalization of a condition of the laboring activity itself or its objectification. Thus, more generally, what sets the conditions for the establishment of an objective measure of time is the objective character of the laboring process itself, insofar as such a process is the fulfillment of a goal or a purpose in a product. The making of the object thus has a beginning and an end. The choice of an external frame of reference to mark the beginning and end of such a process is the choice of an objective time reference. The requirement for such an external or objective reference arises when the process of production itself is both a shared or social process among individuals and when the same process has to be repeated many times. In these cases the objectivity of time reference is required by and established for the sake of a common and objective measure or standard. Thus, for example, the measurement of astronomical time was not first established and then a use for it discovered in marking the seasons or for navigational purposes. But rather the need for such measurement gave rise to the use of the stars for this purpose.

The foregoing elaboration of a theory of time that is suggested in the *Grundrisse* goes beyond what Marx explicitly says. Yet it is coherent with his notion of labor as the temporality of things and with his notion of objectification. He is more specific, however, in his use of the temporal dimension as the category that most fundamentally charac-

terizes economy. Thus he says strikingly, “Economy of time, to this all economy ultimately reduces itself” (p. 173).

Marx further suggests that the use of time as a measure varies historically. Thus it might be said that for him time is itself qualitatively different at different stages of social development. Although time is introduced by labor in all forms of economy, the measure of labor in terms of time is not a common feature of all social forms of production but is introduced when labor itself is realized as a homogeneous and abstract quantity.

In pre-capitalist societies, labor is not measured in terms of time, but rather in terms of its qualitative differentiation as expressed in the various use values of the goods produced. Further, in these societies there is no clear distinction between necessary working time and superfluous working time, that is, laboring time beyond production for needs, since virtually all production is production for use or need.

The possibility of time as a measure for labor arises only in the second stage of social development—namely, that of capitalism. In this stage labor becomes qualitatively undifferentiated; any part of it is like any other part. It becomes abstract labor, where this abstraction of all the qualitative differences between one kind and another occurs through the equivalence established among the products of this labor in exchange. This homogeneous abstract labor now can be measured by a universal measure and divided into standard units. The measure of this abstract labor is time, but time now conceived as itself a universal and homogeneous quantity, any part of which may be substituted for any

other part in equivalent measure. Thus units of time can be mapped onto units of abstract labor.

The value of a thing produced is measured by the amount of socially necessary labor time it takes to produce it. As I indicated above, this total labor time is itself divided into necessary labor time and surplus labor time, and the value of the product is similarly apportioned into a part that must go to labor as wages and the surplus or extra value which is appropriated by capital.

It is the surplus labor performed by the worker—that is, laboring above and beyond that required to produce the products for his or her subsistence—which is the source of the surplus value for capital. Thus Marx writes, “It is a law of capital . . . to create surplus labor, disposable time; it can do this only by setting *necessary labor* in motion—i.e. entering into exchange with the worker” (p. 399). However, there is a second tendency in capital that contradicts this first one. For capital also characteristically attempts to reduce necessary labor time so that a larger part of labor time will be surplus time which produces surplus value. This diminution of necessary labor time is accomplished through an increase in the productive force of living labor, and this in turn is accomplished primarily through the introduction of machinery or, more precisely, an automatic system of machinery. Marx describes this system as “set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton, consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages” (p. 692) Here laboring activity merely trans-

mits the machine's work onto the raw material—only supervises it and guards against interruptions. Thus the machine possesses skill and strength in place of the worker and the worker's activity is determined by the movement of the machinery.

This introduction of machinery to reduce necessary labor time so as to increase surplus labor time and thus surplus value is of great significance for the transition to communal society. For machinery diminishes necessary labor time by increasing labor's productivity. Thus Marx writes that in the use of machinery, "the amount of labor necessary for the production of a given object is indeed reduced to a minimum, but only in order to realize a maximum of labor in a maximum number of such objects. The first aspect is important, because capital here—quite unintentionally—reduces human labor, expenditure of energy, to a minimum. This will redound to the benefit of emancipated labor, and is the condition of its emancipation" (p. 701). That is, the system of capital through its "mania for wealth," to use Marx's phrase, produces *abundance* and thus tends to reduce necessary labor. As Marx explains in *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, such abundance is the condition for a society based on communal production, where there would be distribution of goods to individuals according to needs.

In reducing necessary labor time, capital increases surplus or superfluous time. In so doing, "it is thus despite itself, instrumental in creating the means of social disposable time... and thus to free everyone's time for their own development" (p. 708). However,

within capitalism, superfluous time has what Marx calls an antithetical or contradictory form. For capital's striving toward reduction of necessary and increase of surplus time leads it to crisis (or contradiction), for this process necessarily leads to overproduction. The reduction of necessary time requires a proliferation of goods, but necessary time is paid for by the wage. Thus in diminishing necessary time, capital is also to that degree diminishing the ability of the worker to purchase the goods produced. Marx writes,

The more this contradiction develops, the more does it become evident that the growth of the forces of production can no longer be bound up with the appropriation of alien labor, but that the mass of workers must themselves appropriate their own surplus labor. Once they have done so—and *disposable time* thereby ceases to have an *antithetical* existence—then, on one side, necessary labor time will be measured by the needs of the social individual, and, on the other, the development of the power of social production will grow so rapidly, that, even though production is now calculated for the wealth of all, *disposable time* will grow for all. For real wealth is the developed productive power of all individuals. The measure of wealth is then not any longer, in any way, labor time, but rather disposable time. (p. 708)

Thus in this new form of society, there is again production for use, but now carried out through social production. It is a society of abundance, according to Marx, where necessary labor is transferred to the machine and where "labor in which a human being does what a thing could do has ceased" (p. 325). The determination of time remains important in this new society, for the associated individuals have to distribute their time in ways appropriate to meet their various needs.

But now these needs are needs for self-development. Thus here the measure of wealth becomes free time or time for the free development of individualities. In this society, labor becomes the creative activity of self-realization, which according to Marx is “real freedom” (p. 611).

3 Toward a Labor Theory of Cause: Action and Creation in Marx’s Social Ontology

In this chapter I shall argue that Marx transforms the traditional problem of causality in a radical way by grounding it in his analysis of the activity of labor as an ontological category. In this analysis Marx formulates the problem of causality as one that concerns, on the one hand, the objective conditions under which human agents realize their purposes in the activity of labor and, on the other hand, the production or formation of these very conditions by labor itself.

Marx’s approach shifts the ground of the traditional discussion of causality in two ways: first, with regard to the domain of causality and second, with regard to the relation of causal to intentional or teleological explanation. First, the problem of causality is usually posed as one concerning how in general things come into being or how one state of affairs gives rise to or is succeeded by another. Human action is then situated with respect to such accounts of the causal relation, as either conforming to it or as lying beyond it. By contrast, Marx locates the problem of causality within the domain of human activity itself. He thus transposes the general ontological question of causality into the context of what I am calling a social ontology, that is, a systematic theory of the nature of social reality whose basic entities are individuals in relations. But, as we shall see, this reformulation of the problem does not mean that Marx reduces the problem of causality to one concerning only the intentions or purposes of agents. Rather, he views the activity of labor as a relation between agents and an objective world, where this objective world includes both nature (as it is originally given and as it has been transformed by past human activity)

and human history itself. However, Marx does not treat the problem of causality in the context of nature taken by itself. Thus the question of whether Marx's analysis of causality as a category of social ontology has any implication for an understanding of causality in nature taken apart from human activity will not be considered in this chapter. The discussion that follows does not bear on the question of whether there is causality in nature for Marx. Further, it should be noted that in this chapter there will be no analysis of the relations of power, constraint, or domination among persons. These relations between persons will be analyzed in the discussion of social interaction in chapter 5. However, in the present chapter I shall argue that such relations are not to be understood as causal, that is, as relations in which one agent causes the actions of another.

The second way in which Marx transforms the traditional problem of causality is in overcoming the disjunction between explanations in terms of causes and explanations in terms of reasons or intentions, or put in more traditional terms, the disjunction between efficient and final causes. I shall show that Marx transcends this separation by conceiving of labor as a process in which purposes or intentions are made effective in the world and correlatively, in which the objective conditions of action become transformed in accordance with purposes. Further, I shall argue that on the basis of this theory of labor, Marx develops a conception of causality that is consistent with human freedom.

It should be made clear at the outset that Marx himself does not talk about the concept of causality as such and it is not an explicit theme of

his analysis. This account of his theory is therefore a reconstruction of his views, focusing primarily on the *Grundrisse*. The basis for this reconstruction is an interpretation of Marx's theory of labor as purposive and productive activity, as well as an interpretation of Marx's use of such terms as *production*, *activity*, *objective conditions*, *presuppositions* and *creation*. Although Marx's discussion differs from traditional accounts of causality, I shall show that it is closely related to three major traditional views: those of Aristotle, Kant and Hegel. Yet I shall also show that Marx goes beyond these views in his grounding of causality in human creative activity. Marx's view is further distinguished from these others in that he sees not merely the concepts of causality, but also causality itself as undergoing a development through the various stages of history.

The central focus of this chapter is the reconstruction of what I am calling "Marx's labor theory of cause" as an ontological theory. My reconstruction is in three parts: first, a discussion of Marx's theory of objectification, that is, his theory of labor as a formative process, as the basis for his conception of cause; second, an analysis of Marx's conception of cause as an internal relation; and third, a discussion of how, according to Marx, the ontological reality of labor as cause gives rise to the appearance of cause and effect as an external and reified relation in a given historical period, namely, that of capitalism. Marx's theory of alienation will be important here. On the basis of this reconstruction of Marx's view, I shall develop the critique, which is implicit in Marx's work, of two prevailing views of causality. It may

be useful, however, to sketch these two prevailing views at the outset in order to prepare the ground for the later critique and also to permit the distinctiveness of Marx's own view to emerge more clearly.

These two prevailing views of causality are, first, the view that sees causality as a merely external relation between a cause and an effect, and second, the view that replaces the relation between cause and effect with the relation of reasons or intentions to actions.¹ On the first view the causal relation is regarded as one that holds universally for all domains, whether natural or social. It is interpreted as a relation that holds between two independent entities, whether these are conceived to be objects, in an ontological approach, or ideas or sense impressions, in an epistemological approach. Further, the causal relation is conceived to be an external relation between these independent entities; that is, in this view the entities that are related remain essentially unchanged by the relation.

Such a view of the causal relation as an external one holding between separate entities has its contemporary counterpart in the conception of the functional relation between independent and dependent variables. In the account of human actions this may take the form of behaviorism, in which stimulus and response are taken as independently definable entities which stand in the external relation of correlation between their observed values.

By contrast with this first view, which interprets causality as an external relation, Marx interprets it as an internal relation between the activity of an agent and the object of this activity, in which both are essentially changed by the relation. More significantly, Marx's view

contrasts with this first one in the understanding of human activity itself. Whereas the first view takes human actions to be the effects of causes external to them and as describable in terms of objective laws, Marx takes only human actions to be causally efficacious and does not take them to be the effects of causes. Furthermore, he introduces a conception of this causal human activity as fundamentally purposive and as constituting the social world.

One may find a similar rejection of the view that human actions are to be explained in terms of external causes or objective laws among those theorists who hold that human actions can be understood only in terms of the agent's purposes and intentions. This position constitutes the second of the prevailing views of causality noted above. In distinction from the first view, this second approach sharply distinguishes the question of understanding human action from the question of causal explanation. This approach takes only the contexts of human action as its domain. Further, it proposes that the appropriate way for explaining actions is by understanding the intentions of the agents in performing such actions. This view characterizes contemporary action theory as well as the phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches.

Although Marx would agree with the emphasis that such views place on human action, he would be critical of the sharp separation they make between understanding human action and causal explanation, for Marx understands human action as itself causal. Furthermore, although Marx would agree with the interpretation that such views give of the nature of action as essentially purposive and intentional, he would be critical of the exclusive focus of such theories on the understanding of

actions in terms of intentions alone. Rather, as we shall see, for Marx a full account of action also requires reference to the objective conditions of that action.

The Causality of Agency

Marx introduces a theory of cause that turns on his idea of labor as both a purposive and productive activity. A reconstruction of Marx's concept of cause should therefore begin with an account of his analysis of labor, which Marx understands in a broad sense as human activity itself. As I have shown in chapter 2, labor for Marx is a process of objectification in which an agent forms objects that embody his or her intentions or purposes and in doing so also forms him or herself. The agent in this process of objectification is understood by Marx as a social individual, that is, an individual in social relations, or as social individuals, in the plural, working with a common purpose. The process is one in which the agent or laboring subject constitutes objects or gives them meaning. Objects are therefore not to be understood simply as givens, but are rather to be regarded as produced by the agent's activity. However, as noted in the previous chapter, the agent does not constitute objects out of nothing. Rather, the agent or subject works on something that is given to him or her as external or other.

Thus for Marx, "labor is purposeful activity" (p. 311). In order to realize his or her purposes, the individual in the activity of labor gives form to objects such that these purposes are realized. Thus Marx calls labor a "form-giving activity" (p. 301). Further, insofar as the objects created by this activity realize the purposes or satisfy the needs of the

agent, these objects come to have a use or value for the subject. Accordingly, as we have seen in chapter 2, Marx characterizes labor as "value-positing activity." But perhaps the most significant feature that Marx attributes to the activity of labor is that it is productive activity in the sense of being creative activity, that is, of creating new objects. These objects in turn constitute the objective conditions for subsequent laboring activity.

In this process of creating new objects that realize their purposes, agents at the same time create and transform themselves. That is, in the realization of their purposes through labor, agents come to develop new capacities and skills and come to recognize these new capacities in themselves. Thus labor as a process of constituting the world is at the same time a process of self-constitution. In the *Grundrisse* Marx describes this process as one of "self-realization, objectification of the subject, hence real freedom, whose action is, precisely, labor" (p. 611). A final feature of Marx's model of objectification is that it is a social process. It is so in two senses: first, that production is always carried on in and through specific forms of social relations, and second, that this activity of objectification is at the same time the way that individuals create their social life as their own product.

The question is how this analysis of labor provides the basis for a theory of cause. If the question of cause concerns how things come into being and how one thing gives rise to another, then it is clear that for Marx, in the domain of social reality, it is labor that brings things into being and connects one thing with another. Thus labor not only pro-

vides the ground for the concepts of cause, but more fundamentally constitutes the ontological domain of causality itself insofar as one is concerned with human affairs. Thus the reconstruction of Marx's theory of cause may proceed by an interpretation of Marx's analysis of labor itself.

In this interpretation my first thesis is that Marx sees labor as causal in four senses; final, efficient, formal, and material. It thus becomes clear that one of the historical antecedents of Marx's labor theory of cause is Aristotle's doctrine of four causes.

My second thesis is that for Marx labor is the active connection or mediation between final and efficient causes, between a purpose and the action that realizes it. Similarly, labor is the active mediation between formal and material causes or between the form and the objective conditions for its actualization. As such a mediation, labor may be regarded as an activity of synthesis which unifies these dimensions of purpose, agency, form and objective conditions. In this understanding of the causal relation as a synthetic activity, Marx's view may be compared to that of Kant. But for Kant, the synthetic activity is one of consciousness, whereas for Marx, the synthetic unity is one of labor as a practical activity of the subject in the world.

My third thesis is that for Marx only human agency may properly be called causal. The environment or the objective circumstances in their effects on human actions are therefore not properly conceived as themselves causal agents. Rather, in Marx's account they are regarded as objective conditions or presuppositions of human action. Moreover, such objective circumstances come to be conditions only as they are

required for the realization of purposes in a given activity. Furthermore, Marx characterizes these objective conditions as themselves objectifications of past human agency. This account of the relation between human agency and objective circumstances will permit us to throw new light on Marx's remark in the third thesis on Feuerbach that "the doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances."²

I shall now proceed to discuss these three theses in turn.

First, in Marx's description of the simple production process, that is, the general form of laboring activity in which it produces objects for use, he analyzes labor as introducing final, efficient, formal and material "causes." Thus Marx writes, "The transformation of the material by living labor, by the realization of living labor in the material—a transformation which, as purpose, determines labor and is its purposeful activation . . . —thus preserves the material in a definite form and subjugates the transformation of the material to the purpose of labor" (p. 360-61). Thus for Marx, the objects that labor produces embody the purposes of the agent; these purposes are thus their final causes or that for the sake of which they are created. The quotation further suggests that labor itself is activated or determined by its purposes. Thus in Marx's account labor as transformative activity or as efficient cause—that is, what brings about changes in things—is inseparably bound up with its purposiveness or with final causality. The activity of labor is thus the way in which purposes become causally efficacious.

This transformative activity that realizes purposes proceeds through the working up or forming of material. Thus Marx calls labor “The living, form-giving fire” (p. 360). That is, labor is also the formal cause in the sense that it shapes objects to make them useful and to suit human purposes. Thus the formal cause is also construed in relation to final cause; or, more colloquially, what a thing is, is understood in terms of what it is good for.

It is clear in this account that Marx’s analysis is strikingly similar to Aristotle’s in that he makes use of the distinctions that Aristotle introduces between final, formal and efficient causes. Thus Aristotle gives an account of how things come to be or why they are what they are in terms of (1) “the end, i.e. that for the sake of which a thing is”; (2) “the form or pattern, i.e. the definition of the essence [of the thing]”; and (3) “that from which the change or the resting from change first begins.”³ Analogously, Marx gives an account of labor as the production of things in terms of purposes, the giving of form, and transformative activity that changes things. Furthermore, Marx follows Aristotle in his conception of material cause as the condition for this forming activity or as “that which” is formed by the activity. As Aristotle describes it, this “material cause” is “that from which, as immanent material, a thing comes into being; e.g. the bronze is the cause of the statue.”⁴ In a passage reminiscent of Aristotle, Marx writes,

The relation of capital, in its content, to labor, of objectified labor to living labor . . . can, in general, be nothing more than the relation of labor to its objectivity, its material . . . and in connection with labor as activity, the material, the objectified labor, has only two relations, that

of the *raw material*, i.e. of the formless matter, the mere material for the form-positing, purposive activity of labor, and that of the *instrument of labor*, the objective means which subjective activity inserts between itself as an object, as its conductor. (pp. 298–299)

As in Aristotle, so for Marx, the material cause describes what is available for forming activity as its objective condition or its presupposition. However, as is also clear from this passage, Marx, in distinction from Aristotle, interprets this material not as natural substance but as what he calls “social substance.” That is, he defines these objective conditions as objectified labor, or as the creations of past labor. Thus Marx writes, “Raw material and instrument, as substance of values, are themselves already *objectified* labor, products. The substance of value is not at all the particular natural substance, but rather objectified labor” (p. 299). Thus although objective conditions include what Marx calls natural substance, such substance does not become an objective condition except with reference to a specific activity of labor for which it has value. In this relation it is what Marx calls social substance.

My second thesis was that for Marx labor is the mediation or relation among the Aristotelian four causes and as such may be considered an activity of synthesis comparable to Kant’s notion of causality as a synthesis. Thus an important difference between Marx’s and Aristotle’s uses of the distinctions among the four causes is the centrality that Marx, by contrast to Aristotle, gives to labor. In Aristotle’s interpretation of the four causes in the context of human making, the activity of production or labor is only the efficient cause of the object. The pro-

ductive activity or labor is not the final, formal or material cause of the object. For Marx, on the other hand, the activity of labor contains in itself all four causes of a made object. As we have seen, not only is labor purposive, form-giving and causally efficacious activity, but as objectified labor, that is, as result or product, it is also the material condition for subsequent laboring activity. Thus labor as an activity is the synthesis or unification of all four “causes.”

The recognition that for Marx labor is an activity of synthesis or unification vividly suggests a comparison with Kant’s view of causality as such an activity of synthesis. Furthermore, for Kant the specific nature of this synthesis is that it is in the category of relation. Similarly, for Marx, labor as a synthetic activity establishes relations between entities. Further, as we have seen, labor is a process in which its own dimensions, that is, the four causes, are internally related to each other. It is therefore a synthetic unity of these dimensions.

However, there is an important difference in the understanding of the activity of synthesis between Marx and Kant and therefore in their understanding of the category of cause. Whereas for Kant synthesis is an activity of the understanding, for Marx it is the practical activity of labor. Therefore, while causality is only an epistemological category for Kant, concerning the conditions for any possible understanding, for Marx causality is at the same time an ontological category or, more precisely, a category of social ontology. As such it concerns the conditions for any possible practice.

My third thesis concerns the relation between human activity as cause and its objective conditions. My claim is that on Marx’s view

only human agency, or what Marx calls labor, is properly regarded as causal. The objective conditions for action are precisely that, namely, conditions and not causes. Furthermore, they become conditions for laboring activity only insofar as agents have to take them into account in order to realize their purposes. Moreover, on Marx’s view these conditions are themselves products of past laboring activity. They are what Marx calls “objectified labor.” Thus what appears as external to labor, as the objective world, is to a large degree really the result of labor’s own creative activity. But it should be emphasized that for Marx labor does not create from nothing, but rather presupposes a previously existing world which it works on.

Marx clarifies the relation between labor as cause and its objective conditions in his discussion of the relation between past or objectified labor and living labor as activity in the present. He makes the point that previously objectified labor is significant only to the extent that it is posited as a condition of living labor. Thus Marx writes, “Objectified labor ceases to exist in a dead state as an external, indifferent form of the substance, because it is itself again posited as a moment of living labor; as a relation of living labor to itself in an objective material, as the objectivity of living labor (as means and end) (the objective conditions of living labor)” (p. 360).

Marx gives an example of this relation in his account of the production process. In the weaving of the yarn into fabric, labor has as its objective conditions the material and the instrument, that is, cotton yarn and the loom. The yarn and the loom are themselves products of previous labor. Further, they become objective conditions only with

respect to the purposes of labor, namely, only insofar as they are worked on with a view to transforming them into fabric. Thus Marx writes,

When the labor of weaving transforms yarn into fabric, i.e. treats yarn as the raw material of weaving (a particular form of living labor)—(and twist has use value only if it is woven into fabric)—it thereby preserves the use value which cotton had as such, as well as that which cotton had obtained specifically as yarn. It preserves the product of labor by making it into the raw material of new labor. (p. 362)

Or, as Marx says, “It preserves it . . . only by working it in a purposeful way, by making it the object of new living labor” (p. 362).

Thus it is Marx’s view that the relation of labor to its objective conditions or, as Marx says, to “the objective conditions of its efficacy” (p. 363) is a relation of a causal agent, namely, the present laboring activity, to conditions that become relevant only insofar as they are transformed by this activity. Thus in Marx’s example, the use value of the cotton yarn and the loom are preserved only by the activity of weaving fabric. As Marx describes it,

[The labor of weaving] *preserves the utility of cotton as yarn by weaving the yarn into fabric . . . preserves it by weaving it.* This preservation of labor as product—of the use value of the product of labor by its becoming the raw material of new labor, being again posited as material objectivity of purposeful living labor—is given with the simple production process. As regards use value, labor has the property of preserving the existing use value by raising it, and it raises it by making it into the object of new labor as defined by an ultimate aim. (p. 362)

This analysis helps us to understand more clearly Marx’s conception of the relation between human agents and their circumstances, which he presents in the well-known third thesis on Feuerbach cited above: “[T]he doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances.” It would be a mistake to interpret Marx here as meaning that human beings are produced by circumstances just as they produce circumstances, or to see this as a simple interaction between two causes. We have seen that for Marx circumstances or the objective world have no causal efficacy. They must rather be regarded as conditions or presuppositions of purposive human activity. This quotation should therefore be understood in the context of Marx’s view of objectification. This means that the relation of agents to circumstances is not symmetrical or reciprocal, but rather asymmetrical. Thus causal efficacy lies only with agents.

However, to recognize that only human agency is causal is not to say that the conditions contribute nothing to what results. For Marx, a full account of an action requires reference to the circumstances or conditions of that action. Conditions provide a range of possibilities for the realization of an agent’s purposes. Also, the absence of certain conditions makes the realization of given purposes more difficult or even impossible. Thus we may speak of enabling or constraining conditions of action. But the important thing to note in the context of this argument is that conditions are not causes. Moreover, in view of the argu-

ment made above that what counts as a condition for an action depends on the agent's purposes, it follows that what it is that actions can accomplish under given conditions can be discovered only in the course of the activity itself.

What I have been describing above is the fundamental nature of causality as agency. This is based on Marx's account of what he calls the simple production process, as well as on his remarks concerning the nature of activity. As such, Marx considers it to be a general feature of labor in all historical social stages. However, for Marx the forms of human activity, as well as the conditions for this activity, are socially and historically differentiated. Thus, as we shall see, the ways in which causality appears and is understood vary from one social stage to another.

Thus far I have been concerned with Marx's account of labor as objectification understood as a relation of the laboring subject or causal agent to the objective world. But as I have noted, for Marx objectification is at the same time a process of self-creation of the subject, in which an agent realizes and changes him or herself through changing the world. As in the previous analysis of action on the world, here, too, in the case of self-change, only agency is causal. Further, the four aspects of causality hold here as well: namely, in order to realize his or her purposes, the agent is efficiently or productively causal by a formative activity that shapes conditions. Consider the example of a person who wants to become a good cook. In order to realize this purpose, the person has to practice cooking, that is, has to engage in the activity of combining ingredients in accordance with a recipe and has to learn to

use the appropriate utensils for specific tasks. It is thus by working on conditions in accordance with purposes that the agent acquires new or changed characteristics, in this case, a skill. It is also evident that this process of self-creation or self-change, as in the previous case of labor as the changing of things, requires the mediation of objective conditions. That is, according to Marx, it is necessary to transform one's objective circumstances in order to change oneself.

However, unlike the previous case of changing things, the case of self-creation or self-change should not be conceived as a causal relation between the agent and himself or herself in which the agent may be conceived as a result of his or her previous actions. This would be to deny the freedom of the agent to recreate himself or herself constantly or to be in Marx's striking phrases "without a predetermined yardstick" (p. 488) or to be "the absolute movement of becoming" (p. 488). Rather, I would propose that Marx's idea of self-creation through objectification should be distinguished from traditional views of self-causation or of self-determination. For on such views, although the agent is not the product of any external causes, the agent's present activity is seen as the result of past actions, where only the first cause in such a chain is free and all future actions are determined by past actions. On such views present activity is not free to choose among alternative possibilities. I would claim that since agency is freely causal, one cannot regard this *agency* as caused, not even as self-caused. Rather, self-creation involves a process in which the agent through his or her causal action creates new conditions which present possibilities of new choices and purposes and new modes of action.

Further, it is only in the exercise of these new modes of activity that the agent may be said to have changed.

We have seen thus far that objectification involves a relation between subject and object and also between the subject and himself or herself. A final dimension that Marx sees in every act of objectification is the relation of subject to subject. Thus objectification or labor is characterized by Marx as an activity of social individuals who relate to each other in definite ways. The recognition of this social character of the laboring process requires us to supplement the previous analysis of objectification in the following ways: First, Marx characterizes the subject or causal agent as either a social individual or as social individuals in the plural. In chapter 1, I interpreted such a social individual to be a concrete individual standing in social relations, that is, definite relations to other individuals. Marx also speaks of social individuals in the plural as the subject or agency in the labor process. In this case, I take him to mean that such individuals-in-relation share purposes and co-determine the nature and results of the activity. This signifies for our account of cause that more than one individual can be the causal agent in a single process. But this does not signify a plurality of different causes, but rather that these individuals constitute what we might call a common cause.

The recognition of the social character of the process of objectification suggests another respect in which the previous analysis should be expanded. Specifically, it is not only material circumstances that provide the objective conditions of an individual's action. In addition,

other individuals are equally conditions or presuppositions for such action. Thus the needs of others may provide the motives or purposes of an individual's action. Or further, others may provide the instrumentality as in the case of exploitation. Again, other individuals or social institutions (as the objectified form of their relations) provide the social circumstances that an individual may draw upon in terms of skills, resources, ideas, and so forth in order to realize his or her purposes.

A further way in which the previous analysis needs to be elaborated derives from Marx's account of objectification or labor occurring in and through definite forms of social relations where these take the form of property relations. Marx defines property as disposition over the conditions of production. But my previous analysis has shown that labor or activity requires objective conditions for the realization of its purposes. In view of this, the importance of property, as disposition over these conditions, becomes evident. Thus in Marx's analysis, in the specific form of social relations of capitalism, the conditions or means of production are the property of capital, which therefore has the power of determining how this property is to be used. Since labor, in this form of social organization, does not have control over the objective conditions of its activity, labor's need for these conditions makes it objectively dependent on capital. A more general implication of the importance of property relations is that in order to understand a given process of labor or production in the economic sphere, one must see it in its relations to the forms of social organization, that is, the prevailing forms of property relations, as disposition over the conditions of pro-

duction. In this way we can see that Marx's conception of property is systematically related to his understanding of the objectification process.

In connection with this analysis of objectification as a relation of subject to subject, the question arises of whether this interrelation between individuals should be understood as a causal interaction in which one individual causes the actions of the other and vice versa. From the previous argument it may be seen that Marx takes each individual in such a relation as a causally effective agent and, further, as a free agent. For Marx, an agent causes changes in other things but is not himself or herself the effect of a cause. Therefore we may conclude that the relation between agents cannot be one in which one agent causes the actions of the other. On this account, the nature of this social relation among agents must be conceptualized as other than a causal relation. But the analysis of this alternative relation lies beyond the scope of this chapter and will be treated in the final chapter of this book.

Causality as an Internal Relation

I shall now take up a further dimension of Marx's labor theory of cause: namely, his characterization of cause as a relation, and specifically as an internal relation. This implies that the entities in the causal relation, namely, the subject and the object, are both essentially changed by the relation. Yet I shall argue that on Marx's view this recognition that cause is an internal relation does not require one to interpret it as a symmetrical relation. Rather, here my first thesis is that

Marx preserves the asymmetry of the causal relation while regarding it as an internal relation. Thus on Marx's view while the subject acts on the object, the object is without agency and does not act on the subject. Marx's view may thus be distinguished from those views, like the first view discussed earlier, that regard causality as an external relation between independent entities, which remain essentially unchanged by the relation. But in addition I would like to argue, as my second thesis, that Marx's view should also be distinguished from that which we may attribute to Hegel, which sees internal relations as fundamentally reciprocal, such that each element of the relation constitutes the other. For Marx, both cause and reciprocity are internal relations in which each of the entities in the relation is essentially changed by the relation; but in reciprocal relations the changes are not causal and in causal relations the changes are not reciprocal.

First, then, if we consider Marx's account of labor as a causal relation between the agent and the object of his or her activity, it is clear that the relation is an internal one in which both agent and object are essentially changed. In the framework of the earlier discussion that analyzed labor in terms of purposes, productive activity, form and objective conditions, it may be seen that each of these may be taken as a relation between the agent and the object. Thus, for example, purposes may be seen as a relation between the agent and the object produced by his or her activity. In this case the purposes of the agent determine the kind of activity that will be required to fulfill them and thus essentially change the nature of the agent's activity. At the same time, the purposes determine the nature of the object produced, since

the object that is produced is one that will satisfy these purposes. For example, in making a table that will serve for dining, the agent's purpose requires among other things that he or she plane the wood to produce a flat surface. Also, in accordance with the purpose, the object produced will have a flat surface appropriate for the activity of eating.

Similarly, the antecedent objective conditions may be seen as a relation between the agent and what he or she produces. In this case what is available as a condition for the activity affects the nature of that activity in terms of what conditions the agent chooses to use to produce the object and how he or she uses them; also the object produced is dependent on the conditions available for its production. Thus in our example, whether the agent chooses to use wood or metal as the material for the table, or again, whether the agent chooses to use plane, chisel or sheet metal press as the instrument, makes an essential difference in the nature of the activity of forming the table. It also obviously makes an essential difference to what is produced. A similar analysis may be carried out to show that the form may also be understood as a relation between the agent and the object, in which both the agent's activity and the object are essentially changed in the relation.

In these cases the claim has been that the agent's activity is essentially changed by the adoption of specific purposes or the use of certain material conditions, and so forth. For example, the choice of a plane rather than a chisel makes the activity in the one case essentially different from that in the other. Such changes in the agent's activity can become essential changes in the agent if the activity becomes characteristic of that agent. Similarly, when a person adopts and main-

tains a given purpose, he or she comes to be essentially changed. From this standpoint, therefore, productive activity itself may be seen as an internal relation between the agent and the object, in which the activity not only creates the new object but also changes the agent.

A further way in which labor as causality may be seen to be an internal relation derives from its character of being a synthesis, as described above. Specifically, I described it as a synthesis of purposes, form, productive activity and objective conditions. But, as we saw, purposes, form and productive activity are aspects of labor as a single process and are therefore internally related within it. Further the objective conditions themselves were seen to be objectifications of past labor and are thus themselves moments of the laboring process as a temporal process. As the objectification of purposive, form-giving agency, these objective conditions are internally related to the other moments of the labor process.

Thus the account so far has claimed that Marx regards causality as an internal relation between entities—that is, subject and object—in which each is essentially changed in the relation. However, in Marx's model of causality as an internal relation, the asymmetry of the causal relation is preserved. This may be seen to follow from the account given above of Marx's view of the relation between agents and the objective conditions of their activity. There it was shown that whereas the subject or agent causally acts on the object, the object does not causally act on the agent, but rather only provides the conditions for the agent's self-change. For the present account of cause as an internal relation, this implies that although both the causal agency and its object

are changed in the relation, only the object is changed by the subject, but the subject is not changed by the object.

Thus my reconstruction of Marx's view shows that it differs from those views that regard causality as an external relation of cause and effect between independent entities. Yet it shares their understanding of the causal relation as asymmetrical and as holding between independent entities. Thus Marx's view also differs from those that characterize all internal relations as symmetrical or reciprocal, such that each entity causes or constitutes the other. As I claimed in my second thesis, this understanding of internal relations distinguishes Marx's approach from Hegel's. For Hegel, every relation is a relation within a "totality" and cannot be taken apart from every other relation except by abstracting it from the whole. These are interrelations of elements within a whole in which the elements themselves are constituted by their relations to each other as parts of that whole. Therefore these relations are symmetrical and reciprocal among all the elements of the whole. Further, these are internal relations both in the sense that they are relations within a whole and that the elements of these relations interconstitute each other. By contrast, for Marx, as we have seen, not all internal relations are reciprocal; and specifically, cause as an internal relation is not reciprocal or symmetrical.

The Appearance of Causality as an External Relation Under Capitalism

Thus far I have reconstructed Marx's labor theory of cause in terms of his account of objectification as a process occurring in all forms of

social organization. However, Marx sees this labor process as taking on differentiated forms in different historical periods. This historical differentiation is rooted in two related features of the process of labor: First, as we have seen, this process is a developmental one, insofar as laboring activity in accordance with purposes gives rise to changed conditions that in turn make possible new purposes, and so forth. In this sense the process is one of self-transcendence. Second, as we have also seen, this activity of labor takes place in and through social and property relations, which themselves change. This historical nature of the process of labor suggests that the causal relation itself, which we have defined in terms of this process, is itself also historically differentiated.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, Marx treats the development of the process of objectification through various historical stages, and specifically the stages of what he calls pre-capitalist formations, capitalism, and the communal society of the future. Here I shall consider briefly Marx's discussion of the specific form in which causality appears in the contemporary social stage of capitalism. My thesis is that the appearance of the causal relation as an external relation arises from the alienation of the activity of labor under capitalism.

According to Marx, in capitalism the internal relations between subject and object and between subject and subject appear as external relations among things. Thus he writes, "Their own exchange and their own production confront individuals as an objective relation which is independent of them" (p. 161). Further, according to Marx, the character of the activity of individuals in production appears to

them “as something alien and objective, confronting the individuals, not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them” (p. 157). Similarly, Marx analyzes the process of exchange under capitalism as one in which the products of the causal activity of labor appear only in their relation to each other as exchange values. Thus in Marx’s account of this process of exchange, he writes,

As much as the individual moments of this movement arise from the conscious will and particular purposes of individuals, so much does the totality of the process appear as an objective interrelation, which arises spontaneously from nature; arising, it is true, from the mutual influence of conscious individuals on one another, but neither located in their consciousness, nor subsumed under them as a whole. Their own collisions with one another produce an *alien* social power standing above them, produce their mutual interaction as a process and power independent of them. (pp. 196-197)

These passages not only describe the fact that relations appear as external but also suggest the explanation for it. The appearance has two aspects: First, what are really internal relations appear as external relations between independently existing things; thus the causal relation of agent to product comes to appear as a relation between products, as an exchange value. Second, the agents themselves come to appear as the products or results of objective conditions or external circumstances, which appear to dominate them, that is, to exercise causal agency over them. According to Marx, the explanation of this phenomenon lies in the alienated form of the objectification process under capitalism. That is, in the organization of production under capitalism,

the laborer’s own product comes to belong to another, namely, to capital. Through the capitalist’s appropriation of this product in the form of surplus value, the laborer’s own product comes to rule over him or her as an alien and independent power. The products, as the objective conditions for his or her subsequent laboring activity, belong to capital, on which the laborer is therefore dependent for his or her activity. Thus Marx explains, “Labor capacity . . . has posited these conditions themselves as things, values, which confront it in an alien, commanding personification . . . [The laborer] has produced not only the alien wealth and his own poverty, but also the relation of this wealth as independent, self-sufficient wealth (pp.452-453). When the process is correctly understood, according to Marx, as the alienation of labor, it becomes clear, as Marx writes, that

this objectified labor—these external conditions of the laborer’s being and the independent externality (to him) of these objective conditions—now appear as posited by himself, as *his own product*, as his own self-objectification as well as the objectification of himself as a power independent of himself, which moreover rules over him, rules over him through his own actions. (p. 453)

In capitalism, the causality that Marx sees as residing only in labor as agency now appears in its alienated form as residing in the external conditions of laboring activity. Causal agency comes to be attributed to these external or objective conditions themselves. But for Marx this is a false appearance. The reality is that the external conditions, which are the products of labor, have been endowed with this power over and against labor. The appearance is such that the agent’s activity seems to

be the effect or result of these external conditions taken as cause. Further, the form of the causal relation in this alienated mode appears as an external relation among independent and indifferent entities, related to each other in exchange only as abstract quantities of exchange value.

I would like to propose that it is this appearance of causality as an external relation, and as belonging to the objective or external conditions of labor or agency, that is at the foundation of the conceptions of the causal relation as such an external relation. This conception is the first of the prevailing views referred to at the outset. Here my claim is that this view is an expression of a historically limited and alienated form of the causal relation, which has mistaken, one might say, the appearance of causal relations under capitalism for the reality.

Thus Marx's account of the appearance of social relations under capitalism as external relations between indifferent entities provides the basis for a criticism of the first prevailing view of causality. As will be remembered, this view sees the causal relation as just such an external relation between indifferent entities. According to Marx, this notion of cause is produced by an uncritical theoretical reflection on the practical experience of the forms of social interaction that are characteristic of this historical period. Marx's account provides the basis for a similar criticism of the attempt made, on this first prevailing view, to explain human actions as the effects of external causes or as conforming to objective laws. Just as in the social relations of capitalist production, individuals appear to be acting in accordance with objec-

tive laws, so too, in the theory, actions are explained as the effects of external causes.

There are two further ways in which Marx's approach to causality may be contrasted with this first view. These may be seen to derive from my reconstruction of Marx's theory of cause as agency. As against the first view, Marx does not take antecedent conditions as causes. Rather, as we have seen, only agency is causal. Further, by contrast to the first view, which characterizes causality as an external relation between independent entities, Marx sees the agent as cause to be internally related to these conditions in the activity of working on them and transforming them.

By contrast to the first view, the second prevailing approach to causality, as noted earlier, takes as its domain only the contexts of human actions and proposes that the appropriate way to explain actions is by understanding the intentions of the agents. Insofar as this view may be regarded as causal, it is concerned only with final causes or teleological explanations or with reasons for actions. In place of the external connection between two events as cause and effect, this view sees the relation of intention to actions as an internal relation in which the intention gives the meaning or significance to the action. Some versions of this intentional approach—specifically, those of the phenomenologists and hermeneuticists—give an ontological ground for this characterization of action. They see these meanings as created by the constitutive activity of a subject, where this subject tends to be taken only as an individual.

Marx's first criticism of this second view of causality would be that in their exclusive focus on intentions in explaining actions or on meaning-making activity, most versions of this view tend to emphasize subjectivity in a one-sided way. In this one-sided emphasis, this second approach is comparable to the first one, which similarly places one-sided emphasis on objectivity understood as external law-like connections between events or entities. Marx would see both of these views as stating in theoretical form the abstract and one-sided nature of social relations in capitalism, in which subjects are separated or alienated from the objects of their activity. According to Marx, this separation between subject and object is found in the dichotomy between, on the one hand, self-interested, isolated and indifferent individuals and, on the other hand, the objective and impersonal laws of the market that relate these subjects to each other. In Marx's account this separation is also found in the dichotomy between living labor as subjectivity and capital as objectified labor or objectivity.

Before proceeding to Marx's further criticisms of the intentional view, I shall indicate the respects in which Marx is in agreement with this view. First, like the intentional view, Marx emphasizes the importance of intentions or purposes for an explanation of human action. Second, Marx is in agreement with this view in seeing the relation of intention to action as an internal relation. Again, Marx, like some versions of the second view, regards the conditions of human activity as themselves results of human activity, and therefore agrees in the understanding of agents as self-creating or self-constituting in their activity.

However, Marx would criticize this second view for its exclusive concern with intentional explanation and therefore for its failure to recognize that actions are themselves causally efficacious. Put in more traditional terms, Marx's criticism would be that this second view fails to see the relation between final and efficient causes. Phenomenologists do talk about the activity of subjects as constituting the social world by giving it meaning and in this sense they may be said to grant efficacy to activity. But they do not see this as causal efficacy. Furthermore, from Marx's standpoint, the phenomenologists misinterpret the nature of this constitutive activity. Specifically, they interpret the creation of meaning as an activity of consciousness alone. By contrast, Marx regards this activity of constitution as an activity of laboring which is causally effective and gives meaning to things by transforming a given world in accordance with the subject's purposes.

A further criticism Marx would make of the second view of causality is that in its focus on intentions, this view does not take into account the objective social and historical circumstances that condition action. Insofar as the phenomenologists do consider the circumstances of action, such circumstances are regarded as the horizon or conscious framework for one's activity, and thus from Marx's standpoint do not have the requisite objectivity or sociality. For those action theorists for whom human action is understood as rule-governed and therefore social, Marx's criticism would be that they do not see this sociality as historical.

Thus we have seen that Marx's approach, like the second prevailing view of causality, emphasizes the agent's purposes in the understand-

ing of human activity. However, in distinction from this view, an adequate understanding for Marx would also require reference to the agent's activity in shaping and transforming the given conditions, where these conditions are understood as socially and historically differentiated.

4 The Ontology of Freedom: Domination, Abstract Freedom and the Emergence of the Social Individual

Let me begin with a quotation from the *Grundrisse* in which Marx interprets freedom as self-realization through the activity of labor. Beginning with a biblical passage, Marx writes,

In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou labor! was Jehovah's curse on Adam. And this is labor for Smith, a curse. "Tranquillity" appears as the adequate state, as identical with "freedom" and "happiness." It seems quite far from Smith's mind that the individual "in his normal state of health, strength, activity, skill, facility," also needs a normal portion of work, and of the suspension of tranquillity. Certainly, labor obtains its measure from the outside, through the aim to be attained and the obstacles to be overcome in attaining it. But Smith has no inkling whatever that this overcoming of obstacles is in itself a liberating activity—and that, further, the external aims become stripped of the semblance of merely external natural urgencies and become posited as aims which the individual himself posits—hence as self-realization, objectification of the subject, hence real freedom, whose action is, precisely labor. He is right of course, that, in its historic forms as slave-labor, serf-labor and wage-labor, labor always appears as repulsive, always as *external forced labor*, and not-labor, by contrast, as "freedom and happiness." (p. 611)

Marx goes on to describe the alternative to this external forced labor, in which

labor becomes attractive work, the individual's self-realization, which in no way means that it becomes mere fun, mere amusement, as Fourier with *grisette*-like naiveté, conceives it. Really free working, e.g. composing, is at the same time precisely the most damned seriousness, the most intense exertion. The work of material production can achieve this character only (1) when its social character is posited, (2) when it is of a scientific and at the same time general character, not merely human exertion as a specifically harnessed natural force, but ex-

ertion as subject, which appears in the production process not in a merely natural, spontaneous form, but as an activity regulating all the forces of nature. (pp. 611-612)

We may isolate three themes in this quotation that will be treated in this chapter. First, the definition of freedom: Marx contrasts his concept of freedom to the more traditional conception proposed by Adam Smith. In contrast to Smith, Marx sees freedom not as the freedom from labor, but rather as activity or labor itself, conceived as an activity of self-realization. Marx's concept of freedom is counterposed not only to that of Smith, but to a number of other historical alternatives. The first task of this chapter will be to analyze several alternative concepts of freedom in order to isolate what is distinctive about Marx's conception. It is clear at the outset that for Marx freedom is integrally related to objectification, that is, to the creative and productive activity of individuals; and thus many of the themes of my second and third chapters concerning the ontology of labor will be seen to be relevant here.

The second theme raised in the quotation, but merely suggestively, is the relation between labor as value-creating activity and freedom as itself a value, and thus, more generally, the relation of value and freedom in Marx. Thus there is the suggestion that freedom emerges when individuals transform external natural urgencies into aims that they themselves posit and that "The overcoming of obstacles is itself a liberating activity." Marx regards this liberating activity as one of objectification or labor. But as we saw in chapter 2, the very nature of this laboring activity is the creation of value. If freedom consists in

value-creating activity, is freedom presupposed as the *a priori* nature of this activity itself or is it rather an emergent property that comes into being and develops as the product of this activity? Further, given that Marx does not have a transcendental basis for values, what is the ground of value for Marx, and correlatively, how does the normativeness of freedom arise?

The third theme raised in the quotation is that of the development of freedom. That is, Marx suggests that freedom develops through a historical process and appears differently in different social stages. Further, he suggests that fully realized freedom requires certain conditions, among them the mastery of nature and emergence of universal social relations. Accordingly, the third task of this chapter will be to trace the development of freedom through the stages of social development presented in the *Grundrisse*. It will be seen that this takes the form of a dialectic, as suggested in the first chapter.

Thus, this chapter is divided into three parts: first, an analysis of Marx's concept of freedom in the context of alternative concepts; second, a discussion of the ground of value and the relation of value to freedom; and third, a characterization of the dialectic of freedom in the three stages of social development that Marx discusses in the *Grundrisse*.

The Concepts of Negative and Positive Freedom

We may begin by locating Marx's concept of freedom with respect to a number of alternative classical conceptions which I shall present here

only schematically. Marx contrasts his view to Adam Smith's view of freedom as "tranquillity" or as absence of toil. That is, Smith defines freedom negatively, in terms of what it is not. Labor for Smith has the connotations of that which is unpleasant, requires exertion, and consequently is to be avoided. Freedom then consists in the absence of exertion and the avoidance of the unpleasantness of work. Freedom is therefore defined as not-work, and work is conceived of as an external constraint, that is, as a constraint imposed from without by reason of having to meet natural needs.

A second conception with which Marx's may be contrasted is the Hobbesian view of freedom, which is related to that of Smith. For Hobbes "Liberty, or freedom, signifieth, properly, the absence of opposition; by opposition, I mean external impediments of motion." In the case of human subjects, liberty "consisteth in this, that he finds no stop in doing what he has the will, desire or inclination to do."¹ Thus for Hobbes, freedom is again defined negatively as the absence of external impediments. It does not consist in willing, desiring, or inclining, but rather in not being stopped from doing what one wills or desires.

In both Hobbes and Smith it is a negative feature, that is, the absence of external constraint, that defines freedom. It is "freedom from" instead of "freedom to." In Smith, however, the distinctive character of the constraint is that it arises from the requirement to satisfy one's natural needs by labor. For Hobbes, the external impediments that thwart one's will or desire are interpreted more broadly so that they include not only natural constraints but also the imposition

from without of another's will; impediments therefore include the domination of one subject by another. Insofar as this freedom is defined negatively, simply as the absence of impediments, it has no content in itself; its content is given to it by the specific will or desire that is enabled to satisfy itself as a result. This desire or will is always private or that of an individual. Therefore insofar as this freedom can be characterized positively at all, it is the freedom to do as one desires.

Marx's conception of freedom also contains a negative aspect; like the other two, it can be characterized as a "freedom from." But whereas for Smith and Hobbes freedom consists in the absence of external constraint, for Marx freedom is the *overcoming* of external constraint. Thus he writes, "The overcoming of obstacles is itself a liberating activity" (p. 611). In this sense of freedom as liberation, freedom is an activity and not only a state of being. As for Hobbes, for Marx also external constraint can take the form of either external natural necessity or external social necessity, that is, domination. However, Marx regards freedom as achieved through the activity of liberating oneself from these constraints.

For Marx, this activity of overcoming external necessity presupposes that the agent transforms the external necessity in accordance with his or her purposes. In chapters 2 and 3 I treated this activity as one of objectification. This gives rise to a second aspect of Marx's concept of freedom in which freedom takes on the character of self-determination by contrast to other-determination. In this regard Marx's concept may be seen to be related to that of Kant and of Hegel.

To put it briefly, for Kant, freedom is not merely negative, but

rather is a positive activity of the will. In this sense, for Kant as for Marx, freedom is an activity and not merely a state of being. According to Kant, this activity of the will is free insofar as the will is self-legislating or autonomous—that is, self-determining—by contrast to heteronomous or determined by what is external to it. As autonomous, it does not merely act in accordance with its own rule or law, but rather acts out of respect for its own law, that is, out of conscious recognition of this law as its own, and which, as a law of reason, is universal. Thus Kant's view of freedom introduces the condition of self-conscious self-determination as the characteristic of free activity. But this is a self-determination by a being whose nature is to be rational. Insofar as the self-legislation is that of reason itself, freedom is the activity of a rational being that is in accordance with its nature.

Hegel develops Kant's view of freedom as self-determination, where this self-determination becomes fully free only when the agent is aware of him or herself as being self-determining. Every subject is for Hegel implicitly self-determining (that is to say, in itself) but this self-determination becomes explicit only when the subject realizes that what appears as external or other is really itself in its otherness. With this realization it becomes free both in and for itself. Freedom is therefore the result of a process of developing self-consciousness. For Hegel, however, this result is already implicitly contained in the process from the very beginning. Since this development of self-consciousness is an "unfolding" of its own nature as Spirit or the Idea, the activity of individual subjects in history is understood by Hegel as

particular ways in which the Idea comes to realize itself. The process of this dialectic of freedom is thus one in which the Idea actualizes itself through the activities of subjects.

I indicated that in its second aspect Marx's concept of freedom was that of self-determination. In this respect he follows Kant. Furthermore, like Kant he conceives of freedom as an activity, and moreover, one that involves self-consciousness. But Marx's conception differs from that of Kant in at least two important respects: First, whereas for Kant self-determination is an activity in accordance with one's nature (*qua* rational), for Marx freedom is an activity of creating one's nature. Second, for Kant (at least as he is usually interpreted) self-determination or autonomy is independent of empirical conditions, the consideration of which would make the will heteronomous. By contrast, for Marx freedom arises through interaction with these empirical conditions, that is, by a transformative process in which a subject who is originally heteronomous becomes autonomous by achieving mastery over nature, and freedom from social domination. In this last respect Marx may be construed as following Hegel.

But Hegel regards the externality of the empirical world or nature as the other-sidedness of Spirit, with no independent reality of its own. By contrast, for Marx, as we saw in the second chapter, the other or nature is (at least initially) really other than, or independent of, the subjects who then transform it into their own object. Furthermore, whereas for Hegel freedom is only derivatively predicable of an individual, that is, only insofar as the individual expresses the develop-

ment of the Idea of freedom, for Marx freedom is properly and directly predicable only of an individual. That is, although an individual cannot become free in isolation from others, nonetheless it is only individuals who are free. This emphasis can be attributed to what I characterized in the earlier chapters as Marx's Aristotelian insistence on the ontological primacy of real individuals. Thus, for example, although we may say that a state or a form of society is free, it is so only insofar as the individuals in it are free.

Purposiveness appears for Marx as for Hegel as a characteristic of free activity. This, as we have seen, is related to the notion of self-determination in which an agent pursues his or her own goals. In Marx, as in Hegel, this goal-oriented activity is that of the objectification of subjects, who make nature useful or good by transforming it in accordance with their conscious purposes. In Hegel this activity is one of the self-actualization of the subject. However, since individual subjects are only moments of the total process for Hegel, this actualization is fulfilled only as an aspect of the whole, that is, the totality of the process, or Spirit itself.

For Marx, also, freedom is a process of self-actualization and in this respect Marx may be compared to both Hegel and Aristotle. However, he goes beyond both of them in rejecting the idea of a pre-given or fixed nature or essence that becomes actualized. Instead, for Marx freedom is the process of creating this nature itself. In this sense, freedom is positive or is "freedom to." It is a process of self-realization, namely, a freedom to realize oneself in which an individual creates him or herself through projecting possibilities that become

guides for his or her actions, where the realization of these possibilities leads to the projection of new possibilities to be realized. Thus, properly speaking, freedom for Marx is not the actualization of a potentiality, as it is in Hegel and Aristotle, where the potentiality presupposes the actuality (of which it is the potentiality), but rather the realization of a possibility, where the reality is not presupposed and where the possibility is entirely new. Thus, as we have seen, Marx speaks of these possibilities as "aims which the individual himself posits—hence as self-realization, objectification, hence real freedom whose action is precisely, labor" (p. 611).

This self-transcendence is not a process merely of consciousness nor of the individual within him or herself alone, but is self-transcendence through transforming the world. Furthermore, since this transformation is carried out by individuals in social relations and this is a social activity, the conditions for this individual self-transcendence are themselves social conditions. Thus for Marx, freedom as the process of self-realization is the origination of novel possibilities, acting on which the social individual creates and recreates him or herself constantly as a self-transcendent being. Marx speaks of this process as

The absolute working out of the individual's creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a *pre-determined* yardstick . . . [and in which he] strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming. (p. 488)

We have seen that for Marx freedom has both negative and positive aspects. It is, on the one hand, "freedom from" in the sense of a process of overcoming obstacles or impediments, and specifically, a process of freeing oneself from the external constraints of social domination and natural necessity by one's activity. Freedom is, on the other hand, "freedom to" realize oneself through projecting possibilities and acting on them. These two aspects of freedom are united, according to Marx, in the activity of objectification, in which an individual as a social individual realizes him or herself through overcoming obstacles. Thus real freedom, or concrete freedom, as he also calls it, consists in the unity of these two aspects.

To put it more simply, freedom for Marx consists not only in free choice among the options available to one, but in the creation of new options for oneself (and for others). Thus this view of concrete freedom differs from two alternative views: first, from the view that freedom is a property of the subject's desire or will, that is, that freedom is either intrinsic to the nature of the will or lies in the internal conformity of the will to one's nature; and second, from the view that freedom simply lies in the absence of external constraints or whatever one happens to will or desire. According to Marx (and Hegel), each of these views abstracts one side of the unity of real freedom, and thus may be characterized as merely formal or abstract freedom. In contrast to these views, concrete freedom consists in the active relation between the subject's will or desires and the external conditions for their fulfillment.

Freedom as Presupposition and Product of Activity

This formulation of Marx's view of freedom poses a number of conceptual problems. First, if freedom emerges through the activity of creating one's own nature in the overcoming of obstacles, then it is a product of this process or an emergent. On the other hand, the nature of this creative activity itself is that it is a free activity; that is, it presupposes the capacity to create new possibilities and the ability to realize them. But if this is the case, it would seem as if freedom is already presupposed *a priori* as the nature of this self-creative activity. Thus it would appear that the freedom that is produced or created is already presupposed in the very act of creating it, or that it is both *a priori* and emergent at the same time. But this is at worst paradoxical and at best circular.

A second conceptual problem arises from Marx's claim that there is no fixed or pre-given nature or essence but rather that human beings create their nature freely and that since this activity is one of constant self-transcendence, their nature is constantly changing. But despite itself, this claim seems to attribute a fixed or pre-given nature to these individuals, namely, that of freedom. That is, their nature is to create their nature. But this claim appears to be self-refuting.

The third conceptual problem concerns the value of freedom or whether freedom is itself a value. For, on the one hand, Marx claims that freedom is the activity of objectification and that objectification is the activity of creating values. Thus freedom is value-creating activity. But, on the other hand, we usually regard freedom as itself a value.

Therefore it, too, would have to be created. Thus freedom as value-creating activity creates itself as a value. And this would seem to be circular or question begging. Let us see if any of these paradoxes or circularities can be resolved. My main focus in what follows will be the first of these.

One approach to the resolution of the first problem is to distinguish between two different senses of freedom as on the one hand what is presupposed and on the other what is produced, that is, between freedom as a capacity to realize oneself through activity and freedom as the self-realization achieved through the exercise of this capacity. This rather simple solution of the apparent paradox seems to mark it as one based on equivocation, that is, where the term freedom is used in two different senses. But while these two senses are distinct, they are closely related.

Thus it may be seen that Marx presupposes freedom as an abstract or formal capacity, which characterizes all human beings as such. This capacity is exercised in laboring activity or objectification, which is the distinctive mode of activity of human beings, according to Marx. Furthermore, this capacity may be characterized more specifically as the capacity for purposeful activity. What gives this purposeful activity its character as free activity is the agent's conscious projection of a future state as a possibility and the practical activity in which the agent takes this purpose as a guide for action. In this sense the agent is self-determining. But this self-determination goes beyond the mere fulfillment of particular aims and purposes posited by the subject. The process of acting in accordance with one's purposes, as a process of

social activity and not merely individual activity, generates not only actions but rules of action. Thus social individuals are fundamentally self-legislating, that is, they are agents who act in accordance with the rules they themselves have created.

Freedom in this formal sense thus consists in an agent's capacity to set his or her own purposes and to act on them. This capacity for purposeful activity leads to the transformation of what were merely external needs originally at the animal level into purposes. When the need becomes conscious or articulated, it is posed as something whose satisfaction is in the future and in terms of an activity that may satisfy it. This representation of purposes to oneself in the imagination marks the distinction between animals and humans for Marx. Marx describes this process in which needs become purposes in the passage quoted at the outset as a process in which "the external aims become stripped of the semblance of merely external natural urgencies, and become posited as aims which the individual himself posits" (p. 611). Furthermore, in becoming the objects of conscious purpose, natural needs come to be transformed and these new needs are thus constituted in part by the agents. Thus Marx writes "Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth" (p. 92). In this sense, the agent produces not merely the means of satisfying a given need, but may be said to produce the need itself in its specific human form, where this specific human form is understood as a social one. Thus, in Marx's example, in the purposive activity of satisfying hunger, human beings introduce

new ways of preparing and serving food which transform the original hunger into one for food prepared in a particular way. In addition, this process of transforming the original needs gives rise to other new social needs. For example, in this case, it gives rise to the need for the cooking techniques and utensils required for food prepared in this way.

Thus we have seen that needs not only come to be the products of conscious agents but are themselves transformed into consciously known purposes. Such purposes are the creation of the agents themselves and are no longer needs in the sense of "external natural urgencies." The agents may then be described as self-consciously self-determining—that is, acting in terms of purposes they have set for themselves—and thus free in a minimal sense.

But beyond this, the new or transformed needs or, rather, new purposes are transformations of the agent him or herself—namely, they are projections of new possibilities. In taking up such newly posited purposes as possibilities for future realization, the agent may also create new modes of action. But in this way the agent transcends past purposes and past modes of action. And insofar as he or she, as agent, is identified with these, he or she is self-transcending. This process is thus a process of self-realization through which concrete freedom may be attained. In this process, the initial bare or merely abstract capacity for free purposive activity becomes concretized in the fulfillment of purposes and the creation of new ones. Furthermore, this bare capacity is itself transformed in this process; it becomes differentiated and elaborated as the capacity to do many things and to choose among them.

According to Marx, this concretization and differentiation of activities and capacities occurs through the process of objectification. As was shown in the previous chapters, in this objectification one makes objects in the image of one's needs, that is, as purposive objects. As a consequence, one comes to recognize oneself as having the capacity to produce these objects. As an ongoing activity, objectification thus proliferates objects, capacities and purposes. To use an example that Marx himself gives, "The object of art—like every other product—creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object" (p. 92). Thus the bare or *a priori* capacity for free activity becomes concrete or realized only in this process of self-development.

Thus in this reconstruction of Marx's view, freedom is distinguished as, on the one hand, presupposition, that is, as *a priori* condition for creative activity itself, and as product, that is, as emergent in concrete and developing forms. Thus the apparent paradox of freedom as both presupposition and product is resolved if one distinguishes between a possibility and its realization, where the realization is not simply taken as entailed by the possibility but as the result of an activity.

This conclusion also allows us to cast further light on a distinction between Marx and Hegel mentioned earlier and discussed more fully in the previous chapters. For Hegel, the Idea in its bare immediacy or abstractness has all of its determinations contained within it implicitly, and these unfold dialectically with an inner necessity. For Marx, by contrast, the bare or immediate capacity for freedom as presupposition has no content implicit within it but becomes realized only through the

concrete activity of laboring individuals. Thus this capacity has no predetermined course of development. The character of this development is therefore not deterministic, but possibilistic. Thus, as suggested in the first chapter, the course of this development can be reconstructed as a dialectic only in retrospect.

In this section I have distinguished two senses of freedom: first, as presupposition and, second, as product. But while freedom here has two senses, it does not denote two things; and thus the equivocation is not simply one between two different denotations of a single term. Rather, these are two aspects of one and the same thing, namely, freedom. But this thing taken as a whole is a process. In this sense, what is presupposed—namely, the capacity—is what is required to account for what emerges in the process itself. And the product or the emergent—namely, the differentiated, concretely free activity—likewise is what defines the real moments of the process itself. Thus one cannot separate presupposition and product as though they were wholly distinct in themselves, since they are what they are only in relation to the process itself. Freedom is therefore not a contingent or separable property that may be added or taken away from the activity that constitutes this process as a whole. In Marx's thought, then, activity or labor as such is always free in the sense that it is a capacity for change and self-change. But freedom as such a capacity is only formal. Freedom becomes concrete when, through the exercise of this capacity in specific modes of activity, the individual realizes his or her projects. But for Marx, the process of achieving concrete freedom requires conditions and does not follow from the formal capacity

alone. As we shall see, Marx regards the full achievement of concrete freedom as the result of a process of historical development.

The second conceptual problem arising in Marx's view of freedom concerns what appears to be a self-refuting claim: namely, that since for Marx there is no fixed nature or essence, but rather individuals constantly create themselves and change themselves, then their nature is constantly to change themselves; and this indeed seems to be a fixed nature. One way to meet this objection is simply to write it off as a sophistical argument. Short of that, however, one may approach it as a question of levels of reference. If the change that the individuals undergo is different from the "nature" that these individuals have as self-changing, then the term "self-changing" has two distinct levels of reference: first, to the individuals who in fact are changing, and second, to this property of self-changing that is taken as the nature of these individuals and that itself does not change.

The argument would be self-refuting if the individuals were self-changing and not self-changing in the same respect. But this is clearly not the case. Yet it may be argued that one could still talk about this nature as fixed. But against this one could argue that the alleged fixity is in the linguistic fact that we give a fixed description to this process of self-changing and that the fixity is a hypostatization introduced by discourse and does not denote a "nature" in the thing itself.

The third conceptual problem arising from Marx's view of freedom concerns the claim made above that freedom is value-creating activity and at the same time freedom emerges from this activity and is itself ordinarily regarded as a value. We thus seem to get the strange result

that freedom creates itself out of itself. This problem lends itself to a classical teleological argument in terms of which we may also interpret Marx's view here.

Since, according to Marx, values come into being only as the result of conscious purposive activity, they have their ground only in this activity itself and not transcendently. But, as we have seen, this activity of creative labor is the means by which the individual realizes him or herself, that is, becomes free. Therefore the creation of values in the fulfillment of purposes serves the goal of self-realization. Thus when an agent satisfies a purpose, he or she seems to be satisfying him or herself through the mediation of some external object transformed for his or her use which is thus a value for him or her, or through his or her interaction with other individuals. But this fulfillment of a purpose is at the same time, according to Marx, an activity of self-realization. In fulfilling specific purposes, for example, getting an education, passing a course or meeting a friend, one is *apparently* acting for the sake of these purposes themselves posited as external aims. But insofar as the fulfillment of these purposes is self-fulfillment or is an activity of self-realization, the end that these purposes serve and the ultimate value achieved in this activity is self-realization, that is, freedom. When this self-realization is consciously taken as the end in itself of these activities, freedom becomes manifest as the end in itself. Thus freedom is not only the activity that creates value but is that for the sake of which all these other values are pursued and therefore that with respect to which they become valuable. Thus freedom is both the source of value and the highest value as the end in itself. I would

suggest that such a teleological value theory is the model in terms of which Marx sees the historical development of freedom in the *Grundrisse*. Thus the problematic circularity in which freedom appears to create itself out of itself is admitted on this interpretation. Freedom has no ground as a value outside of itself and all other values are grounded in it. It is value itself as the end in itself. Furthermore, since freedom is the nature of human activity, this activity has its end in itself, that is, to fully realize itself as free. The one qualification to this pure self-creation is that values come to be created by transformation of the external world and that freedom is achieved only in and through this process of working on nature in a given form of society.

The Dialectic of Freedom in the Stages of Social Development

In the *Grundrisse* Marx sees freedom as developing historically through different stages of social organization. The foregoing analysis of the concept of freedom in Marx was abstracted from this concrete context in which Marx more fully develops his ideas. Marx characterizes the three social stages of pre-capitalist societies, capitalism and communal society in terms of the degree to which freedom is realized in each. Put in terms of the previous analysis, these stages are marked by the progressive overcoming of natural necessity and of forms of social domination; and insofar as the overcoming of these obstacles is itself liberating, there is a growth of freedom through these stages. Full or concrete freedom is achieved only in the third stage and thus may be regarded as the product of a historical process. Nonetheless, freedom in the sense of the creative activity of laboring is present in all stages.

But freedom or laboring activity appears in the first two as a means for the achievement of other ends, especially wealth. It is only in the third stage that freedom appears as the end or aim of social life, that is, as end in itself. Thus these stages reveal a development of freedom from a bare or abstract freedom of laboring activity that is in the service of others and under external constraint in the first two stages to concrete freedom as freedom for self-development of individuals in the third stage. Furthermore, as we shall see, the meaning of freedom itself changes through these stages. It is also clear that Marx understands this historical development of concrete freedom as a social process accomplished through the objectification and interaction of social individuals. Thus in tracing freedom through these three stages it will become evident in what sense freedom is not only the self-realization of the individual, but is social freedom or the freedom of *social* individuals.

In pre-capitalist societies, the individual “appears as dependent, as belonging to a greater whole” (p. 84), where this whole is the community. The identities of individuals as well as the character of their relations to each other are determined by their place within the community. The relations between these individuals are relations of personal dependence or relations of domination of one person over another. Furthermore, the laboring individuals are also bound to the soil and to a fixed mode of work.

In these societies of natural and social dependence, the individual appears as unfree. It is only the community as a whole that could be said to be free, where “free” signifies “self-sufficient.” Thus both Plato and Aristotle write that only the community is self-sufficient. At

this stage, the community as the organic totality is a stable and self-sufficient entity in contrast to and at the expense of the individuals who are dependent parts of this totality. Insofar as freedom characterizes individuals at this stage, it is only the masters who are free, and their freedom consists in their not-laboring, that is, in their possession of leisure time. Nonetheless, even in this first stage, all laboring individuals possess a degree of freedom that consists in their laboring activity itself insofar as it is a creative activity. Thus, as Hegel points out in the master-slave dialectic in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, even the slave is free in the activity of working on nature for the master. For in this activity, it is the slave who overcomes the natural obstacles and learns to master nature. The master comes to depend on him or her for this ability.

According to Marx, the second great social stage—that of capitalism—is marked by personal independence based on objective dependence. He describes this situation as follows:

In the money relation, in the developed system of exchange (and this semblance seduces the democrats), the ties of personal dependence, of distinctions 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 of existence* within which these individuals enter into contact (and these conditions, in turn are independent of 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 into themselves. (pp. 163–164)

Thus the freedom in capitalist society is a liberty of indifference. This freedom has its form in free labor. This labor does not belong to anyone by right, except the laborer, who offers it in free exchange for a wage. This free labor becomes itself equivalent in the exchange to what it is exchanged for and thus appears to take on the independence of a thing. It no longer functions in a personal relation, since it has become abstract labor, that is, impersonal, qualitatively indifferent and measured only by its quantity, time. In order to fulfill his or her desires, the worker exchanges what he or she owns—namely his or her labor capacity measured in time—for something else, namely, money that will then be exchanged for the objects of desire. As the medium of exchange, money buys time and the entire system of exchange appears as external. Further, the only impediments to the worker's freedom appear external—that he or she might not be able to sell it where and when he or she wants. Such external impediments are, for example, unemployment or underemployment. According to Marx, this externality of exchange is an objectification of individuals who create it as external, but it is not known to be such to these individuals.

Capitalism is thus marked by personal independence where this signifies that the worker, unlike the slave or serf, has disposition over his or her own capacities and thus can voluntarily alienate his or her property. But, according to Marx, this personal independence rests on a foundation of objective dependence. For although the laborer can sell

his or her labor freely, he or she is not free not to sell this labor; that is, it must be sold in order to gain the means of subsistence. Moreover, the laborer depends for selling it on the objective systems of exchange and capital. Thus Marx regards this freedom as abstract or one-sided, since as the freedom of the subject it is separated from the objective conditions of its fulfillment.

According to Marx, in selling his or her labor capacity to capital, the abstract freedom of the laborer turns into its opposite, namely, the domination of labor by the objective system of capital. The freedom of the marketplace reveals itself as a semblance, which for Marx hides a reality of domination in production. For in alienating his or her laboring capacity, the worker's capacity is no longer under his or her control but is in the service of another. Through this alienation, living labor comes to be dominated by objectified labor, by an objective system of wealth that is not under its control.

Thus the master-slave dialectic described by Hegel appears here, but in an impersonal or objective mode. Just as the slave who works on nature for the master is in the first instance not directly enriched by his or her work, so the worker's products are alien to him or her and enrich capital. However, in the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave, enslavement proves eventually to be a humanizing process that overcomes the merely natural qualities of the slave. This humanization process—which Hegel locates at the outset of history—occurs through the objectification carried out by the slave. In the process of serving his or her master, the slave transforms nature into his or her own self-expression and consequently comes to recognize him or herself in it.

Similarly, for Marx the objectification of the laborer's capacities in capital is a condition for concrete freedom. Thus just as for Hegel the encounter with the master is the beginning of the overcoming of natural needs, so for Marx the overcoming of natural necessity through production of an abundance of goods is accomplished through capital. What Hegel locates at the origin of history, Marx finds in the stage of capitalism. As described in chapter 2, for Marx this overcoming of natural necessity results from the tendency of capital to increase surplus labor and thus surplus value by reducing necessary labor through increasing productivity. The primary means by which it does this is the introduction of automatic systems of machinery.

Thus, according to Marx,

With its unlimited mania for wealth [capital achieves a stage of development] where the possession and preservation of general wealth require a lesser labor time of society as a whole, and where the laboring society relates scientifically to the process of its progressive reproduction, its reproduction in a constantly greater abundance; hence where labor in which a human being does what a thing could do has ceased Capital's ceaseless striving towards the general form of wealth drives labor beyond the limits of its natural paltriness, and thus creates the material elements for the development of the rich individuality which is as all-sided in its production as in its consumption, and whose labor also therefore appears no longer as labor, but as the full development of activity itself, in which natural necessity in its direct form has disappeared; because a historically created need has taken the place of the natural one. (p. 325)

Thus the first condition for concrete freedom prepared for by capitalism is the overcoming of natural necessity through the achieve-

ment of abundance in production. But concrete freedom, according to Marx, also requires the overcoming of social domination, and the attainment of universal social relationships, as well as the development of manifold human capacities. Capitalism also is instrumental in producing such universal social relations, but it does so only in external and alien form. Thus the system of exchange establishes social connections between producers of labor, and most significantly, advanced systems of machinery increase the social combination of producers insofar as they are the product of many individuals and require coordination of labor. Further, capital leads to the proliferation of human powers by introducing new branches of production and hence new laboring activities.

According to Marx, these accomplishments of capital are in reality the objectifications of the laboring individuals. The transformation to the third form of society occurs when these individuals recognize the objective system of capital as their own creation. Marx describes this as labor's "recognition of the products as its own, and the judgement that its separation from the conditions of its realization is improper" (p. 463).

Further, as we have seen, the differentiation of human capacities and needs that was established by capitalism is now recognized by the individuals as their own differentiation and many-sidedness. Similarly, their social combination, which was previously objectified in machinery, is recognized as their own internal relation to each other.

Marx describes the third social stage as that of "free social individuality." This freedom presupposes as its condition the overcoming of

both natural necessity and social necessity, that is, domination. Marx describes the freedom at this stage as concrete freedom for self-development, that is, freedom to realize oneself. Freed from the constraints of necessary labor (which is transferred to automated production on Marx's account), the individuals are now free to realize whatever projects they choose. Further, since labor at this stage is no longer engaged in out of constraint, it now appears, as Marx says, "no longer as labor, but as the full development of activity itself" (p. 325), which is moreover engaged in for its own sake. It is such activity that Marx characterizes as concrete freedom.

Furthermore, this freedom presupposes that domination of one individual by another has been overcome, that each member of this community recognizes the others as free. Thus they recognize their common character as consisting in this very capacity in each of them for free activity. For Marx, as we shall see in the next chapter, the greatest freedom of the individual is possible in this situation of the greatest sociality.

I shall now sketch the abstract ontology of freedom that may be derived from the preceding analysis, and consider it in relation to the ontology of society and of labor presented earlier. But it would be wrong to construe this abstract ontology as the whole of Marx's social ontology. Thus Marx's social ontology includes not only the conceptual analysis but also the concrete analysis of social and historical development given in the *Grundrisse*.

In the previous chapters I argued that Marx's ontology is closely related to that of Hegel and Aristotle. Like Hegel, he understands

individuals as individuals in relation. For Marx, these relations are characteristically social. Like Aristotle, he affords ontological primacy to the individuals and sees them in terms of their characteristic mode of activity. For Marx, this activity is labor. But we have seen in this chapter that Marx goes beyond Hegel and Aristotle in his conception of freedom. The most significant difference he introduces is the idea that these real individuals create their own nature in their laboring activity and that this nature is therefore not given or predetermined, but emergent and self-transcending.

Since these individuals create themselves and since these individuals are always individuals in social relations, these social relations themselves change. Consequently, these individuals create their own history or create themselves as historical. In this creative activity they transform nature, endowing it with the temporality of their own laboring activity; they also give it value and human meaning, and in the course of this activity become different agents who are socialized, universalized, and free.

Freedom, then, is first of all the characteristic mode of activity of these individuals. It is their laboring activity itself. Through this activity individuals differentiate themselves and realize themselves.

All the dimensions that Marx attributes to this laboring activity—that it is creative, self-transcending, historical, self-realizing—characterize it as a process. This process is a process of freedom.

A process, as distinct from an entity or a relation, is an activity that has continuity. The process described here also is marked by emergence, that is, by real novelty as the character of this continuity

itself. It is a process of constant change. But it is not sheer flux. Rather, it is the preservation of a past state by transforming it in new forms in accordance with freely chosen purposes. It is therefore a teleological process. Further, this teleology is immanent, since it is generated through the laboring activity itself, which is this process.

This activity is an activity of individuals. Thus this process is created by individuals and is their very mode of being. However, since such individuals are always individuals in social relations, the character of their activity is that it is social labor—namely, labor carried on in and through social relations and the character of this process is that it is a social process. As such, the process is differentiated by the different individuals who compose it and the different social relations that characterize it at different historical stages.

It is in and through the activity and the interaction of the laboring individuals in the stages of social development that the conditions are developed for the concrete freedom or independence of these individuals. In the third stage, free individuals constitute the community as their own creation. Moreover, as we shall see in the next chapter, each individual recognizes the other as free and acts so as to enhance the other's freedom.

5 The Ontology of Justice: Social Interaction, Alienation and the Ideal of Reciprocity

Marx offers an extensive criticism of capitalism both as an economic system that engenders periodic crises and as a social system that is based on the exploitation of the working class. His critique of alienation and exploitation under capitalism is clearly a normative one. However, Marx does not systematically articulate the values that underlie his critique. In the previous chapter I attempted to show that Marx's theory of social reality entails a theory of value whose central norm is freedom. In this chapter I shall propose that both Marx's critique of alienation under capitalism and his projections of a communal society of the future imply a conception of justice. Furthermore, I shall argue that for Marx the realization of freedom requires justice, where this is understood in terms of concrete forms of social relations. Upon analysis, these just social relations will be seen to be characterized by reciprocity. On the other hand, the various relations of domination that Marx sees as typifying class societies may be analyzed as forms of non-reciprocal social relations. One may reconstruct Marx's view as an account of the historically changing forms of reciprocal and nonreciprocal social relations through the different stages of social development.

Although Marx offers no explicit discussion of the concept of justice in the *Grundrisse*, this work provides the basis for reconstructing such a conception. Inasmuch as this conception may be derived from his view of the very nature of social relations, it is not to be understood as an addition which is merely appended to the rest of his social ontology. Rather, I shall argue that it grows out of his account of social relations (analyzed in chapter 1), his treatment of labor (as presented in chapters

2 and 3), and his conception of freedom (discussed in chapter 4). Indeed, his conception of justice as it is reconstructed here ties together the concepts of property, labor or agency, social class, domination, exploitation and alienation, and freedom. In this chapter, therefore, I shall give an analysis of those concepts that are essential in Marx's view of social domination and injustice, namely, property, domination, social class, alienation, and exploitation. On the basis of this analysis, I shall then attempt to show how these various aspects of Marx's social ontology are integrated in his conception of justice.

Marx's view of justice may thus be seen to be grounded in his analysis of concrete forms of social interaction. He objects to those views of justice that treat it merely as an abstract moral or legal principle and he rejects those views that take it to be an *a priori* principle. Marx's objections to such views have led certain commentators to conclude mistakenly that he lacks a theory of justice altogether or that he sees justice as relative to whatever principles prevail in any given historical form of social organization.¹ However, I would argue that these commentators are attempting to fit Marx's view into traditional frameworks of moral and legal philosophy and fail to see that Marx radically reformulates the terms of the discussion and the very question of what a theory of justice is about. In fact, I would hold that justice is central to Marx's view of a possible communal society of the future and that Marx's critique of capitalism is an attempt to explain how it gives rise to injustice in the form of alienation and exploitation. In this critique Marx treats the facts themselves evaluatively and also sees the values in terms of their concrete forms in social life.

The reconstruction of Marx's theory of justice that I shall give in this chapter is divided into two parts: The first and longer part will be an analysis of Marx's conception of social interaction and of its non-reciprocal and reciprocal forms; the second part will draw out the implications of this analysis with a view to initiating a reconstruction of Marx's theory of justice and will show its relation to the norm of freedom. Specifically, in the first part I shall begin with an account of pre-capitalist social relations and give an analysis of Marx's conception of property and of domination (interpreted as a non-reciprocal relation). I shall then proceed to Marx's central critique of alienation and exploitation in capitalism and analyze the nature of these relations as non-reciprocal social relations. I shall further show the connection of these relations in Marx's account to the reciprocal relations involved in free market exchange. In this section, too, Marx's conception of social class will be seen in its relation to his conceptions of property, alienation, and exploitation. I shall conclude this first part with a discussion of Marx's conception of social relations in a communal society of the future. Here I shall propose that these relations should be understood as what I shall call relations of mutuality, which are the most fully developed form of reciprocal relations. In the second part of this chapter I shall reconstruct Marx's implicit theory of justice, beginning with an account of Marx's critique of abstract conceptions of justice. I shall then proceed to argue that he reformulates the traditional question of justice as a question that concerns the concrete forms of social relations discussed in the first part. I shall then consider Marx's conception of justice in its relation to the central value of freedom and

it will be seen that for him justice in social relations is the condition for the full realization of freedom. Finally, I shall elaborate the meaning of justice in connection with the ideal of mutuality understood as fully reciprocal social relations.

Social Relations, Alienation and the Forms of Reciprocity

Marx's analysis of the changing forms of social relations in different historical periods is centrally concerned with the various forms of domination that prevail at each stage. As we have seen in chapters 1 and 4, Marx characterizes the social relations in the three major stages of social development as (1) relations of personal dependence in pre-capitalist society, (2) relations of personal independence founded on objective dependence in capitalism, and (3) relations of free social individuality in a communal society of the future. Here I want to develop further the interpretation of these relations in terms of the institutional and personal modes of domination at each stage and specifically with respect to the forms of property and class relations. In the course of this discussion I shall also present an analysis of the forms of reciprocal and non-reciprocal social relations that will provide the basis for the reconstruction in the second part of this chapter of the conception of justice implicit in Marx's view.

In the various types of pre-capitalist societies that Marx describes, the relations of domination take the form of personal relations among individuals. The subordinated individuals in these relations—for example, slaves or serfs—are bound in their servitude to a particular master or lord by force or coercion or by the weight of tradition which

makes their servile position appear to be part of the nature of things. The power that the master or lord exercises over these individuals may be seen to be derived from his control over both the objective and subjective conditions of their activity. The control over the objective conditions consists in the master or lord having the power of life and death over his slaves or serfs as well as the power of physical punishment, and, in addition, in the master's possession or ownership of the land and instruments of production. Control over the subjective conditions is exercised not only through the threat of force, but also through the whole system of social, political, cultural and religious obligations, rules, and beliefs.

Moreover, the slaves and serfs are not regarded as agents or persons, but rather as themselves part of what Marx calls the inorganic and natural conditions of production. Thus he writes,

In the relations of slavery and serfdom . . . one part of society is treated by the other as itself merely an *inorganic and natural* condition of its own reproduction. The slave stands in no relation whatsoever to the objective conditions of his labor; rather *labor* itself, both in the form of the slave and in that of the serf, is classified as an *inorganic condition* of production along with other natural beings, such as cattle, as an accessory of the earth. (p. 489)

In this form of social relations, therefore, the slave or serf is treated as a mere means of production and is not yet separated as labor or agency from the objective conditions of production.

Marx sees these relations of domination as occurring in the context of a specific form of property. He characterizes this form as communal property, in which individual proprietors hold their property in virtue

of their being recognized as members of the community. Thus he writes, "As a natural member of the community he participates in the communal property, and has a part of it as his possession. . . . His *property*, i.e. the relation to the natural presuppositions of his production as belonging to him, as *his*, is mediated by his being himself the natural member of a community" (p. 490). However, not all individuals are recognized as members; thus, slaves or serfs who are treated as "inorganic conditions of production" are not regarded as members of the community and have no share in its property. In fact, the slaves or serfs are themselves regarded as part of property in one form or another. Thus Marx writes,

In the slave relation, [the individual, real person] belongs to the *individual, particular* owner, and is his laboring machine. As a totality of force-expenditure, as labor capacity, he is a thing [*Sache*] belonging to another, and hence does not relate as subject to his particular expenditure of force, nor to the act of living labor. In the serf relation, he appears as a moment of property in land itself, is an appendage of the soil, exactly like draught-cattle. (pp. 464-465)

Yet slavery and serfdom are not the only forms of domination in pre-capitalist societies. According to Marx, all the members of the society are bound or unfree in that their roles, functions and obligations are set by their place within the totality. Thus Marx writes that "it is clear from the outset that the individuals in such a society . . . 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 members of a caste etc., or as members of an estate etc." (p. 163).

Thus communal property in its pre-capitalist forms is characterized by social relations of personal dependence in which some individuals are dominated by others and in which all the individuals in the society are subordinate to the social totality and are defined by their place within it.

Marx describes this pre-capitalist form of communal property as one in which the relation of individuals to the conditions of production (which, as we shall see, is Marx's general definition of property) is mediated by the community of which these individuals are members. Thus he writes,

Property, then, originally means—in its Asiatic, Slavonic, ancient classical, Germanic form—the relation of the working (producing or self-reproducing) subject to the conditions of his production or reproduction as his own. It will therefore have different forms depending on the conditions of this production. Production itself aims at the reproduction of the producer within and together with these, his objective conditions of existence. This relation as proprietor—not as a result but as a presupposition of labor, i.e. of production—presupposes the individual defined as a member of a clan or community (whose property the individual himself is, up to a certain point). (p. 495)

On the basis of Marx's discussion of pre-capitalist societies, I shall begin to reconstruct some general features of Marx's understanding of domination, social relations, and property. First of all, one may infer from Marx's account that for him domination is the exercise of power by one individual (or group of individuals) over another (or others), that is, direction or control of their actions by means of control over the

conditions of their activity. Thus for Marx domination is not causal determination of the actions of one individual by another, even in the case of the coercion or forced labor involved in slavery. Rather, domination is a social relation, that is, a relation between agents or persons, and not a causal action upon things. Therefore domination operates mediately, in that it involves coercion by means of the control by one agent over the necessary conditions or requirements of the activity of another. The term activity here should be understood as referring to production or labor as well as more generally to the exercise of agency, following the analysis in chapter 2. Thus, as we have just seen, the power that the master or lord exercises over the slave or serf derives from the master's control over both the objective and subjective conditions of their activity. In these cases of slavery and serfdom, the master's control extends even to the conditions of existence itself. Yet it should be emphasized that even where an individual's activity is subject to such control and he or she is treated as a mere instrument of production, the individual remains an agent and in fact cannot be reduced to a mere thing. Thus Marx writes (in a passage in which he compares capitalist wage labor and slavery),

The recognition of the products as [wage labor's] own and the judgment that its separation from the conditions of its realization is improper—forcibly imposed—is an enormous [advance in] awareness, itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital, and as much the knell to its doom as, with the slave's awareness that he *cannot be the property of another*, with his consciousness of himself as a person, the existence of slavery becomes a merely artificial, vegeta-

tive existence, and ceases to be able to prevail as the basis of production. (p. 463)

Such relations of domination may further be analyzed as non-reciprocal relations. By this I mean a social relation in which the actions of one agent (or group of agents) with respect to an other (or others) are not equivalent to the actions of the other with respect to the first. In the relation of master and slave, the elements of non-reciprocity are evident: Whereas the master stands in the relation of domination to the slave, the slave does not stand in the relation of domination to the master, but is rather subordinate to him. Further, the slave has not entered into the relation freely, but rather under constraint, whereas this is not the case for the master. Correlatively, the slave, in being a slave, acknowledges the master as an independent being, whereas the master regards the slave as dependent.

Such non-reciprocal social relations may further be analyzed as internal relations. As we saw in chapter 1, an internal relation is one in which each agent in the relation is changed by the relation. Thus in the master-slave (or lord and serf) relation, the master is a master only in and through his relation to the slave, and conversely. However, as in the earlier analysis such internal relations should be understood as holding between individuals who are agents. Thus even though such individuals change through their relations to each other, they are not to be regarded as totally constituted as individuals by these relations. Furthermore, as Marx suggests, though slaves or serfs may be regarded as and used as mere instruments of production or things, they are in

fact not really things, but rather agents reduced to this level of functioning by the existing social relations. This same understanding of internal relations as holding between individuals as agents who are not totally interconstituted by their relations has a further implication for the understanding of pre-capitalist forms of society in general. Namely, while such societies appear to be organic wholes in which the individuals are no more than parts and are totally defined by their place within the whole, it is clear from Marx's discussion that in fact this totality itself, like all social forms, is a social and historical product of the actions of the individuals who make it up. Thus the reality of such a social form is that it is a constituted totality and not pre-given and the individuals who appear as parts are really the agents of its constitution. Thus in treating the relation between forms of property and of production, for example, Marx writes, "At the very beginning, [the preconditions of production] may appear as spontaneous, natural. But . . . if they appear to one epoch as natural presuppositions of production they were its historic product for another" (p. 97).

Another general feature of Marx's view which is important for a reconstruction of his conception of justice concerns the meaning of property. This meaning may already be discerned in his discussion of pre-capitalist forms of society. Marx defines property in its most general sense as the relation of an individual to the conditions of production as belonging to him. These conditions are twofold: on the one hand, the natural conditions of land, raw materials, and so forth, and on the other, the social conditions, namely, other individuals and the existing form of social relations. Thus Marx writes,

Property thus originally means no more than a human being's relation to his natural conditions of production as belonging to him, as his, as *presupposed* along with *his own being*; relations to them as *natural presuppositions* of his self, which only form, so to speak, his extended body. . . . The forms of these *natural conditions of production* are double: (1) his existence as a member of a community; hence the existence of this community. . . . (2) the relation to *land and soil* mediated by the community, as *its own*. . . . (pp. 491–492)

Although in this passage Marx specifically refers to the pre-capitalist form of communal property, the general features of his view of property all emerge here. These general features are evident also when he states, "*We reduce this property to the relation to the conditions of production*" (p. 492). Or again, he writes,

Property, in so far as it is only the conscious relation—and posited in regard to the individual by the community, and proclaimed and guaranteed as law—to the conditions of production as *his own*, so that the producer's being appears also in the objective conditions *belonging to him*—is only realized by production itself. The real appropriation takes place not in the mental but in the real, active relation to these conditions—in their real positing as the conditions of his subjective activity. (p. 493)

It is clear that Marx's conception of property is radically different from the ordinary conceptions of it. First of all, for him property is not a thing, but a relation. That is, it does not refer to objects owned, but rather to the relations involved in appropriation itself. Moreover, Marx's conception is much broader than the usual ones because of the scope of what he includes among "conditions of production." Thus, as noted, these consist of both nature and society. This can be under-

stood most clearly in terms of Marx's conception of labor as objectification, discussed in chapters 2 and 3. There the conditions of laboring activity were seen to include both material conditions, that is, raw materials, land, and the products of past laboring activity, and social conditions, that is, other persons as well as the prevalent forms of social organization. Moreover, it is clear that for Marx the conditions of production also include what he calls subjective conditions, such as the individual's own body, consciousness, language, skills, and so forth.

Marx sees property as integrally related to production. In his discussion of the general features of production at the beginning of the *Grundrisse*, he writes,

All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society. In this sense it is a tautology to say that property (appropriation) is a precondition of production [T]hat there can be no production and hence no society where some form of property does not exist is a tautology. An appropriation which does not make something into property is a *contradictio in subjecto*. (pp. 87-88)

Marx is here stating that all production or objectification presupposes some form of property. Further, he suggests that the activity of production as a process of appropriation or making something one's own serves to reproduce the very form of property that it presupposes.

To say that all production presupposes property is to say that it presupposes some mode of control over or disposition over the conditions that are necessary for this production to occur. Most generally, Marx understands this as a relation of the individual to the conditions

in which they are said to belong to him (*ihm gehören*). Marx uses the phrase "belonging to him" here not in the narrow sense of private ownership or possession (although this does characterize some particular forms of property), but rather in the generic sense of disposition over the means or conditions necessary for productive activity to occur. The ways in which these conditions "belong to one" and, specifically, who has control over them are socially defined and vary historically. Thus the activity of production on the part of an individual is always mediated by a certain form of social relations that provide the context for his or her relation to nature, to other individuals, and more generally to the conditions of production. Accordingly, Marx writes, "An isolated individual could no more have property in land and soil than he could speak" (p. 485). On the other hand, as is evident from the passages cited above, it is always concrete individuals who are the agents of production and who relate to the conditions of production in the various forms of property. Thus Marx's discussion of property again makes clear that for him the basic entities of social reality are individuals-in-relations or social individuals, as I argued in chapter 1.

The preceding discussion of property shows that it is a central concept of Marx's analysis and that it stands in a systematic relation to the other fundamental concepts of his social ontology. We have seen how, in property, the activity of production is integrated with the social relations in which this activity takes place; and how, through a given property form, an individual comes to stand in definite relations to the natural world and to other individuals. Furthermore, it is now clear that there is a very close connection between the form of property and the

form of domination. It will be recalled that domination is the control by one agent (or group of agents) over the actions of another (or others) through the control over the conditions of the other's agency or production. But such control over the conditions of production is precisely the meaning of property. Thus Marx's analysis shows how a given form of domination is to be understood in terms of a particular historical form of property and how the criticism of domination thus also requires the criticism of the specific property form. Furthermore, the link between domination and particular forms of property suggests that a just society in which domination is overcome requires an appropriate form of property or of control over the conditions of production. This will be discussed in the second part of this chapter. In the following section we will see that the relation between the form of property and the form of domination is centrally important also to Marx's analysis and critique of alienation and exploitation in capitalism.

As will be recalled, Marx's general characterization of the social relations of capitalism is that they are "relations of personal independence founded on objective dependence" (p. 158). In contrast to the pre-capitalist relations of personal dependence in which the slave or serf is bound to a particular master and to the land, capitalist social relations presuppose the emergence of free labor, in which the worker has disposition over or owns his or her laboring capacity. The laborer now has the status of a person who can freely contract to sell or alienate this capacity in exchange for money. Thus Marx writes,

The first presupposition [of the bourgeois system of production], to begin with, is that the relation of slavery or serfdom has been sus-

pended. Living labor capacity belongs to itself, and has disposition over the expenditure of its forces, through exchange. Both sides confront each other as persons. *Formally*, their relation has the equality and freedom of exchange as such. . . . [E]verything touching on the individual, real person leaves him a wide field of choice, of arbitrary will, and hence of formal freedom. . . . The totality of the free worker's labor capacity appears to him as his property, as one of his moments, over which he, as subject, exercises domination, and which he maintains by expending it. (pp. 464-465)

[T]he worker is thereby formally posited as a person, who is something for himself *apart from his* labor, and who alienates his life-expression only as a means towards his own life. (p. 289)

However, according to Marx, this formal freedom of the individual worker depends on his or her participation in the system of exchange and production. But this system is an objective and external system not under the control of the individual and yet is one to which the individual is bound. Thus the individual worker who has no other property to exchange than his or her laboring capacity is not free not to engage in this exchange. This dependency arises from the fact that the objective conditions of production that the worker requires for his or her activity and for his or her subsistence belong to capital. The objective dependence of individuals on the system of exchange and production extends to the capitalist as well, but in a different way. The capitalist who owns the conditions or means of production is required to enter into production and exchange in order to utilize these conditions for the sake of the reproduction and accumulation of capital. The exchange here primarily involves the payment of wages for labor power and the sale of the commodities produced. Marx describes the impersonality

and apparent autonomy of the system to which individuals are subordinated under capitalism as follows:

[T]he *conditions of existence* within which these individuals enter into contact . . . 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 [case of pre-capitalist societies] 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. (p. 164)

Beyond this general sense of objective dependence in which individuals are restricted by the operations of the external system of exchange and production, social relations under capitalism are characterized by objective dependence in yet a deeper sense. Specifically, for Marx, the mass of individuals, that is, the wage laborers, are dominated by capital as an objective power that stands over and against them. It might be said that the analysis and critique of objective dependence in this sense is Marx's central concern.

As will be seen, the objective dependence of labor on capital, which is the distinctively capitalist form of domination, is analyzed by Marx in terms of the concepts of alienation and exploitation. As Marx argues, this form of domination is not apparent in the surface processes of exchange in capitalism, in which the agents are free and equal and in which they reciprocally exchange equivalent values. Rather, this form of domination comes to light when one examines the underlying processes of capitalist production. Marx argues that the capitalist right of property, which is the right to appropriate the products of one's own

labor or to exchange them for their equivalents, is transformed into its opposite in the production process. It becomes instead the right to appropriate the products of another's labor without exchange. Such appropriation on the part of capital of the products of another's labor without recompense is what Marx means by exploitation; correlatively, the laborer's positing of the products of his or her own work as belonging to another, that is, as the property of capital, is what Marx means by alienation. Indeed, exploitation and alienation are the same process viewed from two sides: the first from the side of capital and the second from the side of labor. It is in Marx's account of this transformation of property right and in his discussion of the social relations involved in alienation and exploitation that we can discern his critique of the injustice of the capitalist system and from which we will begin to reconstruct the elements of his implicit conception of justice.

The relation of alienation to property is systematically set forth in the *Grundrisse*. The strategy of Marx's argument is to show how the reciprocity of the sphere of exchange, in which the exchangers treat each other as free and equal, is undermined by and gives way to the non-reciprocal relations of alienation and exploitation in the sphere of production, in which the individuals are unfree and unequal. He makes this strategy clear in introducing the structure that his argument will take in the major portion of the *Grundrisse* ("The Chapter on Capital"). Marx writes,

As we have seen, in simple circulation as such (exchange value in its movement), the action of the individuals on one another is, in its content, only a reciprocal, self-interested satisfaction of their needs; in

its form, [it is] exchange among equals (equivalents). Property, too, is still posited here only as the appropriation of the product of labor by labor, and of the product of alien labor by one's own labor, insofar as the product of one's own labor is bought by alien labor. Property in alien labor is mediated by the equivalent of one's own labor. This form of property—quite like freedom and equality—is posited in this simple relation. In the further development of exchange value this will be transformed, and it will ultimately be shown that private property in the product of one's own labor is identical with the separation of labor and property, so that labor will create alien property and property will command alien labor. (p. 238)

Marx, like Hegel, characterizes the simple exchange process as one in which the exchangers are equal, free, and reciprocally related to each other. In this process, the individuals confront each other exclusively in their role as exchangers; as such, their individual differences are irrelevant to the exchange. Since each exchanger stands to the other in the same relation, they are equal in the exchange. Thus Marx writes, "Each of the subjects is an exchanger; i.e. each has the same social relation towards the other that the other has towards him. As subjects of exchange, their relation is therefore that of *equality*" (p. 241). Furthermore, the objects they exchange are also taken to be equivalent in value; in the act of exchanging these equivalents, according to Marx, the agents "assert themselves . . . as equally worthy, and at the same time as mutually indifferent" (p. 242). In addition, Marx sees the exchange process as characterized by the freedom of the agents. That is, neither of the agents imposes the exchange on the other, but rather each recognizes the other as a free agent, who has the choice of disposing or not disposing of his or her property. The recognition of

the agents' freedom of choice in exchange constitutes this sphere as one of formal freedom.

Another feature of the exchange relation, according to Marx, is that it is a reciprocal one. He writes,

[I]ndividual A serves the need of individual B by means of the commodity *a* only insofar as and because individual B serves the need of individual A by means of the commodity *b*, and vice versa. Each serves the other in order to serve himself; each makes use of the other, reciprocally as his means. Now both things are contained in the consciousness of the two individuals: (1) that each arrives at his end only insofar as he serves the other as means; (2) that each becomes means for the other (being for another) only as end in himself (being for self); (3) that the reciprocity in which each is at the same time means and end, and attains his end only insofar as he becomes a means, and becomes a means only insofar as he posits himself as end, that each thus posits himself as being for another, insofar as he is being for self, and the other as being for him insofar as he is being for himself—that this reciprocity is a necessary fact, presupposed as natural precondition of exchange, but that, as such, it is irrelevant to each of the two subjects in exchange, and that this reciprocity interests him only insofar as it satisfies his interest to the exclusion of, without reference to, that of the other. (pp. 243-244)

Most generally, this reciprocity in exchange may be understood as a social relation in which one agent acts with respect to another in the same way as the other acts with respect to the first. Moreover, each agent is aware of the equivalence of their actions. The particular mode of reciprocity described here may be called instrumental reciprocity in the sense that each agent enters into this relationship out of self-interest alone.² Each uses the other for his or her own purposes.

On analysis it may be seen that the equality and freedom of the exchangers are aspects of the reciprocity of their relation, as it is described by Marx. Equality is evident in the fact that each exchanger acts with respect to the other in the same way. Further, as we have seen, since the agents are indifferent to each other in every other respect but their relation as exchangers, we may call this formal or abstract equality, namely, one that abstracts from all their individual differences. In a similar way, the reciprocity of the exchange relation may be called formal or abstract reciprocity, in that it is based on the abstract equivalence in value of the commodities exchanged. The concrete differences between the commodities and between the exchangers are irrelevant in the exchange. In addition, the formal freedom of the agents in the act of exchange is presupposed in their reciprocal relation to each other. Thus each agent enters into the exchange voluntarily, freely agrees on the equivalence in value of what is exchanged, and freely chooses to serve the other in order to serve his or her own purposes.

An additional dimension of the process of exchange for Marx concerns the property rights of the exchangers. On his view, these property rights give legal expression to the economic and social relations involved in the exchange of equivalents. Each exchanger has the right of property over the products of his or her own labor and has the right to sell these products freely. This form of the ownership and salability of property constitutes the legal right of private property. Further, since the process of simple exchange is an exchange of equivalent values, the appropriation or acquisition of the products of another's

labor in principle requires that one exchange for it an equivalent value in the products of one's own labor. The right of private property thus incorporates the concept of reciprocity in its formulation. Specifically, each exchanger stands in relation to the other as proprietor and is recognized as such by the other. Further, each has the right to exchange what he or she owns at its equivalent value.

It may be suggested here in a preliminary way that the right of private property as a legal expression of economic relations embodies a principle of abstract justice. Specifically, it implies the principle that equals should be treated equally. That is, property right establishes that each exchanger treat the other as a proprietor like him or herself, hence as having the right of ownership of his or her product and the right to dispose of it freely. Therefore each exchanger is bound, first, not to take the other's property by force, and second, to exchange for this property on the basis of a free agreement on its equivalent value.

The process of exchange just described, with its features of equality, freedom and reciprocity, is seen by Marx as applying also to the exchange between labor and capital. On Marx's view, the free laborer has disposition over his or her own laboring capacity and sells it as a commodity to the capitalist in exchange for a wage. Marx understands this process as an exchange of equivalents. In the sense discussed above this exchange may be regarded as a fair or just one. Marx goes on to show, however, that the deeper relations between capital and labor, namely, those in the sphere of production, are in fact characterized by the very opposite qualities from those that mark the exchange process. These social relations in production are nonreciprocal

relations, which are unfree and unequal and which, as I shall argue, may also be characterized as unjust. As Marx puts it, "In present bourgeois society as a whole, this positing of prices and their circulation etc. appears as the surface process, beneath which, however, in the depths, entirely different processes go on, in which this apparent individual equality and liberty disappear" (p. 247).

This contrast between the surface processes of exchange and the deeper processes of production, discussed in chapter 2, may be reconsidered here for the implications that it has for an analysis of the injustice of alienation and exploitation. The contrast between the processes of exchange and production is shown by Marx to follow from the separation between labor and property which is a major presupposition of the capitalist mode of production. By this Marx means that property as the objective conditions of production ("means of production") is owned and controlled by capital. Labor, on the other hand, is propertyless in this sense and owns only its productive capacity. This contrast between labor and capital is also described by Marx as a contrast between living labor and objectified labor. The products of past laboring or productive activity or objectified labor which constitute wealth are owned by capital. By contrast, what remains to the laborer is only labor as subjectivity, that is, the capacity for value-creating, productive activity. Marx describes the labor that confronts capital as follows:

Separation of property from labor appears as the necessary law of this exchange between capital and labor. Labor posited as not-capital as such is: (1) *non-objectified labor* . . . labor separated from all means and

objects of labor, from its entire objectivity. This living labor . . . this complete denudation, purely subjective existence of labor, stripped of all objectivity. Labor as *absolute poverty*: poverty not as shortage, but as total exclusion of objective wealth. . . . (2) *Not-objectified labor* . . . i.e. subjective existence of labor itself. Labor not as an object, but as activity; not as itself *value*, but as the *living source* of value. (pp. 295–296)

Because of this separation of labor from the objective conditions of its activity, which belong to capital, the laborer, in order to gain means of subsistence, has to exchange the only thing he or she owns with capital. This is disposition over his or her laboring capacity which he or she sells to the capitalist for a given period of time in exchange for a wage. On Marx's analysis, as we have seen in chapter 2, the wage is a specific sum of money that is in general equivalent to the cost of reproduction of the laborer's capacity to work. The capitalist thus purchases disposition over this laboring capacity, that is, labor power, as a commodity, just as he does with any other commodity in the market. According to Marx, this exchange of labor power for a wage follows the principles of the exchange of equivalents and falls entirely within the sphere of circulation or exchange.

However, this particular commodity has a distinctive character, namely, that its use creates value. What capital acquires as a consequence of the exchange is the use of labor as value-creating activity. Thus Marx writes, "The capitalist obtains labor itself, labor as value-positing activity, as productive labor; i.e., he obtains the productive force which maintains and multiplies capital, and which thereby becomes the productive force, the reproductive force of capital, a force belonging to capital itself" (p. 247). Again, Marx says, "Through the exchange with the worker, capital has appropriated labor itself; labor

has become one of its moments, which now acts as a fructifying vitality upon its merely existent and hence dead objectivity” (p. 298). Thus in gaining disposition over the worker’s laboring activity for a given time (for example, the working day), the capitalist also gains possession of the values created by this activity during that time.

Marx thus analyzes the relation of labor to capital as involving two separate processes: first, that of exchange, and second, the use of laboring capacity by capital in the production process. Marx emphasizes the difference between these processes and argues that a recognition of this difference is crucial for an understanding of the nature of the capitalist mode of production. “*In the exchange between capital and labor, the first act is an exchange, falls entirely within ordinary circulation; the second is a process qualitatively different from exchange, and only by misuse could it have been called any sort of exchange at all. It stands directly opposite exchange; essentially different category*” (p. 275).

This second process of production is the sphere of alienated labor, as I have described it in chapter 2. In alienation, both the laborer’s productive activity during a given time and the products of this activity belong to another and not to the laborer. Thus, as Marx says, “the creative power of his labor establishes itself as the power of capital, as an *alien power* confronting him. He *divests* himself of labor as the force productive of wealth; capital appropriates it, as such” (p. 307). Because the capitalist gains control over this value-creating activity, he is able to reproduce and increase his capital in the following way: The capitalist pays the worker a wage that is equivalent in value to what it

costs the worker to reproduce his or her capacity to work. However, the capitalist receives in return value created by the laborer’s activity in excess of the value represented by the wage. The capitalist receives this excess or surplus value by requiring that the laborer work beyond the time necessary to create the value equivalent to the wage; this, as we have seen, is what Marx calls surplus labor time. It is thus labor’s own capacity to produce more value than it takes to reproduce itself that is the source of surplus value. This surplus value serves to increase capital, that is, it increases both its control over additional means of production (or objectified labor as its property) and command over additional living labor or workers.

On the basis of this analysis, Marx goes on to show that alienation does not simply refer to the separation of labor from its products and to labor’s lack of control over its productive activity. Marx argues that beyond this, alienation underlies the whole production process of capitalism. In this systemic sense, alienation refers to the process by which labor produces capital and also constantly reproduces its relation to capital, in which it is dominated by capital. Marx describes this process as follows:

[The] absolute separation between property and labor, between living labor capacity and the conditions of its realization, between objectified and living labor, between value and value-creating activity . . . now appears as a product of labor itself, as objectification of its own moments. . . . Labor capacity . . . has posited [the conditions of its own realization] as *things, values*, which confront it in an alien, commanding personification. The worker emerges not only not richer, but emerges rather poorer from the process than he entered. For not only

has he produced the conditions of necessary labor as conditions belonging to capital; but also the value-creating possibility, the realization which lies as a possibility within him, now likewise exists as surplus value, surplus product, in a word as capital, as master over living labor capacity, as value endowed with its own might and will, confronting him in his abstract, objectless, purely subjective poverty. He has produced not only the alien wealth and his own poverty, but also the relation of this wealth as independent, self-sufficient wealth, relative to himself as the poverty which this wealth consumes and from which wealth thereby draws new vital spirits into itself, and realizes itself anew. All this arose from the act of exchange, in which he exchanged his living labor capacity for an amount of objectified labor, except that this objectified labor . . . now appears as posited by himself, as *his own product*, as his own self-objectification as well as the objectification of himself as a power independent of himself, which moreover rules over him, rules over him through his own actions. (pp. 452-453)

Viewed from the side of the laboring subject, this process in which labor produces capital as the power that dominates it is the process of alienation. This very same process, when viewed from the side of capital, is that of exploitation. Exploitation for Marx refers to the appropriation by capital of alien labor without exchange, that is, without giving any equivalent in return for it. That portion of the labor time that is appropriated without exchange in this way, or unpaid labor, is what was previously described as surplus labor time. Correlatively, the value created by labor during this time is the surplus value which increases capital. It is thus by means of this process of exploitation/alienation that capital reproduces and increases itself. Furthermore, it is through this process that capital comes to increase its domination over labor, since in this process capital acquires greater and greater

control over means or conditions of production. In other words, the property accumulated as capital is the result of this exploitation. Yet this accumulation of property by capital may also be understood as the product of labor's alienated activity. Marx writes, "The product of labor appears as *alien property*" (p. 453). Further, "The greater the extent to which labor objectifies itself, the greater becomes the objective world of values, which stands opposite it as alien property" (p. 455).

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it is now possible to reconstruct Marx's conception of the specific form of domination involved in alienation and exploitation. This form of domination, as we have seen, is based on the separation of labor from the objective conditions of labor. These objective conditions that are required for labor's activity are under the control of capital as its private property. Human activity as objectification, however, requires not only the subjective purposes and capacities of the agent, but also the exercise of this activity upon the objective world in order to transform it in accordance with the agent's purposes. In the property form characteristic of capitalist production, where capital controls these objective conditions, the worker is dependent on capital for the conditions of his or her self-objectification. The consequence of this dependence is that the laborer has to put his or her creative activity at the disposal of capital. Thus objectification takes the form of alienation.

In the previous chapter it was seen that for Marx freedom as self-realization is tied to objectification. Positive freedom was seen to require not only agency, but also the conditions for the exercise of this self-transformative activity. The analysis in the present chapter makes

clear how essential the form of property is to the development of freedom. The full development of freedom requires a relation to the conditions of production as belonging to one. But in the form of private property under capitalism, these objective conditions of one's own agency or production belong to and are under the control of another.

The sense in which Marx refers to capitalism as a system of "personal independence founded on objective dependence" may now be more fully interpreted in this context. Personal independence consists in the fact that the laborer owns and controls his or her laboring capacity as property. However, since the laborer lacks all other property in the form of control over the conditions or means of this agency, he or she is objectively dependent on capital for these conditions. Capital here is understood by Marx as an institutionalized and systemic mode of control over these conditions. That is, it takes the form of an objective and external economic system in which power resides in the objective conditions of wealth themselves. The dependence of labor on capital is to be understood not as a personal dependence of the laborer on this or that capitalist, but rather on the objective system of capital. The laborer is dependent on the forces of production which capital owns (including land, raw materials, and instruments of production) as well as on the relations of production which capital controls (the system of wage labor). The capitalist mode of production may thus be regarded as an institutionalized and objective form of domination.

Within this objective and institutionalized system of capitalist production and exchange, the social relations are such that individuals relate to each other in terms of their functions or roles within the system. In

their fulfillment of these abstract functions, their individual differences and purposes are irrelevant. The social relations among individuals are reduced to functional economic relations or what Marx characterizes as the class relations of capitalism. These class relations are for Marx fundamentally defined in terms of relations to the means or conditions of production, that is, in terms of property. Thus in capitalism the two principal classes are, on the one hand, those who own and control the means or conditions of production (capital) and, on the other, those who are propertyless in this sense (labor).

It will be recalled that domination in general is defined as the control by one agent (or group of agents) over the actions of another (or others) by means of control over the conditions of their agency. In capitalism, domination takes the form of control by the capitalist class over the activity of the working class by means of their control over the objective conditions of laboring activity. Thus in capitalism domination consists of the domination of one class by another. And, as we have seen, it takes the specific form of the relation of exploitation or of alienation.

On Marx's view, labor and capital are internally related. That is, these classes are interdefined in that capital is objectified labor and functions as disposition over labor time in the process of capital's own reproduction and accumulation. Correlatively, labor can only be actualized in being used by capital and in working on the material that belongs to capital. Furthermore, in alienation and exploitation, both capital and labor are changed in the relation. Specifically, capital increases its wealth and grows in power and labor is impoverished and further subordinated through the appropriation of labor by capital in which

labor posits its own product as belonging to capital. Thus Marx writes, "It here becomes evident that labor itself progressively extends and gives an ever wider and fuller existence to the objective world of wealth as a power alien to labor, so that, relative to the values created or to the real conditions of value-creation, the penurious subjectivity of living labor capacity forms an ever more glaring contrast" (p. 455).

The capitalist form of domination, as alienation and exploitation, may now be analyzed as a non-reciprocal social relation which is also unfree, unequal, and as we shall see, unjust. By contrast to the reciprocity in the sphere of exchange, the sphere of production reveals a non-equivalence in the social relations between labor and capital. Alienation and exploitation are non-reciprocal relations because capital controls and directs the productive activity of the laborers, whereas the laborers have no equivalent power to direct the processes of capital. While it is the case that capital depends on labor for its reproduction and growth, and labor depends on capital for the conditions of its activity, nevertheless labor is subordinated to the direction of capital in production. An additional aspect of the non-reciprocity lies in the fact that in appropriating surplus value, capital enriches itself and gains in power while the worker is impoverished and is further subordinated in this same process. The non-reciprocity in this process is based on the nonequivalence between what the worker is paid as a wage and the value of what he or she produces, which is appropriated by the capitalist. Marx highlights the non-reciprocity involved in this process by calling surplus value the appropriation of unpaid labor or "the theft of alien labor time" (p. 705). It is evident that this non-equivalence in production, in which

the capitalist's gain is the worker's loss, involves also the inequality of the two, by contrast to the sphere of exchange, in which they appear as equals. In addition, the production process contrasts with the exchange process in that it entails the lack of freedom of the worker. As was noted, the worker is not free to realize his or her own purposes in his or her productive activity, but rather is constrained to act under the direction and control of capital.

In the transition from the sphere of exchange to the sphere of production, there is, on Marx's view, a fundamental violation and transformation of the right of property upon which exchange itself is based. In this connection, Marx's criticism of capitalism amounts to the criticism that it is unjust in that it does not measure up to its own standards of justice. Specifically, the property right that lies at the basis of exchange, as was noted above, entails that each person has the right of property over the products of his or her own activity or labor and has the right to sell these products freely and at their equivalent value. Moreover, this property right was seen to embody a principle of abstract justice, namely, that equals should be treated equally. However, according to Marx, this very right is violated in the processes of alienation and exploitation in production. In these processes, labor loses the right to the products of its own activity and loses the right to an equivalent exchange for the values it yields to capital. Thus although labor appears as an equal with capital in the process of exchange and is said to retain this equality in production as well, in fact the laborer is not treated as an equal in the process of production. In this sphere labor is constrained to yield surplus value without equivalent exchange as a condition for its participation in production.

Correlatively, the capitalist appropriates the products of another's labor without paying an equivalent. Marx argues that in this way the proprietary right of the laborer to the products of his or her labor and to a freely agreed upon exchange for them is being violated in the production process. In effect, then, Marx's critique here amounts to the claim that capitalism is unjust in that it violates the very principle of abstract justice which it enunciates in its principle of property right.

In his discussion of the appropriation of surplus value as an inherent and ongoing feature of capitalist production, Marx describes this violation and transformation of the right of property that governs the exchange of equivalents. He writes,

[B]y a peculiar logic, 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 labor, the right to appropriate alien labor without an equivalent, and, on the side of labor capacity, it becomes the duty to relate to one's own labor or to one's own product as to *alien property*. The right of property is inverted, to become, on the one side, the right to appropriate alien labor, and, on the other, the duty of respecting the product of one's own labor, and one's own labor itself, as values belonging to others. The exchange of equivalents, however, which appeared as the original operation, an operation to which the right of property gave legal expression, has become turned around in such a way that the exchange by one side is now only illusory, since the part of capital which is exchanged for living labor capacity, firstly, is itself *alien labor*, appropriated without equivalent, and, secondly, *has to be replaced with a surplus by living labor capacity*, is thus in fact not consigned away, but merely changed from one form into another. The relation of exchange has thus dropped

away entirely, or is a *mere semblance*. Furthermore, the right of property originally appeared to be based on one's own labor. Property now appears as the right to alien labor, and as the impossibility of labor appropriating its own product. The complete separation between property, and, even more so, wealth, and labor, now appears as a consequence of the law which began with their identity. (p. 458)

This critique of the inversion of the right of property is not the only respect in which Marx may be said to criticize the capitalist system as unjust. In his critique of alienation and exploitation, Marx goes beyond what may be called an internal critique of capitalism, concerning its failure to abide by its own principles. One may interpret his analysis of alienation and exploitation as showing the injustice of these relations in yet a deeper sense. In this sense, these relations are unjust in that through them one individual (or group) deprives another of freedom. This is what I previously characterized as domination. Thus in alienation and exploitation, as modes of domination, some individuals control the range and direction of the actions of others by means of controlling the conditions of their activity. In this way, some individuals deprive others of the conditions for the full realization of their freedom and thus deny them positive freedom (in the sense discussed in the previous chapter). Since the capitalist mode of production systematically engenders such unjust relations of alienation and exploitation, this system as a whole may also be characterized as unjust. It may be added that pre-capitalist society should also be regarded as unjust inasmuch as the social relations that characterize it are relations of domination.

From this reconstruction of Marx's critique of the injustice of capitalist alienation and exploitation, one may see that there is a close connection between the conception of freedom that underlies Marx's analysis as its central value and the conception of justice. It is also clear from this analysis that it is the non-reciprocity of the social relations of alienation and exploitation that constitutes the formal character of the injustice of these relations. For on this analysis, it is their character as relations of domination that makes them unjust and domination is paradigmatically a non-reciprocal relation.

I shall now briefly sketch Marx's projection of a third stage in the development of social relations in what he sees as a communal society of the future. As is well known, Marx's discussion of this third stage is highly schematic and undeveloped. Nonetheless, the major features of the social relations in this stage emerge clearly in his account in the *Grundrisse*.

On Marx's view, the social relations in a communal society of the future will be radically distinct from those in capitalism, although he sees the new social relations as developing out of this earlier stage. Whereas in capitalism the relations are those of personal independence founded on objective dependence and the system of commodity production engenders alienation and exploitation, in communal society the relations are those of mutuality among free individuals and production is under the control of these associated individuals. Thus, as we have seen, Marx describes this stage as follows: "Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals, and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth, is the

third stage. The second stage creates the conditions for the third" (p. 158).

Marx characterizes the subjects of this society as "free social individuals" (pp. 197, 705), which he explicates as "individuals in mutual relationships" (p. 712). The relations among these individuals may be analyzed as reciprocal relations in which each recognizes the freedom of the other and acts so as to enhance it. Thus no individual or group of individuals dominates another. Rather, the mode is one of social cooperation in the realization of common projects and in support for the differentiated projects of each individual. Thus the central value and animating principle of this form of society is positive freedom, understood as the fullest self-realization of social individuals. The reciprocal relations in which this positive freedom is realized are no longer those of formal and instrumental reciprocity, which were examined in the process of exchange. Rather, they may be called relations of mutuality, by which I mean reciprocity in its most fully developed form.

Marx presents this conception of social relations not only as an ethical ideal but also as the conception of a possible mode of social organization. The form of organization of such a society follows from the above conception of its subjects as free individuals in mutual relationships. It consists of communal control over the processes of social life and over social production. Marx presents a view of this form of social organization in a passage in which he critically contrasts capitalist production with it:

[In capitalism] production is not *directly* social, is not "the offspring of association," which distributes labor internally. Individuals are sub-

sumed under social production; social production exists outside of 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. . . . The *private exchange* of all products of labor, all activities and all wealth stands in antithesis not only to a distribution based on a natural or political super- and subordination of individuals to one another. . . but also to free exchange among individuals who are associated on the basis of common appropriation and control of the means of production. (pp. 158-159)

In this communal form of society, therefore, individuals are no longer principally related to each other indirectly and externally through the exchange of the products of their labor or through the sale of their labor time as exchange values. Rather, their relations are direct and internal, that is, personal relations in which the individuals recognize and act on their common interests. However, unlike the internal, personal and communal relations in pre-capitalist societies, here the relations are among free and equal individuals who do not stand in relations of domination and subordination.

Marx explains that in this form of society the individual has a share in determining social production and has a share in the distribution and consumption of products in virtue of being a member of the community. This contrasts with the capitalist form of social organization in which an individual comes into relation to others only by entering into an exchange of commodities with others and by entering into the production process. Marx writes,

In the first case, which proceeds from the independent production of individuals . . . mediation takes place through the exchange of commodities, through exchange value and through money; all these are expressions of one and the same relation. In the second case, the *presupposition is itself mediated*; i.e. a communal production, communality, is presupposed as the basis of production. The labor of the individual is posited from the outset as social labor. Thus, whatever the particular material form of the product he creates or helps to create, what he has bought with his labor is not a specific and particular product, but rather a specific share of the communal production. He therefore has no particular product to exchange. His product is *not an exchange value*. . . . In the first case the social character of production is *posited only post festum* with the elevation of products to exchange values and the exchange of these exchange values. In the second case the *social character of production* is presupposed, and participation in the world of products, in consumption, is not mediated by the exchange of mutually independent labors or products of labor. It is mediated, rather, by the social conditions of production within which the individual is active. (pp. 171-172)

The changes in social organization and in production that characterize a communal society of the future go along with changes in the meaning of property as the relation to the conditions of production. In capitalism, as we have seen, the form of property is one in which the laborers are alienated from the conditions of production; they relate to them as belonging to another. In a society founded on mutual relations, the means of production belong to the associated producers. This is not to be taken as a return to the communal property of pre-capitalist society, in which the individuals are subordinated to the totality and in

which relations of domination prevail. Instead, in the third stage, property in the sense of a relation to the conditions of social production belongs to the community, understood not as a totality over and above the individuals, but as these individuals themselves in their mutual relations. Thus this community does not rule over the individuals and is nothing in itself beyond the concrete individuals in their social relations to each other. Thus Marx writes,

[W]ith the suspension of the *immediate* character of living labor, as merely *individual* . . . with the positing of the activity of individuals as immediately general or *social* activity, the objective moments of production are stripped of this form of alienation; they are thereby posited as property, as the organic social body within which the individuals reproduce themselves as individuals, but as social individuals. (p. 832)

The Meaning of Justice and Its Relation to Freedom

It is now possible to draw the implications of the foregoing analysis of Marx's critique of the injustice of capitalism and of his projections of a communal society of the future for a reconstruction of Marx's implicit theory of justice. These implications, together with the analyses of Marx's social ontology in the earlier chapters of this book, will enable us to sketch the outlines of Marx's positive conception of justice, which I have claimed is embedded in his account. The discussion that follows will necessarily be brief because Marx says very little explicitly about justice and therefore what I present is almost entirely a reconstruction based on what is implicit in his account.

Before proceeding to the reconstruction of Marx's positive view of

justice, we may consider why Marx himself did not explicitly present a conception of justice and why, despite this, one may claim that he has such a conception. It is reasonable to suppose that Marx says so little about the concept of justice because of his polemical opposition to those who substituted abstract moralizing for the criticism of society. Marx's critique of the use of abstractions in this way is mainly aimed at two groups of writers: first, the classical political economists (Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, Say, and J. S. Mill, for example), whom he criticized for taking bourgeois society ahistorically as an essential or natural form of social organization; and, second, the utopian socialists, especially the French (Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon, for example), who, he claimed, saw socialism as no more than a realization of the ideals of bourgeois society.³⁵

Marx's argument against merely abstract values such as formal freedom, abstract equality and abstract justice is that their very abstractness serves to mask the concrete problems that obtain in a given form of society. Thus, as we have seen, Marx argues that if one uncritically observes only the formal freedom and abstract equality of exchange which is the surface appearance of capitalist society, then one fails to see the deeper social realities of concrete unfreedom, inequality and injustice in the sphere of production. Moreover, Marx argues that such a conception of values as merely abstract does not recognize the concrete and differentiated forms that these values take in various social and historical periods.

Nonetheless, Marx does not reject the use of abstractions entirely. In

fact, he holds that abstractions are useful insofar as they permit one to grasp the elements common to different situations. Thus in talking about how one should analyze production in political economy, he writes, Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development—production by social individuals. It might seem, therefore, that in order to talk about production at all we must either pursue the process of historic development through its different phases, or declare beforehand that we are dealing with a specific historic epoch such as e.g. modern bourgeois production, which is indeed our particular theme. However, all epochs of production have certain common traits, common characteristics. *Production in general* is an abstraction, but a rational abstraction insofar as it really brings out and fixes the common element and thus saves us repetition. Still, this *general* category, this common element sifted out by comparison, is itself segmented many times over and splits into different determinations. Some determinations belong to all epochs, others only to a few. [Some] determinations will be shared by the most modern epoch and the most ancient. No production will be thinkable without them. (p. 85)

I would claim that the view expressed here, and which in fact structures part of Marx's analysis, implies that abstractions do have a place in Marx's theory of value. They specify values that are common to all historical periods, but that at the same time take on forms specific to each historical period. Thus these values must be understood not merely in their generality, but in the concrete embodiments and different significances that they have in various forms of society. Moreover, Marx sees such values as that of freedom as developing historically. Thus Marx's rejection of merely abstract values should not be taken as implying that he lacks a conception of justice. Rather, it

signifies that for Marx justice, like other conceptions, must be understood in relation to its concrete and differentiated historical forms.

Furthermore, Marx's rejection of abstract morality should not be taken to mean that he is advocating a purely descriptive or value-free approach to the study of society, in which values such as justice are seen as historically relative.⁴ That Marx is not a historical relativist is evident from the fact that his social ontology is a normative one. That is, as I argued in chapter 4, Marx views freedom as a fundamental value which has its basis in the very nature of human activity. As the *capacity* for self-transcendence, it characterizes all individuals in all historical periods, though it is realized to varying degrees in different forms of society. Furthermore, this value of freedom provides the ground for Marx's critique of the different social forms in terms of the degree to which they realize this value. Likewise, it will be seen that Marx's conception of justice has a normative force and is not merely descriptive.

From the foregoing considerations, we may conclude that although Marx does not present an explicit theory of justice, this fact cannot be used as an argument to the effect that there is no implicit conception of justice in his work. Indeed, I have suggested that the basis for such a conception is present in Marx's normative and historical approach to value theory. I will go on to argue that Marx has a conception of justice, though an implicit one. However, this should not be taken to mean that his views fit into one or another of the traditional theories of justice, for example, the Kantian or utilitarian ones. Rather, Marx should be understood as changing the very terms of the traditional

discussion of values, and specifically of freedom and justice. In place of treating values only abstractly apart from the social contexts in which they change or develop, Marx studies values in their concrete embodiments in human practice. Furthermore, he bases his approach to values on an ontology that is distinctively social and historical. In addition, Marx goes beyond the traditional dichotomy between facts and values in seeing the essentially valuational character of human actions and social institutions. Thus as we saw in the discussion of his concept of freedom and in his critique of alienation and exploitation in capitalism, Marx's description of the social facts is at the same time a consideration of their normative import.⁵

The question now arises: What is Marx's conception of justice? How is it related to his view of freedom as the central value in social life? And how is it related to his concepts of property, class, domination, alienation and exploitation, analyzed in the first part of this chapter?

This reconstruction of Marx's theory of justice is primarily derived from three features of his analysis: his critique of capitalist alienation and exploitation as unjust, his projection of a communal society of the future and his conception of positive freedom. Marx's critique of the injustice of capitalist social relations was interpreted as a critique of alienation and exploitation as modes of domination. That is, Marx's analysis is that in these relations, one class by its control over the conditions of production deprives the members of the other class of their positive freedom through denying them the conditions for the realization of their own purposes. This domination consists, on the one hand, in the capitalists' control and direction of the work-

ers' laboring activity in the production process and, on the other hand, in the capitalists' appropriation of a portion of the workers' product without exchange. If unjust social relations are relations of domination, namely, those that deprive some agents of the conditions for their positive freedom, then we may infer that justice in one sense of the term refers to social relations in which no agents deprive any others of the conditions for their positive freedom. It follows that justice in this sense is itself a condition for the full development of positive freedom, that is, a condition for the self-realization of all individuals. But beyond this, I shall argue later that justice has a further meaning for Marx, namely, it designates social relations in which agents mutually enhance each other. Justice in this sense of mutuality will be seen to be a further condition necessary for the full or complete development of positive freedom.

The first meaning of justice according to which no one deprives another of the requirements for his or her agency may be elaborated and expanded by considering the implications of Marx's conception of positive freedom. It will be recalled that for Marx freedom does not only refer to the abstract capacity for choice and its correlative requirement for freedom from constraint; it also refers to self-realization through transformative activity and its correlative requirement for the conditions necessary for this activity. Freedom in this latter sense is not merely negative freedom, namely, absence of constraint, but is positive freedom, as the freedom to realize oneself through objectification as an activity of transforming conditions in accordance with one's purposes.

We have seen in chapters 1 and 2 that Marx views this activity of self-transformation or self-realization as the distinctive characteristic of human beings. Every individual is therefore to be taken as having the capacity for such activity. Freedom as this capacity is thus the fundamental ontological feature of human beings that underlies Marx's theory of social reality. As I have argued, although this capacity is universal, and *as capacity* is undifferentiated from one individual to another, this does not entail that human beings have a fixed nature, but rather that they freely create their natures through their activity (both in production in the broad sense and in social interaction). This common capacity is thus the basis for differentiation, of both individuals and historical social forms.

In his social ontology, Marx does not merely treat this capacity for freedom descriptively; he also recognizes its normative force. That is, this capacity by its very nature demands the realization of this freedom through activity. This capacity for freedom is the disposition to realize oneself through transformative activity. This capacity therefore entails the demand for the conditions for this activity. Further, as argued in the previous chapter, freedom for Marx is an end in itself. In this teleological value theory, whatever serves this end, that is, whatever is a condition for freedom, is valuable in virtue of this function. Having the conditions, that is, possessing them or having access to them, is thus also valuable.

Since each individual has this (abstract and undifferentiated) capacity for self-transcendence or self-realization simply in virtue of being

human, no individual has more of a right to the conditions for the fulfillment of this capacity than any other. Or put differently, each individual has an equal right to these conditions, that is, to the conditions of positive freedom. I would argue that this principle of equal positive freedom constitutes an important meaning of justice for Marx. The equality that is required by this principle is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the full development of positive freedom. It is also evident from this argument that justice in this sense of equal rights to the conditions for freedom derives its value from the value of freedom itself.

This meaning of justice is in accord with the conception of abstract justice discussed earlier in this chapter as characteristic of the process of exchange on Marx's view. It is the principle of treating equals equally. However, the form of this principle in Marx goes beyond a major traditional formulation of it. This traditional formulation simply states that equals should be treated equally, but does not specify who counts as equal.⁶ By contrast, Marx's conception of equal positive freedom, as I have reconstructed it, specifies that *every* individual is to be treated equally. Such an insistence on universal equality is found in various systems of universalist ethics, for example, that of Kant (in which all persons are to be taken as equals since they are all ends-in-themselves) and is also characteristic of traditional democratic theory in the political realm, as well as of much of modern legal theory. However, Marx's approach is distinctive in that he extends the domain of this equality to the social and economic realms as well. Further,

Marx extends the meaning of equal treatment beyond any of its traditional interpretations to include equal access to means of production as among the conditions required for freedom. Moreover, he sees equal treatment as requiring also an equal right to determine the forms of social organization.

This emphasis on equal access to the means of production and on the equal right to participate in social decision making as requirements for freedom is evident in Marx's account of the communal society of the future. In this account, as we saw, the means of production belong to the associated producers. Each of them stands in the same relation as the others to these conditions of production as belonging to him or her by virtue of membership in the community. Furthermore, each of them participates in the communal control over social and productive activity. Insofar as property in general for Marx is defined as the relation to the conditions of production (both natural and social) as belonging to one, it is clear that production in the third stage requires a social form of property, both as the producers' communal relation to the means of production and as a form of democratic decision making about the processes of social life.

One may now also note the close connection between Marx's implicit conception of abstract justice as reconstructed here and his views on property. That is, for him private property in the sense of private ownership of the means of production is incompatible with justice in that it denies equal access to the conditions for positive freedom. Likewise, justice for Marx requires the overcoming of class domina-

tion, in which one class controls the conditions of production that another class requires for its productive activity.

Abstract justice, in the sense of equal rights to the conditions of positive freedom, is an essential part of the meaning of justice for Marx. But it is not the whole meaning of justice for him. I would argue that for Marx concrete justice consists, beyond this, in mutuality in social relations. This can be understood by considering his conception of positive freedom. As we have seen, it signifies the fullest self-realization or self-development of individuals. Since these are social individuals, their self-development consists in realizing both individual and common purposes and projects. As we have seen, this positive freedom requires an instrumental relation to the conditions of production, both natural and social, in which natural materials and forms of social organization serve as means for the realization of agency. In addition, however, positive freedom requires a non-instrumental relation among agents. We shall see that for Marx the full development of positive freedom requires a form of non-instrumental relations among agents which I will call mutuality.

Mutuality may be characterized as the most developed form of reciprocity. It will be recalled that Marx discusses reciprocity as a feature of the process of exchange in capitalism. Here it signifies the recognition by the exchangers of each other's equality and freedom and of their common interest in the exchange, in which each serves as a means for the other. I characterized this as formal and instrumental reciprocity. It was seen that Marx analyzes this reciprocity in exchange as masking

the deeper relations of non-reciprocity in the sphere of production. We have seen further that Marx describes the relations in a future communal society as mutual relations among free individuals.

On the basis of these characterizations by Marx, I would propose that mutuality may be understood as a reciprocal social relation that goes beyond instrumental reciprocity and beyond merely formal reciprocity. Mutuality goes beyond instrumental reciprocity in that each does not take the other as a means only, but also as an end in him or herself. Further, it goes beyond the recognition by each of the other's equal capacity for freedom although it presupposes this recognition. Beyond these, mutuality consists in the conscious recognition and respect by each agent for the individual differences and projects of the other. That is, each recognizes and respects not only the other's capacity for freedom, but also the specific ways in which the other is fulfilling or realizing this capacity, that is, the other's development of his or her positive freedom. In addition, mutuality is the active relation of enhancing the other through practical actions that help the other to fulfill his or her needs and purposes. Mutuality in this sense of enhancement thus contributes to the other's development of his or her positive freedom. Since positive freedom is the self-development of social individuals, the more each individual enhances the other, the greater the development of each of them. This provides richer possibilities for the social interactions among them and also for each one's own further development. It is through such relations of mutuality that, in Marx's words, "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."⁷

This proposed reconstruction of Marx's conception of concrete justice can be extended to social life more generally in the following way. As applying to social relations, concrete justice as a condition for freedom consists in mutuality. As applying to social organization, justice would mean a form of social life that would serve to realize full positive freedom by embodying mutuality in its institutions. Indeed, Marx emphasizes that mutuality should be embodied in such concrete social forms. And in his discussion of a communal society of the future, he gives some suggestions as to what such social forms might be. First of all, he sees such a communal society as differing radically from capitalist society in that the primary form of the connections between people would shift from economic relations to immediately social relations. It is in such direct relations among individuals that mutuality as I have described it becomes possible. Correlatively, the activity of production itself becomes the activity of a community, as the differentiated, creative activity of its members in which they jointly determine the purposes of productive activity and the form of the distribution of its products. Distribution does not, for Marx, constitute a separate sphere, but rather derives its character from the communal organization of productive activity itself and from the mutual relations among the members of the community. Thus concrete justice for Marx is not limited to the equitable distribution of goods but has its primary locus in the mutual social relations among agents, through which these agents carry out their communal productive activity and their distribution of society's benefits.

Within these communal activities of production and distribution,

joint determination of purposes and procedures is achieved only by a process in which each member of the community takes the others' purposes, needs and individual differences into account. That is, the mode of social decision-making is one of mutuality. Yet this social production and distribution itself and the mutual interactions within it have as their end the fullest possible development of each of the individuals who constitutes it. The importance of the development of each individual in the community in his or her own distinctive ways is clearly expressed by Marx (in discussing the communal society of the future) in his formulation of the principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."⁸

Such a community is made up of individuals-in-relations where the relations are those of mutuality and the individuals are agents who constitute this community through their social interaction. For Marx, justice in its concrete sense may be identified with such relations of mutuality. Justice in this sense, together with abstract justice as discussed above, is the condition for the fullest development of freedom. That is, the full self-realization of individuals, as their freedom, requires a community in which justice as mutuality is realized and in which the equal right of each individual to the conditions for positive freedom is recognized. This relation between justice and freedom is one in which justice as the most fully realized form of social relations is the condition for freedom as the fullest realization of individuals. This reveals the deep ontological connection between individuality and community in Marx's theory of social reality.

Notes

Notes to Introduction

1. Marx wrote the *Grundrisse* in 1857–1858, but the book was not published until 1939, when a German edition appeared in the Soviet Union. However, this edition was a very limited one, and the book did not become widely available until 1953, upon its publication in Germany. The first complete English translation appeared in 1973.
2. Although Hegel introduces the concept of self-creation and self-change through labor (for example, in *The Phenomenology of Mind* and in the *Jenenser Realphilosophie*), I would hold that he cannot ultimately claim that such self-creation is the activity of independently real individuals or that these individuals are fundamentally free.
3. This hermeneutic method originated as a mode of interpreting the Bible as a text. Its aim was to penetrate beneath the surface of the literal text in order to reveal its deeper meanings. It has more recently been developed as a method of interpreting any text (although it has been used primarily on philosophical and literary texts). In this use, the interpreter tries to grasp the inner sense of a text by recreating the author's project through an examination of what is given in the text itself. For discussions of this method see, for example, Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, especially part II, and Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*.
4. In this respect, the *Grundrisse* is comparable to the early *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, which also were written for self-clarification and not for publication and which are also explicitly philosophical in approach. However, these early writings are fragmentary and are not as systematic and comprehensive as the *Grundrisse*.
5. Interpretations of Marx along these lines may be found in E. Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*; H. Marcuse, "The Foundation of Historical Materialism"; M. Marković, *From Affluence to Praxis*; S. Stojanović, *Between Ideals and Reality*; G. Petrović, *Marx in the Mid-Twentieth Century*; I. Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation*; E. Bloch, *On Karl Marx*; R. Garaudy, *L'Humanisme Marxiste*; E. Kamenka, *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism*; L. Dupré, *The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism*; and E. Fromm, ed., *Socialist Humanism*. Clearly there are many important

differences among these interpreters. But all of them share an emphasis on the philosophical and humanist aspects of Marx's work, particularly in his early writings.

6. Such an interpretation of Marx is found—although in very different ways—in L. Althusser, *For Marx*; L. Althusser (with E. Balibar) *Reading Capital*; E. Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx, 1843 to Capital and An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*; and earlier in R. Hilferding, *Böhm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx*, among others.

7. There are some other commentators who see this continuity in Marx's work. One may mention G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* and *Ontologie-Marx*; B. Ollman, *Alienation*; J. Plamenatz, *Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man*; I. Fetscher, *Marx and Marxism*; S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*. To varying degrees these authors interpret Marx's later systematic political economy as continuous with his earlier concept of alienation. However, I believe that my study goes beyond these interpretations in proposing that Marx is fundamentally philosophical not simply in the early work but in the later political economy as well. Furthermore, I attempt to work out Marx's distinctive synthesis of philosophy with social and political economic theory as a social ontology.

Notes to chapter 1

1. G.A. Cohen similarly proposes that Marx's account of the three stages of social development in the *Grundrisse* is in the form of a Hegelian dialectic. However, Cohen's interpretation of this dialectic and his understanding of the difference between Hegel and Marx are different from mine. Cf. G. A. Cohen, "Marx's Dialectic of Labor."

2. It should be noted that Hegel's logic is presented in somewhat different forms in these various works. Thus in *The Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel begins his dialectic with the immediacy of ordinary sense experience and develops the dialectic of consciousness from this beginning to its fully realized form as Absolute Spirit. In *The Science of Logic*, on the other hand, Hegel begins from "pure knowing" as what he calls an abstract or absolute beginning. The account that I give of Hegel's dialectic in what follows is based primarily on the version in *The Science of Logic*, but is

supplemented by considerations drawn from the version in *The Phenomenology of Mind* and from *The Philosophy of Right* and *The Philosophy of History*. The use of Hegel's alternative versions of the dialectic is not problematic, however, since these versions are complementary and the form of the dialectic is the same in all of them.

3. This is not to say that for Marx practical activity is not conscious or that for Hegel the logic of consciousness does not have a social and historical dimension. Indeed, in Marx's view, practical activity and social relations are the activities and relations of *conscious* agents and thus Marx also addresses himself to the dialectic of the development of consciousness. Similarly, on Hegel's view, the dialectic of consciousness takes place through social and historical activity and thus is also a dialectic of the development of social relations and institutions. However, the difference between Hegel and Marx is clear, as we shall see: They differ both in their focus and in their ontologies. Furthermore, they differ in their understanding of how the dialectic is generated or where it has its source. Thus Hegel conceives of the dialectic as the form of the process by which the Idea comes to know itself through its self-activity; this activity is exhibited in external form in social and historical processes as well as in nature, art, religion, and so forth. For Marx, on the other hand, the dialectic is the reconstruction of the contingent form that social and historical practice itself reveals when it becomes the object of philosophical or scientific reflection, that is, when human beings come to understand their own conscious practical activity.

4. For Hegel logic is ontology, that is, the categories of logic are the categories of Being, since for him, thought is Being and Being is thought. Thus Hegel comprehends Being as the Idea itself as an object of its own awareness. And he sees logic as the form of the process by which the Idea comes to know Being as identical with itself.

5. Cf. Hegel's *The Science of Logic*, book I, section one, chapter 2 ("Determinate Being"). This reference to Spinoza occurs in Hegel's discussion of self-differentiation as a condition for self-identity as described above. Hegel develops this idea further in the *Logic*, especially in book I, section one, chapter 3 and book II, section one, chapter 1.

6. In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel develops the relation between subject and object as a dialectic in which consciousness is related to what it is aware of as its

object. In *The Science of Logic*, on the other hand, Hegel does not begin with the subject-object relation, but rather with Being (as abstract and undifferentiated) as the “Absolute beginning” and on this basis generates the subject-object relationship as one of reflection. Cf. note 2 above.

7. Here and elsewhere in this work I use the term “concrete” in a way that is similar to Marx’s own usage, namely, to refer to what is practical, empirical, or actually existing. This usage of the term is close to the commonsense one. It should be noted that Marx’s use of this term differs from Hegel’s. Hegel uses “concrete” to characterize that which is known in thought in all of its systematic interconnections, whereas “abstract” connotes that which is taken out of context, apart from its relations. In his view, empirical phenomena are abstract in this sense in that they have no systematic or inner connection with each other; these connections are only achieved in reflection in thought. However, there is a dimension of Hegel’s meaning that Marx retains. Marx also interprets “concrete” as referring to what which stands in relation to other things. For Marx, however, the practical and empirical world is concrete in that the things in it are interconnected and thought is concrete when it grasps these interconnections.

8. Although Marx distinguishes various forms of pre-capitalist societies in the *Grundrisse*, he characterizes them all as having certain fundamental features in common. Following his analysis, I am drawing these common features together into what we might call a model of pre-capitalist society. It is clear that there are many historical exceptions that do not fit this model and Marx himself notes some of the important ones. Thus, for example, Marx points out that in the ancient communities of Greece and Rome, exchange is already developed to some degree and that in Roman law, the juridical concept of the person already exists. But his point is that these are not the dominant forms of social relations in these societies. Furthermore, it is evident that the stage of pre-capitalist forms of society as described in the *Grundrisse* is not equivalent to a stage of primitive communism and in fact does not include such a form. Thus the immediacy that characterizes such pre-capitalist forms is an immediacy relative to the following stage of capitalism.

9. This direct relation of producer to product should be understood as holding generally and for the most part, as indicated in the previous footnote. There are, of course, historical exceptions, such as, for example, landless peasants in ancient Rome who

worked on the large estates and produced commodities for trade or export and not for personal consumption.

10. The wage laborer was historically in the first instance male. On the whole, in Western capitalism women entered the work force later.

11. On this point, cf. Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 450–454.

12. There are interpretations of Hegel that take him as holding that the individual does in fact act independently and not merely as an expression of the Idea. On this view, the Idea is understood as no more than the species-nature of these individuals. Such an interpretation is suggested, for example, in Kojève’s *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. I do not agree with such interpretations since I believe, first of all, that they ignore Hegel’s own formulations to the effect that individuals are the finite moments of Absolute Spirit’s or the Idea’s self-development; and second, that they do not recognize how Hegel’s system itself entails such a conclusion (though I shall not develop the argument for this point here). Finally, I might suggest that such interpretations of Hegel in fact read back into him conceptions that were introduced later, especially by Marx and Heidegger.

13. As will be seen, it is Marx’s emphasis on independently real individuals, and not his conception of the constitution of the social world by these individuals, that I am suggesting is the Aristotelian element. It may also be noted that although this Aristotelian element is present in Marx and not in Hegel, there are, of course, other dimensions of Hegel’s analysis that are Aristotelian.

14. This appears to be similar to Hegel’s view about philosophical reflection in the preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, where he writes that “philosophy . . . is its own time apprehended in thoughts.” Or again that “As the thought of the world, [philosophy] appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed. . . . The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk” (pp. 11, 13). However, Marx and Hegel arrive at this notion of retrospective reconstruction from radically different perspectives. For Marx, history can only be understood retrospectively because of the very contingency of concrete human actions and events. That is, since it is the free choices of agents which constitute history, one cannot know these choices in advance. For Hegel, on the other hand,

the ground for such a retrospective method is not contingency, but rather necessity. Philosophical reflection is the moment of the Idea's own self-consciousness and therefore essentially the recognition by the Idea of its own necessity. In philosophical reflection on history, the standpoint of philosophy in its own time can only be retrospective since it can only reflect on what the Idea or Spirit has presented to it as an expression of the necessity of the Idea's own nature. For Hegel, philosophical reflection on history is therefore always bound to a given stage of the self-objectification of the Idea and thus cannot transcend it.

15. See, for example, *Metaphysics*, Book IX, chapters 7 and 8, (1048b35–1051a4); *Politics*, Book I, chapter 2 (1253a); *De Anima*, Book II, chapters 1 and 2 (412a1–414a28).

16. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in R. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 109.

17. Cf. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*.

18. Aristotle, *Categories*, 3b10, 2b4–6.

19. Further examples in the *Grundrisse* of Marx's emphasis on concrete individuals may be found on pages 239, 282, 323, 488, 491, 515, 705, 708.

20. Cf. the discussion in Hegel's *The Science of Logic*, book II, section two, chapter 3 and section three, chapter 3.

21. See the related discussion in chapter 3 below.

22. It is clear from this how my interpretation of internal relations differs from the interpretation that B. Ollman gives in his study, *Alienation*. Ollman attributes to Marx a view of internal relations that is essentially the same as Hegel's. He proposes that Marx sees individuals (and things) as constituted by their relations. In my view, Ollman fails to recognize Marx's departure from the Hegelian model. This consists in Marx's Aristotelian emphasis on the independent reality of the individuals who enter into these social relations with each other. Thus I argue that although Marx makes use of Hegel's theory of internal relations, he transforms it in a way that is ontologically and methodologically very significant.

Notes to chapter 2

1. This is not to say that Marx overlooked the political-economic dimensions of alienation in his early works. In fact I would claim that this dimension is fundamental

in his early analyses as well. The point here is that alienation becomes fully elaborated as a political economic category in the later works.

2. Here, as elsewhere in this chapter, the term creation is not used in an honorific sense, but rather descriptively, to denote the making or forming of new objects through activity.

3. Aristotle, *Physics*, 193a12–17.

4. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1014b 27–82.

5. Although the term alienation has been used in a wide variety of ways, both in studies of Marx and in more general discourse, it is clear from the *Grundrisse* that Marx's use of it is highly specific. He uses it to refer to the particular form of domination that fundamentally characterizes the capitalist mode of production. Although in Marx's analysis there is domination in pre-capitalist societies, there is no alienation strictly speaking, since the presuppositions of alienated labor do not exist as characteristics of the society as a whole. As I show in the text, these presuppositions are basically the existence of free labor, as well as the separation of labor from the objective conditions of production. I might also suggest that such a political-economic conception of alienation is present in the earlier *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Yet in these manuscripts and in the *Grundrisse* the concept of alienation is not interpreted in any reductive sense, but rather represents a synthesis of systematic philosophy and political economy.

6. This suggests an important distinction between Marx and Aristotle. Marx sees the process of objectification or production as a process of transforming objects through specific social relations. Thus objectification is an activity that involves both making and social interaction or, in Aristotle's sense, both *poiesis* and *praxis*. By contrast, Aristotle treats production or the making of things apart from social interaction. Thus he takes these two modes of activity to require separate sciences.

7. In other works Marx characterizes this as "the socialization of production."

8. The relation between Kant's conception of synthesis as an activity of consciousness and Marx's conception of labor as a practical activity of synthesis is discussed by J. Habermas in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, chapter 2.

9. Aristotle, *Physics*, 217b33–218a3.

Notes to chapter 3

1. One may mention another position that seems to provide a third view on causality, but I believe that it can be treated as a variant of the first view. This position, most closely associated with Donald Davidson, holds that reasons are causes of human actions. It attempts to reconstrue the conception of causality and to accommodate reasons to such a causal model.
2. "Theses on Feuerbach," op. cit., p. 108.
3. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1013a27-33.
4. Ibid., 1013a21-25

Note to chapter 4

1. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 21, p. 159.

Notes to chapter 5

1. Cf. R. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, chapter 2; A. Wood, "The Marxian Critique of Justice"; D. P. H. Allen, "The Utilitarianism of Marx and Engels."
2. A fuller analysis of instrumental reciprocity and of other aspects of the relation of reciprocity is given in C. Gould, "Beyond Causality in the Social Sciences: Reciprocity as a Model of Non-exploitative Social Relations".
3. See, for example, *Grundrisse*, pp. 83, 248.
4. It may be useful to summarize some of the recent arguments to the effect that Marx does take such a value-free and historical relativist approach to the study of society. The argument that Marx takes a value-free approach has two aspects: first, that Marx conceives of his project as an objective scientific analysis of capitalism and exploitation and therefore refrains from making judgments concerning the justice or the injustice of the system. Rather, it is argued, Marx sees justice as defined by the system's own rules and thus not as an external or transcendent norm. Second, it is pointed out that Marx explicitly criticizes those who, like Proudhon, claim that capitalism is unjust, and asserts that such an approach is utopian and an example of abstract moraliz-

ing. Two recent commentators who present such an argument are R. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea* and A. Wood, "The Marxian Critique of Justice." They also argue that Marx is a historical relativist in that he regards each social system as establishing its own norms of justice. Thus on such a view there is no external standard of morality or justice which one can use to criticize a given form of society. It is clear from the text that I do not agree with these interpretations of Marx. The arguments given by Wood and Tucker are discussed in W. McBride, "The Concept of Justice in Marx, Engels and others."

5. This is not to say that Marx was the only theorist to recognize this dichotomy and to go beyond it. He was certainly not the only one to recognize that social facts are value-laden (for example, Vico and Fichte before Marx; Scheler and the "Verstehen" tradition, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and others after Marx). But Marx was a crucial figure in grasping the critical force of a method that integrates facts and values.
6. Cf. H. L. A. Hart's discussion of this point in *The Concept of Law*, p. 155.
7. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* in R. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 353.
8. K. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," in R. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 388.

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Cognitive map of this recursive system, which takes place over time and is a duration, is the narrative form.

The metanarrative which Marx faults is the cognitive mapping which outlines the contours of necessity.

The dialectic is a homogeneous work, which, because it takes place over time, is a duration and takes the form

the cognitive mapping of a duration, which because it takes place over time, takes the form of a recursive system.