and appearance, reflects his adoption of Hegel's dialectical logic.

FETISHISM OF THE COMMODITY

The product of labor in this context has a dual nature. It is an individual object of some kind that can be described in its own terms: an automobile or a software program embodying the current state of technology and specific skills of the workers who produced it. At the same time it has an economic value that cannot be explained by its material qualities and that enables it to be equated somehow with a qualitatively different object:

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. (Marx 1996a, pp. 35:82–83)

Materialists and idealists battle interminably over the explanation of this and other mysteries of philosophy because they preserve the standpoint of the independent, separate individual that gives rise to them. Behind the mystery of economic value is the social nature of human labor, the fact that each product embodies a certain proportion of the combined labor of society. Because the people whose interdependent labor is responsible for the product have organized themselves as separate, disconnected individuals, their underlying social connection takes the form of a mysterious, nonmaterial property of their products. In the value form of the commodity spirit and matter confront one another as irreducible opposites: for the "value-relation between the products of labour … [has] absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom" (Marx 1996a, p. 5:83). Consequently, "[t]here it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (83).

This complex relationship produces the "fetishism" (Marx 1996a, p. 5:83) of the products of labor when they become commodities. The combined power of human beings appears before them as an external power ruling over them—the market and the quasi-omnipotent power of money. The mystery of the nonmaterial characteristics of the product can ultimately be explained in one of two ways: (1) As the expression of the social relations between the producers, seen in essentially cooperative activities that belie the capitalist form of private ownership. This is

the kind of social-historical and dialectical "materialism" that Marx espouses. (2) Or it can be approached by reference to "the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world," in which "the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race" (83). Marx thought that Hegel's idealism, for all its advances over previous materialism, did not escape this religious, other-worldly, appearance of alienated human activity.

See also Communism; Marx, Karl.

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DIALECTIC IN ISLAMIC AND JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

In these closely related traditions dialectic is primarily associated with the science of *kalām*, commonly translated as "theology," but literally meaning "word," "speech," or "discussion." *Kalām* began in the eighth century as an intellectual defense of Islam against external critics and quickly developed into an internal debate over doctrinal issues concerning the legitimacy of political authority, the necessary conditions of religious belief, predestination and free will, the ontological status of the Qur'ân, and the relation of God's attributes to His essential Unity. *Kalām* was subsequently appropriated by Arabic-speaking Jews living in the Islamic realm, who shared some of its concerns and employed its distinctive techniques and formulas in the defense and systematic explanation of their own faith.

Kalām in general is marked by its dual reliance on revelation and reason. The *kalām* theologians, or *mutakallimūn*, took scripture as their primary data but

employed rational argumentation to produce the most robust and coherent interpretations thereof. This distinguished them on the one hand from traditionalists and literalists who saw logical disputation and interpretation as leading to heresy, and on the other hand from the Greek-influenced Islamicate philosophers, or *falāsifa*, who were more fully committed to the demands of reason and thus wary of their theological brethren's residual dogmatism. *Kalām*'s method of reasoning and argumentation was dialectical in at least two respects. The first recalls the Aristotelian concept of dialectic, insofar as the *mutakallimūn* based their arguments on merely probable or generally accepted beliefs—specifically, the revealed truths of Islam or Judaism—rather than rationally self-evident first principles or premises that necessitated consent. The *falāsifa*, who appropriated Aristotle's hierarchical distinction between dialectic and demonstration, considered this approach insufficiently rigorous. While their own adoption of the demonstrative syllogism held out the prospect of certitude, they saw the *mutakallimūn* as hobbled by the questionable epistemic status of their faith-based premises. However, the *falāsifa* did not reject dialectic altogether. They generally recognized its value as a propaedeutic for honing intellectual skills, as well as a tool for communicating crucial truths to those unequipped for philosophical discourse. The *mutakallimūn*, for their part, remained dubious about the philosophers' claims to apodictic certainty.

The second sense in which *kalām* was dialectical recalls certain aspects of the Socratic method. First, it was dialogical: It typically took a question and answer form, in effect presupposing the existence of an intellectual adversary to drive the discourse forward. Its method was thus parasitic: The *mutakallimūn* tended to establish their own conclusions indirectly, by teasing out inconsistencies or internal contradictions in the opponent's position. This strategy often involved the use of dilemmas, where the adversary would find himself trapped between two unacceptable consequences that could be avoided only by adopting the questioner's position. The *mutakallimūn* commonly fashioned their arguments with an eye to the specific concerns, presuppositions, and methods of their opponents as well, advancing internal critiques of their adversaries to refute them on their own terms. Ironically, their assault on the *falāsifa* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which effectively brought an end to the classical period of Islamic philosophy, required the instrumental adoption of Aristotelian logic, specifically, the demonstrative syllogism.

Although the presence of dialectical methods within the Islamic and Jewish traditions is often attributed directly to Greek influences, a number of contemporary scholars and historical figures have made the case that versions of these argumentative strategies in fact predate exposure to Christian, Greek, or Syriac sources.

See also Aristotle; Dialectic; Islamic Philosophy; Jewish Philosophy.

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