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MARXIST ANTHROPOLOGY: PRINCIPLES
AND CONTRADICTIONS

NEW PERSPECTIVES IN THE SCIENCE OF MAN

PART I: SOCIETY, INDIVIDUAL AND PERSON

I

DIALECTIC OF THE RELATIONS OF THE HUMAN RACE
TO NATURE AND WITHIN SOCIETY

The science of anthropology has traditionally studied the relations of the human kind to nature and the relations within society, the original animal condition of the human being, the preservation and overcoming thereof, the establishment of human culture, and its material, mental or artistic expression. Anthropology is founded on the presupposition of the variety of human societies and cultures, the differences between them, and the varieties in the developments and relations of each. It is an academic discipline above all, and has no internal commitment to practical undertakings. At best it has nurtured liberal spirits who embraced the "party of humanity", and who have defended the concept of the whole against any expression of innate superiority of one group over another. It is an abstract social science which has only now separated itself from a spurious natural-science view of humanity, and this latter has given birth to a monster, the biology of racism, the reduction of cultural differences to natural or innate differences, and the assignment of these to a scale of higher or lower races. This academic anthropology did not strangle its offspring until long after it had done its harm.

Karl Marx in his anthropology took up the same subject matter, the relations of the human kind to nature and in society, the relations to the animal forebears, the historical differences of the social groups.¹ But the academic nature of the discipline, its separation of theory from practice, hence its abstract character, sporadic dialectic, has removed itself from any anthropology that can call itself Marxist.

¹ See *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, transcr. and ed., with an introd. by Lawrence Krader (Assen, 1972). Marx was one of the first to denounce the racist cant.

The notion of a Marxist anthropology is a *contradictio in adjecto*. The work of Marx and the science of anthropology can overlap but they may not coincide, except as a potentiality of either. Their overlap consists in their common problems and what is common in their scientific method; but that method is not at all points the same in Marx's terms and in the science of anthropology generally, as we shall show in the following pages. The main differences lie in the necessary retreat of the academic discipline, the holding back from concrete programs of practical activity, and the lack of system in the dialectic. Anthropology as an academic profession is far from having developed a materialist basis; if it did it would simply be Marxism, or Marxism anthropology, repeating in the adjective what is expressed in the noun, as *anthropological* Marxism redundant, as *Marxist* anthropology unnecessary.¹

We will focus on the dialectic of the relations within society and culture, and will then take up the relations to nature; at the same time the two problems are inseparable. Marx wrote:

"Industry is the actual historical relation of nature and hence of natural science to the human being; if industry is therefore taken as the exoteric revelation of the human essential powers then the human essence of nature or the natural essence of the human being will also be understood, hence natural science will lose its abstract material or rather idealist direction and will become the basis of human science, just as it has become already – although in alienated shape – the basis of actually human life; and one basis for life, another for science, is a lie from the outset. Nature which becomes human history – the act of genesis of human society –

¹ The issue of a Marxist anthropology is further complicated by the controversy over the young Marx on the one hand and the mature Marx on the other. The relation of the youthful works of Marx to his mature works is a matter of continuity and discontinuity in his undertakings. By the young Marx is usually meant the author of articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung* and in *Vorwärts*, of the *Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, of the *Ökonomisch-Philosophische Manuskripte*, all from the period 1842-44. The controversy has been carried to an extreme by L. Althusser, who opposes the non-dialectical to the dialectical Marx; Althusser claims that the brand of the dialectic was stamped on those early writings and was only eradicated by him in later life. E. Fromm has put forth the opposition between Marx the humanist and Marx the revolutionist. The transition made by Marx from a philosophical anthropology to an empirical ethnology has been traced elsewhere. See my Introduction to *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*; "Karl Marx as Ethnologist", in: *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, Second Series, XXXV* (1973), pp. 304-13; "The Works of Marx and Engels in Ethnology Compared", in: *International Review of Social History, XVIII* (1973), pp. 223-75; *Ethnologie und Anthropologie bei Marx* (Munich, 1973), chs 1 and 2.

is the actual nature of man, therefore nature, as it comes to be through industry, even though in an *alienated* shape, is true *anthropological* nature. [...] History itself is an *actual* part of *natural* history, of nature become human. Natural science will eventually subsume the science of man, just as the science of man will subsume natural science in itself: there will be *one* science."¹

Comment:

1. The relation of humanity and nature is one of continuity and discontinuity. The continuity is the original condition and the earliest relation of the human kind and the natural world; each was and is a part of the other.
2. The formation of the human species is the primary alienation of mankind from nature; all other human alienations in social and economic relations are developments out of this initial alienation, or discontinuity.
3. The separation of humanity and nature is the actual relation, the separation of human history from natural history, of human science from natural science, is the superstructure raised upon this initial separation and alienation.
4. The relation of nature and humanity is repeated in the relation of the natural and human sciences; the first relation is the determinant of the second, and not the converse. This is not a dialectical relation between the processes of the natural world and of thought; it is an opposition to the abstract material view, or the view of idealism. The unity between nature and humanity, just as the unity between natural and human science, is a potential one, a becoming; the means to the end of unity is industry, or the operation of the human kind upon nature. The reversal of the nature which becomes human, hence ceases to be itself, is a process that is limited in time, temporary, our contemporary time, the nature which has taken an alienated *Gestalt*, its human nature, will itself be reversed in turn, and the unity of nature and humanity will be developed. This is a dialectic of the double negation, first of nature, then of humanity, first by the process of alienation of humanity from nature, which process is human industry, and by its sublation.

The first part of the above passage was developed by Marx in a dialectical way, the second was dropped away: human life is given in society, social life is conceived not in the abstract but in particular historical conditions, and these are variable. Hence the definition of the human being in the different historical epochs is variable. Thus,

¹ *Ökonomisch-Philosophische Manuskripte*, in Marx-Engels, *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, I, Vol. 3, pp. 122-23.

while Aristotle in ancient Greece defined the human being as a social animal or rather as a town-dweller, Benjamin Franklin defined the human being as a tool-making animal. The relation of the ancient Greek *polis* within itself and to nature, and the relation of eighteenth-century Yankeedom, in each case posited a different conception of the human being.¹ Both of these conceptions of the human nature are remarkable, but in neither of these societies was the limitation of the condition of humanity particular to the period overcome, and in neither case was the conception of humanity thus delimited overcome. Further, the history of invention was discussed by Marx in the context of social invention as opposed to the inventions by single individuals. He concluded that human and natural history proceeded along parallel paths.²

1. The material basis of the formation of the instruments of production is the natural technology of a given plant or animal species and the cultural technology of a particular human society. The natural organs of plants and animals are the instruments of the production of life of the given plant or animal form, and these organs have their natural history, just as the instruments of production of human societies have their human history. Darwin³ called attention to the natural history of technology, Marx to the cultural history of human technology. The unit taken for his observations by Darwin was the biological species, but this unit is broken up into the technologies of particular societies in the case of the human species. The natural and cultural technologies each have their history.

2. Technology reveals the active comportment and relation of human beings to nature. This should be understood as the relation of particular societies, it is not general to all mankind, and must be separately mastered. The mastery of their arid habitat in the Kalahari desert by Bushmen, the adaptation of means of detection, conduit and storage of water by these people, far exceeds the ability of the later European intruders, who upset the balance between the social group and the natural surroundings. The human beings do not learn and adapt to

¹ Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Vol. 1, in Marx-Engels, *Werke* (MEW), Vol. 23, p. 346. Marx took each of these conceptions of humanity in its particularity and did not advance a universal definition of his own.

² Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 392, note. That which was regarded in 1844 as the potentiality of the reunion of humanity and nature thus fell away, to be replaced in the later writing by the mentioned parallelism.

³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859) (Modern Library, New York, n.d.), see p. 112 on specialized and generalized functions of organs; pp. 149f. on the sting of the bee as a boring instrument; p. 370 on modifications of rudimentary structures, etc.; *id.*, *The Descent of Man* (1871), *op. cit.*, on specialization of organs of communication, in nature, p. 465, etc.

nature as a species, but only through the traditions of particular groups; the unit of human history is different from that of the natural species.

3. The problem of production by appropriate technology contains within itself the problem of reproduction, which latter is to be understood in the natural sense of biological reproduction in the cases of the human and of plant and animal species; but in the case of humanity, in all circumstances, both of literate and non-literate cultures, the reproduction process is the matter of the continued existence and furtherance of mankind not as a form of animal life. It is instead the matter of the continued existence and furtherance of particular economic relations, not merely as the abstraction – the technological basis of life and adaptational history gives way to the economic bases of human life and the history of these.

The adaptation and technics of production and reproduction of life are the same abstract categories in the case of human history as in the case of natural history: concretely they differ; the rate of development in the case of mankind is rapid and multifarious, while the biological rate of development is as a rule geologically slow. The varieties of technical adaptation of human groups are several thousand times greater than that of animal and plant species. The abstract problems of production and reproduction of the species are the same, but concretely they are realized in different ways; the differences between animals and humanity, in this regard, are great, the differences within the human species relatively small. The dialectical opposition of potential unity and actual difference is the same as that of alienation and reunification of humanity and nature. It is joined to the dialectic of the unity of humanity when considered in the abstract and the multiplicity of human social histories in the concrete cases.¹

II

FOUNDATIONS AND NATURE OF SOCIETY

Turning to the relations of society, we take up first the nature of society itself. Society is an object that can be perceived with the senses, but it is at the same time a suprasensory object, a set of relations and the symbolic representation both of the sensory and the suprasensory object. In his treatment of commodity fetishism, Marx begins with the opposition between mysticism and sensory investiga-

¹ The theses advanced by Marx in 1844 were set forth by him again in *Capital*: the thesis of continuity-discontinuity of the relations of the human kind and nature; and the thesis of the parallel development of human and natural science. The thesis of the convergence of these sciences is a separate problem.

tion, what is mystified and what is clear to the senses.¹ Commodities

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1. In the first ed. (Hamburg, 1867), Marx wrote, p. 774: "Eben deshalb erscheinen die Arbeitsprodukte als Waren, sinnlich übersinnlich oder gesellschaftliche Dinge." *Nota bene*, the commodities are things which are sensory and at once suprasensory; being both, they are social. The social in the commodities is at once of the senses and beyond them (but there are other things in nature which are also at once of and beyond the senses). The social is of the natural order, which includes other relations beside the commodity relations, and all these are at once sensory-suprasensory. Marx took up this formulation regarding commodities in the later editions of *Kapital*: "Es ist sinnenklar, dass der Mensch [...] die Formen der Naturstoffe [...] verändert." He then considered that the table while it is still wood, unchanged, not yet in the form of a commodity, is "an ordinary, sensory thing". "Aber sobald er [der Tisch] als Ware auftritt, verwandelt er sich in ein sinnlich-übersinnliches Ding." The mystery attached to the commodity relation, says Marx, arises out of the mystery attached to the social relation. Because we are unclear about the one, willfully mystifying and obscuring that unclarity, we mystify and obscure the other. On the dialectic of the sensory-suprasensory and the mystical, Marx proceeded to reject the mystical root of the commodity, whether in its use-value or in its value determination. Yet both these economic relations have their physiological base and derivation from the head, nerves, muscles, sense-organs. The social form of labor begins when men begin to work for one another. The mystery of the commodity arises out of the form of the commodity itself, which, we have seen, is a sensory suprasensory thing. By exchange, labor products become commodities: "Durch dies Quidproquo werden die Arbeitsprodukte Waren, sinnlich-übersinnlich oder gesellschaftliche Dinge." *Kapital*, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 85f., cf. *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, in MEW, Vol. 26.3, p. 474. We call attention first to the poetics of Marx, beginning with that which is clear to the senses, *sinnenklar*, then proceeding to the consideration of wood, an ordinary, sensory thing, then to the commodity, the form of wood as table, a sensory-suprasensory thing. That commodity as sensory-suprasensory is social; it is not social as sensory-suprasensory. Cf. *Le Capital*, J. Roy tr. (Paris, 1873-75), pp. 28f.: "sinnlich", "qui tombe sous les sens"; "sinnlich-übersinnlich", "à la fois saisissable et insaisissable"; English translation, Friedrich Engels ed., S. Moore and E. Aveling tr. (New York, 1937), p. 81: "It is as clear as noon-day", "sinneklar"; p. 83: "commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses", "Waren, sinnlich-übersinnlich oder gesellschaftliche Dinge".

The relation of the social world to the sensory-suprasensory is a problem of the ontology of social being. See my "Critique dialectique de la nature de la nature humaine", in: *L'Homme et la Société*, No 10 (1968), pp. 21-39; Georg Lukács, *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins. Die Arbeit* (Neuwied, 1973). The mystification of the commodity relation is a problem of the fetishism of commodities, and at the same time of the social relation. The problem of fetishism is in turn connected with the relation of religion in society and in thought; it is at once an ontological and epistemological problem. The mystery of the commodity does not arise out of the content or substance of the commodity, nor out of its social relation, but out of its form, as social, sensory-suprasensory. L. v. Stein had attached much mystery to the concept of society; the certainty of the senses, wrote Stein, is not a sufficient ground for truth, since all phenomena have a basis which cannot be grasped with the senses; the concept of society

are both sensory and suprasensory. (It would be naive to suppose that sense-perception has no mystery attached to it, but such mystification as it has engendered leads in another direction, and is another problem than our present one.) The mystification of commodities arises from their social character, their character as the products not of social production but of the social relations between human beings, who now stand to each other not as producers in society but as buyers and sellers of the products. It is the mystification of the commodity relation; the initial mystification of the social relation, or the failure to grasp it for what it is, the relation between human beings, is the kernel of mystification carried forward into the commodity fetishism, just as its earthly core is the social relation itself, the concrete relation of human beings in a particular society, who come together in a market place and relate to each other as buyers and sellers. It is the social relation that is carried over into the commodity relation, the mystification of the social relation is the germ that has infected the commodity relation with the same disease. This carries the discussion from structure to superstructure, and will be returned to below. First we must consider the element in the Marxist social theory concerning the social relation itself.

Marx acknowledged his debt to the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, who criticized the Hegelian system not for its dialectic but for its idealism; but Marx had to break free from Feuerbach, which he did in the eleven theses against the latter and in the chapter on Feuerbach in the *German Ideology*. Feuerbach had written of the human essence, or the essential nature of man,¹ Marx replied: "But the human essence is no in-dwelling abstraction in the single individual. In his reality the individual is the ensemble of social relations."² The human individual has no essence, and exists only as a means of social relations; the essential core of humanity is nothing other than the set of human relations in society. The society in turn is not a passive category into which the human relations are poured, the society is the nexus of individual relations, just as the individual is the nexus of social relations. The collective body of individuals forms an agency whereby social conditions are formed and changed, the educators educated. The reciprocal relations of the human individual and society form an interaction, the dialectic of agent and patient, or activity-passivity.

is more difficult to grasp than that of the state or the economy. L. v. Stein, *Der Sozialismus und Kommunismus des heutigen Frankreichs* (1848), Pt I, ch. 2. On Stein, see Karl Marx, *Die Heilige Familie*, in MEGA, I, Vol. 3, p. 311.

¹ Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 2nd ed. (1843). See also his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (1843).

² Marx, *Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach* (1845), MEW, Vol. 3, pp. 6, 534.

The relations of human beings in society are various, they are not generally the same throughout the species, throughout its natural history. There is, that is to say, no species-specific behavior for mankind as there is for animal species. This is the error of modern ethologists such as N. Tinbergen and K. Lorenz. The relations of human beings vary from one society to the next, and from one era in the same society to the next. Once mankind had been distanced and distanced itself from nature, these relations became highly variable, the variability being both mark and measure of the distance from nature. The society is as much the agency of these variations as the individuals; the technological inventions should be made the subject of a critical history, and we would then see how little these inventions belong to single individuals. The scorn that Marx heaped on the fiction of Robinson Crusoe as the model of the science of society is directly related to this thesis.

The political economists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fastened upon the story by Daniel Defoe of Alexander Selkirk. It is a convenient fiction, which Marx understood rightly to have concealed within it the myth of the capitalist individual. The ideological overburden of this fiction, or its mythical core, is the self-made man, the rugged individual, who does not need society; nor does he desire interference from without, in particular he wants no interference from the state in running his business affairs. The individual is the starting point of the science of society, just as, in the conception of the ideologists of individualism, the individual is the starting point of society. Society presupposes, according to this doctrine, human individuals; these individuals, on the contrary, do not presuppose society.¹ The point that Marx had made is that production, the division of labor, distribution, wants and their satisfaction are social relations and undertakings, to which social categories correspond.² David Ricardo had held that the primitive hunters exchanging fish and game were possessors of commodities.³ The Robinsonade reaches over and beyond

¹ Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1859), in MEW, Vol. 13, p. 46. See also *Kapital*, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 90f.

² Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, ch. 12, esp. § 4: "Die Teilung der Arbeit innerhalb der Manufaktur und Teilung der Arbeit innerhalb der Gesellschaft". This distinction holds for production in primitive as well as civilized societies. The division of labor in the family and in the factory does not presuppose the exchange of commodities; the division of labor in manufacture presupposes society, that of the family does not.

³ David Ricardo, *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, 3rd ed. (1821). In ch. 1, section 1, Ricardo wrote of exchangeable value of commodities in the early stages of society in this way. He quoted Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Book I,

the classical economists and Marx: at the end of the nineteenth century, Marx's economic system was criticized by Eugen Böhm-Bawerk on the grounds that the individual and not the society is the starting point of economics. The Marxist standpoint was defended by Rudolf Hilferding, who accused Böhm-Bawerk of holding an unhistoric and unsocial outlook; Hilferding began, in the tradition of Marx, with the social relations of individuals with one another.¹ Böhm-Bawerk's theory of value is based on the satisfaction of individual wants; it is a subjective determination by the individual. The theory of value in Marx is objective and social, founded on labor time, a theory which is traced back to Smith and Ricardo.

The viewpoint of the Austrian school of economics, of which Böhm-Bawerk is representative, is not factually wrong; the wants of the individual are undeniable. The error that they make is the same as that which Marx accused the Robinsonaders of making, that is, they divorced the individual from society, assuming that there is such a state of existence in which the individual does not need society, is independent of it, and pre-exists the society, which he joins because of a penchant toward social life. Grotius, Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke in the seventeenth century, Montesquieu and Rousseau in the eighteenth all assumed a free, unfettered life of the individual, which mankind surrendered because of the attractions of life in society, where greater riches, intercourse, gaiety would be found. The social contract whereby the civil society was founded is a consequence of the inclinations of the human beings who were already in existence. Marx, as we have seen, proposed that the individual and society are mutual determinants and determinations, one of the other. The wrongness of the Austrian school and its modern representatives, L. von Mises and F. Hayek, is not one of fact, but of the failure to bring the two sides, individual and society, into their dialectical relation.

From the starting point of Marx, the individual and society are mutually interactive and determinant. The objective side of the dialectic does not lie in the society alone, however. The individual, being formed of social relations, bears within himself both the subjective and the objective components of society; society, however, as the product of individual relations, subsists in their objective side alone. There is no subjective factor in society and history save that of the human individual; but the human individual is in turn neither subject

ch. V, to the same effect. Neither divorced the individual from society; both presupposed society in the economic undertakings of the individual.

¹ Eugen Böhm-Bawerk, *Karl Marx and the Close of his System*; Rudolf Hilferding, *Böhm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx*, P. M. Sweezy ed. (New York, 1966). See p. 133 and Sweezy, Introduction, p. xx.

nor object alone, he is both. During the past three generations since the death of Marx, the doctrine has spread that Marxism is the objective science of society, and this scientific side is taken up in unanimity by Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, G. V. Plekhanov, V. I. Lenin, although it were erroneous to say that this overt agreement on a starting point had any consequence in the practice of revolution, evolution, reform of society, or revision of Marxism.¹ All agreed, however, that the laws with which Marx and Marxists operate are objective laws of history and society. Plekhanov made the most explicit statement, and went furthest of all, in equating the individual with the subjective factor in history, the social with the objective, but even the Neo-Kantian or revisionist socialists, Conrad Schmidt, E. Bernstein, M. Adler accepted this view as axiomatic. The debate concerning Marxist humanism, introduced by the existentialist Marxists, carried on primarily in the light of the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* of Marx, a debate which has even penetrated the parties and countries of Lenin's tradition, has not shaken the equation of Marxism with objectivity.

The objective factor in history predominates, however, because the subjective factor is suppressed, distorted and transformed by the social relations of political society. Thereby the thesis of the objective laws is given operating room; they are at work because of the conditions of civilized life that reach their peak in capitalist society. These conditions are, in the first place, the division of society into classes and, upon this basis, the alienation and reification of the human being under these conditions, hence, the objectification of the laws governing the society. The result is that the subjective side gives way, the objective side of humanity expands its role; in place of the whole individual, a simulacrum of humanity appears. The individual is divided as society is divided. How this works will be the subject of the following sections.

That is the first step in the dialectic of society; the second is the relations between the economic factor and the superstructure raised upon it in history: the state, law, philosophy, science, religion, ethics.²

¹ Karl Kautsky, *Ethik und materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* (Stuttgart, 1906); Otto Bauer, "Marxismus und Ethik", in: *Die Neue Zeit*, XXIV, 2 (1906), pp. 485-99; G. V. Plekhanov, *The Role of the Individual in History* (New York, 1940). See the collections by H. J. Sandkühler and R. de la Vega, *Marxismus und Ethik*, and *Austromarxismus* (Frankfurt, 1970); V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (1917).

² Friedrich Engels repeatedly brought out the interrelations between the economic and the other factors. See his correspondence with Conrad Schmidt, Josef Bloch, Franz Mehring and W. Borgius (Heinz Starckenburg), *MEW*, Vol. 37, pp. 435ff., 462ff., 488ff.; Vol. 39, pp. 96ff., 205ff. See Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx* (1938), pp. 220-29. Marx made the economic factor in history

Just as there is an interrelation between the substructure and superstructure in the social whole, so there is a relation between the individual and society, each of these interrelations implying and calling forth the other.

III

THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL SOCIETY

The state is an institution of political society, it is not an institution of society in general. On the one hand, it is not a universal feature of human society, for it is not found in societies that are commonly called primitive. On the other hand, the state is not the ultimate end of society, nor is it the perfection of society; Aristotle held, to the contrary, that the Greek city-state is the ultimate nature of man, or the final end of human society. Opposed to Aristotle is the tenet that the state is a passing phase of social evolution. It will be abolished when the conditions that gave rise to it in the first place themselves disappear.

The common root of human society is life in the community, in which the opposition of the private and the public is not to be found, or is found only in a modest degree. The transition to political society, however, the emergence of the class of new men, whose ends are at once individual and class-individual, introduces the opposition between the private and the public sector on the one hand and the continuation of the common institutions on the other. These common institutions are not overcome, they are transformed. The latter are literally the continuation of the common people, and, to an ever changing degree, the continuation of the collective institutions and the holding of the land in common. The surplus product is collected by the new class of private men, who are the public officers, who use the public offices in their private interest. Their relation to society in regard to the private interest is now twofold. Through their public control they express and undergird the private interest; through the pursuit of the private interest they achieve public control, control over the public interest and over the public, the people. All this is founded on the separation

the most important one. H. S. Maine had put the moral factor first, to which Marx replied: "This 'moral' shows how little Maine understands the matter; the influences are economic before everything else, the '*moral*' modus of existence is ever a derived, secondary modus, never the primary one." *Ethnological Notebooks*, p. 329. The words "before everything else" can only mean that there is something else which the economic comes before. That which the economic precedes is given in the *Ethnological Notebooks* on p. 112: the political, religious, juristic and philosophical systems of the society.

and opposition of the public from the common and the public from the private.

A lesson in etymology may make this clear. The Roman State was the republic before it became the empire. The republic is *res publica*, the public thing or matter. Political society having been formed, the state is now called into existence, the public concern and interest is separated from the private concern, and both from the common, which is the root and stem of both. The appellation Commonwealth, the translation of *res publica*, therefore is a flat lie; commonwealth is supposed to be the political society, but wealth is now held in severalty, and no longer in common. The wealth or social product is collected in the public interest (in the treasury of the state), but is at the same time accumulated by private individuals. It is in their interest to maintain the collective institutions, the unit for collection of the surplus in the form of rent, tax, rent-tax is by means of these collective institutions, the village, the community, the kin-village community, whereby the opposition of the public interest and the common interest is maintained and prolonged. The formation of political society is thus a dual dialectical movement, which takes place simultaneously: 1) out of the original common concern, collective interest and life, the opposition of the public and the private interests arises; 2) the public and private interests are both opposed to the common interests of the society as a whole. That common interest was originally the predominant one in society, but in political society it is subordinate to the emergence and opposition of the public and private interests. The agencies of the state have as one of their functions the regulation of the opposition of the public and private interests, a delicate balance, in which the private is not suppressed but kept within the bounds defined by the concurrence of all the parties. The extraction of surplus value from the common people, the direct cultivators of the soil, etc., is the function of the state in the early history of political society. The private interest arises as a subjective matter, but takes a reified form in political society, as we shall see in the following sections.

To the public sector is associated power over others, by armed men, record keepers, judges, priests; the private wealth and the public power are combined in their hands; opposed to them are the immediate producers in society. The power of the state is the expression of this wealth, armed support, learning; but it is mere appearance, externality; its supremacy has no inward root, but is the result of the previous external processes of increase in the social product, the means of its accumulation, storage and appropriation of a part of it in the hands of a few who, by its control, thereby gain control over the society as a

whole; or rather they now control certain aspects of the life of the society, in particular, those aspects that are accessible to regulation by the state instruments: armed might for control of the interior of the society and for external conquest; the formality of the law for the control of the public, outer, formal side of the human being; religious mystification in order to obscure the origins of knowledge and of control over nature and society.

Let us turn to the human beings themselves who have been part of this joint process of division of the social product and control thereby of society; we will examine by taking this course the internal and subjective factors in history, in their relation to the aforementioned external and objective ones. Human beings had lived hitherto in an undifferentiated mass, without distinctions of wealth and power. Out of the disruption of this community of interest, the oppositions of the public and the private sphere emerge. A few individuals come forth who establish control over the public sphere in their private interest, by appropriating an increasingly larger share of the social product. The community binds its members to itself, the members bind each other by their common life and interests, the bonds are comfortable, comforting, the opposite of despotic; the umbilicus to the community is severed, a few individuals are torn forth, the majority remain bound by custom to the whole. In the early appearance of the state, the community continues to exist for the many, while the few are gathered around the courts of the sovereignty. These few are a new social type, who put their own interests foremost, and they pursue this interest at the expense of the society as a whole, at the expense of the poor class of people, and at the expense of their wealthy congeners, or the cohort of the powerful. The working out of the individuality in society is thus onesided, it works on behalf of the wealthy and mighty few, and they work out this individuality in their own interests. This latter interest is a class interest, the individuality is that of a class of individuals. This class interest, however, has internally contradictory tendencies, for it contains within itself means both for the furtherance of the interest of the ruling class at the expense of the social whole and of the remaining class or classes, and at the same time contains means for the disruption and opposition within the ruling class itself. The state is still defined therefore as the organ of the ruling class; its functions are the domination of the entire society, of the poor class of people, of the direct workers on the land, in mines, and workshops, together with their families; but it is also the means of control over the self-interest and self-seeking of the new men, the class of the wealthy which will put the private interest of the individual even before the interest of the class to which it belongs, on which it is

dependent for support, and which gave rise to that individual interest in the first place. In a first expression of this view Marx wrote:

“The apparent supreme independent existence of the state is itself merely show, and that in all its forms it is an excrescence of society. As its appearance itself comes forth at a certain stage of social development, so it disappears again as soon as the society has reached a stage not yet reached. First tearing forth the individuality from the originally *not despotic chains* (as blockhead Maine understands it), *rather the satisfying and comforting bonds of the group*, of the primitive community, – therewith the onesided elaboration of the individuality. As to the true nature of the latter, it is shown only when we analyze the content, the *interests* of these ‘latter’. We then find that these interests themselves again are interests common to particular social groups, interests that characterize them, *class interests*, etc., hence this individuality is itself a class individuality, and these in the final instance all have economic conditions at bottom. On this basis the state is built and presupposes them.”¹

Comment:

1. H. S. Maine, *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (1875), had criticized the view, held by J. Austin, that the state is the result of abstraction purely within the law. Maine thought the state to be the result of moral influences, Marx criticizes Maine’s view for being superficial and ignoring the economic conditions.
2. The theory of the evolution of the state is expressed by Marx in consonance with the stage theory of cultural evolution expressed by Morgan.²
3. The reference to the non-despotic chains by Marx is simultaneously an attack against J. J. Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, and against Maine.
4. The interests of the class are both subjective and objective. The definition of the state as the organ of the ruling class must be reworked in terms of the functions enumerated and in the light of the interplay of the subjective and the objective factors. First, the function of the state to control all elements of society, both the oppressors and

¹ Ethnological Notebooks, p. 329.

² L. H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (1877). See Ethnological Notebooks, pp. 97-241. See also Marx, drafts of letter to Vera Zasulich, MEW, Vol. 19, pp. 384-406. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Pt II, ch. 1 (MEW, Vol. 20, pp. 137f.), had written that primitive communities had already developed the state (“der Staat, zu dem sich die naturwüchsigen Gruppen gleichstämmiger Gemeinden [...] fortentwickelt hatten”). See “The Works of Marx and Engels in Ethnology Compared”, loc. cit.

the oppressed, must be brought out. Second, the control of the poor, exploited and oppressed by the state in the interest of the wealthy, who rule over the former through the organs of the state, is an objective factor. Third, the control of the individuals of the ruling class who act in their own interest, as opposed to class interest, is both a public and a private matter. The objective factor is the public one; the subjective aspect has been separated and subordinated to the others, thereby it has been reified, dehumanized, turned into a factor which serves the interest of others, but not of the one in whom it is a proper part.

5. Humanity lived prior to the formation of the state in collectivities whose common interests predominated over individual interests. Individuals are torn loose to form the ruling class, whereas the ruled and oppressed retain their community form and interests long after, indeed down to the beginning of the contemporary era of history. These individuals are the very self-seeking kind who put the interest of the part over the interest of the whole, and the interest of their own individuality even over the interest of the part. The state organs guard against these excesses, potentially damaging to the whole, as they guard against rebellions by the poor and against invasion from without. In the interest of the self-serving individual of the ruling class in the society, arms are sold for private profit to rebels against the state and to the invaders, at the cost of endangering the very same ruling class in the first instance and the social whole in the other. The interest of the self-serving and self-seeking individuals will go so far as to evade tax-collection or customs and excise payments, even though the pay of the state organs, army, police, treasury, which protect the ruling class, depends on these collections.

6. The tearing forth is the act of formation of the individual interests that enter into the formation of the state. The community is not destroyed thereby, but its primitive character is transformed as its members enter into relations through the age-old community with the organs of the state, which now extracts the surplus from the community in the form of rent in labor, tax in labor, rent-tax.

7. The transition from the primitive to political society is effected by the formation of this new class of individuals, whose class interests are the individual interests, whose individual interests are the class interests and their oppositions, which therefore must be regulated and controlled by the organs of the state. The transformation of primitive institutions, among which is the community in the first place, the emergence of the new class of individuals, and the emergence of the organs of the state, together constitute the passage from primitive to political society.

8. The class interests of the new individuals form the content of their social lives; the subjective content of the relations in society is thrown off, to be replaced by an external, objective set of social relations, and it is these which now replace the former content of the social lives of the new individuals. The onesided elaboration of the outer form of the social life is a form of reification of the whole individual; its etiology and consequence is a form of social alienation.¹

9. The act of tearing forth of the new individuals is the primary act of alienation of political society; the philosophy of egoism, the poetry of individualism, or freedom of the individualist from social constraints, is its ideological expression: it is a false subjectivity, the ideology of the unfettered subject that is substituted for the reality which must relate the subjective to the objective freedom. It is the second alienation of humanity as well as the first in the new form of society. The reification with which it is connected is further developed in the social relations of capital.

Marx wrote in *Capital*: "Cooperation in the labor process as we find it predominating in the beginnings of human culture, among hunting peoples or perhaps in the community of India, rests on the one hand on the communal ownership of the conditions of production; on the other hand it rests on the fact that the individual is not torn forth from the umbilicus of the tribe or community any more than the bee from the beehive."²

a. The sequence in the evolution of mankind from communal to individual ownership is posited. First of all, an evolution of society by stages of development is presupposed.

b. The cultivator of the soil is a member of the community of cultivators, he is not torn forth, *losgerissen*, from that community, even after the community has made the transition to membership in political society and is subordinated to the state.

c. This is the negative of the thesis proposed³ in the notes on Maine, where the *Losreissung*, tearing forth, of the ruling individuals from the community in the process of the formation of political society and the state is expressed.

¹ On the opposition between individual and common interest see Marx, *Die Heilige Familie*, op. cit., pp. 306-10. In his critique of Helvetius, Marx equates the individual with the private interest on the one side, the human with the common interest on the other. Thereby, the particular interest in the given society is overcome, but the critique of this interest is still to be made: the common interest is potentially the interest of all of humanity, but it is not actually so; this lies in some future time. The individual and the private interest are equated precisely in political society, class-divided society, capitalist society.

² Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, pp. 353f.

³ The passage in *Kapital*, Vol. 1, dates from 1867, that on Maine from 1880-81. See *Ethnological Notebooks*, pp. 86-89.

d. The analogy between the primitive community and the beehive is a biologism, a reduction of the human kind to animal life. This is to be criticized, for the relations in the community and in the swarm are only a manner of speaking, a rhetorical trope which is contradicted by Marx himself by his reference to the beginnings of culture (*Kultur-anfänge*). This reference is one of the earliest to the modern use of the word "culture", and is different in conception from the analogy drawn to the hive: culture is thereby opposed to nature.

In political society the undifferentiated forms of human labor, characteristic of primitive society, give way to the differentiated forms. This differentiation is to begin with the opposition of private to social labor. In social labor, abstract and concrete labors are mutually opposed, each converted into the other.¹ Production in political society no longer takes the form of direct and concrete, private labors for the immediate satisfaction of the wants of the individual, family, or community; production in political society is mediate. By increasing division of labor in society the unit of production is ever more separated from the unit of consumption; the labor is now mediate labor, labor for and by others, hence social labor. It is no longer the production of useful things directly consumed by the immediate producers; on the contrary, wants in political society are met by the labors of others, i.e., by commodity exchange and production. The products of the social labors are given an abstract expression in order to effect the exchange. Social labor is in its abstract form a commodity, but not one like any other; it is the abstract content of all exchanges, the expression of which is value. The mutual dependence of the different units of production and consumption increases as the division of labor increases, hence, as the abstract form of labor increases. The society becomes ever more abstract in its expression, or in its quality as political society; the relations of the individuals who labor for one another become ever more abstract as the form of labor becomes increasingly abstract; in this sense they become ever more abstract individuals. The first moment, then, in political society, is the expression of social labor as mediate labor; the medium is the relation of exchange.

The second moment in political society is the conversion of social labor into what it is not. Here, social labor is not labor for all but for some. Political society is society divided into classes, whereby the one does labor, work or toil for the other, but the other does not return the like amount of labor or its equivalent measure of value. The difference is the surplus produced by social labor, which is a contradiction. One class works for the profit² of the other. Here social labor contains a

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 73.

² See Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, op. cit., pp. 485f.

portion of non-reciprocated or surplus labor, abstractly expressed as surplus value. The contradiction is not overcome by the conversion of the surplus into private as opposed to social property; on the contrary, it is promulgated thereby. The economy of the political society is not social economy, but, founded on the production of surplus value and on the private and privative relation of property, it is political economy. The relations of political economy are partly implicit, partly unfolded in the earlier forms of political society, in the ancient Asiatic, classical and feudal modes of production; the relations of political economy achieve their fullest development hitherto gained in the capitalist mode of production.

Having considered the relations of political society in themselves, to primitive society, and to society in general, we now turn to the relation of the individual in society and the relation of the person to the human being, or the alienation and reification of the latter as the juridical person in political society.

IV

THE HUMAN BEING AS SUBJECT AND OBJECT AND AS JURIDICAL PERSON

Any anthropology, whether Marxist or not, must take into account the subjective as well as the objective factors in history; human society is subjective and objective, insofar as the human being is subject and object. The objective side of the human individual has the formal social relation as its characteristic; the juridical person is the formal and external aspect of the individual, it is the individual person in its relation to law and the state. It is like a human being, having certain human qualities. At the same time the juridical person is like the legal institutions and the state, for it is wholly a social product, all of these being the inventions or figments of political society. The juridical person is the fiction of the human being, the state is the fiction of society; the juridical person is the reification of the human being in the law, the state is the reification of society. The link between the law and the state on the one side and the human being on the other has produced a character that can convey the rules, commands, decrees of the state to its human members. Such is the formal character of the individual, or the juridical personality, which is designed to be the mechanism that conveys these rules, etc., from the formal and external sphere of social life to the internal and private one. For this reason, if for no other, the formal aspect of the human being had to be socially shaped, the subject and private formed and separated out; the reification of humanity is the figment of this formality and externality.

The agencies of the state, the courts of law, the factory, schools, the military each have a characteristic means whereby they relate to the individual, shaping the social individual to their socially derived, respective ends; the individual has a corresponding means of relating to the social institution. The stage of entry into the factory is by the contract for work, which takes up the formal relation of the individual in society just as do the courts of law which reinforce the contract. The individual is thereby alienated from his inner life, just as the worker is separated from the product, he is prevented from taking any pride in its outcome and from having love of its result. The cultivator is bound to the soil in feudalism, but the bondage is also a closeness to it, reflected in the poetry of the time. The resentment is there directed not against the means of production, the work object, for the soil is honored; it is directed against the nobility. Under capitalism, the resentment in the poetry of the working class is directed against the materials worked upon, the instruments of labor, and against the bosses.

We have seen that the social group, in making the transition to political society, underwent a twofold opposition, the first between the social classes, the second between the public, formal, official, external and objective sphere of social life on the one side, and the private, internal, subjective sphere on the other. No such alienation and opposition is to be found in the primitive communities. The alienation of the external and public aspect of the human individual from the private and internal followed along with the social process of separation. This alienation has its history. The joint processes of social and individual division and opposition were not regarded as evil in classical antiquity. The Stoic philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius had already separated the human individual into mask and man, having regarded it as neither troublesome nor evil, but as normal that human beings sculpt their own masks, forge their own characters, make their outward features as they undergo the fortunes and vicissitudes of life.¹ But Shakespeare held that the separation of the outer from the inner face of man is evil. Hegel thus understood the problems of the person as the separation of the human individual into parts: "The individual who has risked his life can be recognized as a person, but has not the truth of this state of being recognized as an independent consciousness."² This recognition is a public acknowledgement, it is opposed to the inner consciousness, which is separate from the external

¹ Marcus Aurelius was citing Epictetus. See Marcel Mauss, "A Category of the Human Spirit", in: *The Psychoanalytic Review*, LV (1968), p. 475.

² G. W. F. Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), ch. IV, A: "Herrschaft und Knechtschaft".

recognition and opposed to it. The inner truth of this recognition is a further stage to be attained by the consciousness. The consciousness, which has become independent, is such by the public recognition of the person. The thesis of the person that Hegel took up is that of juridical form, the juridical person separate from the inner life, the private individuality. The question concerns an inner essence, or the mystical being, of the person. Here the separation between the inner and the outer spheres of the human individual corresponds to the separation of the private and public spheres of the society, which is likewise without an inner essence; the separation of the juridical person from the entire human individual corresponds in Hegel to the separation of the family and civil society, and both of these from the state. Hegel explored this subdivision of the individual into parts, without integration, which he found to be the result of the division of labor in society, and Marx so understood him, taking up the same critical viewpoint.¹ The person, save when we are speaking loosely, is made by a legal fiction, and becomes our second nature when there is nothing left to the individual but his formal character mask, when the exterior is so successfully internalized that there is nothing left but the shell, which becomes the content of the person.

In the capitalist society, the human individual sells his labor capacity and labor power to the buyer, the worker to the capitalist. Both buyer and seller stand to each other as persons.² Formally speaking, their relation is that of equal and equally free individuals who engage in exchanges on the capitalist marketplace generally. The formality of the transaction calls forth the formal aspect of either side; the individuals who engage in it relate to each other in their formal aspect; that formal aspect has already been invented in society, it is socially useful and necessary to the particular transaction. The existence of the juridical persons in this relation is a fiction; the formal equality and formal freedom have no content, yet the form has a function, being necessary for the sale and purchase of the labor power. The equality is no less a fiction, the freedom is a deception. The juridical persons who appear in the given relation are the outward masks of human beings, but that outer form is mere appearance. The

¹ Id., *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), § 187, Zusatz; Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 385; see also D. Urquhart, *Familiar Words* (London, 1855). In Hegel's philosophy of education this parsing of the individual in social life is deplored; Marx, loc. cit., quotes Hegel with approval.

² "Beide Seiten stehen sich als Personen gegenüber. Formell ist ihr Verhältnis das gleiche und freie von Austauschenden überhaupt. Dass diese Form Schein ist und täuschender Schein, erscheint, soweit das juristische Verhältnis betrachtet wird, als ausserhalb desselben fallend." Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1857-1858) (Berlin, 1953), p. 368.

formal relations are the juridical reality, a reality which, however, is but external, apparent; in reality it is mere appearance, but in the law there is no other reality.

Marx further developed this, and in the same language. Labor power can appear as a commodity on the market only so far and because it is offered and sold by its own possessor whose labor power it is. "In order that the possessor sell it as a commodity he must be able to dispose of it, thus be the free owner of his labor capacity, of his person. He and the possessor meet on the market, and enter into a relation to each other, as possessors of commodities who are of equal birth, different only in that one is buyer, the other seller, hence both are juridically equal persons."¹

We have seen that the anthropology and the psychology of the person are the dialectic of the formal, external, juridical, and that of the inner, subjective aspects. They meet in the human being in the same way that the exchangers meet on the market, or the body's members meet and oppose the belly in the tale of Menenius Agrippa.² The juridical person is not the human individual, but a part of that individual; again, it is a part played by the individual, the character mask. The outward character is internalized thereby; the result is nothing but that mask, the hollow husk, the external feature is the content. The materialization of the relation between human beings is taken as the relation itself, the fiction for the reality. The materialization is then transformed into the humanization of the relation between things. At the same time, the humanization of the relations between things is transformed into the materialization between juridical persons, which is what they really are. The labor capacity of the individual human being is made into a commodity, the material relation between persons. It is fetishized by being made over into a social relation between things: "As the producers enter socially into contact only by exchange of their products, it is only in the limits of this exchange that the social character of their private labors is affirmed in the first place. Or the private labors are manifested in reality as divisions of social labor only by the exchange established between the products of labor and indirectly between the producers. It results from this that for the latter the relations of their private labors appear what they are, that is, not the direct social relations of persons, in their labors themselves, but rather the material relations of persons and the social relations of things."³

These relations are to begin with indirect, mediate; they are *both*

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 182.

² Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 381.

³ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 3, in MEW, Vol. 25, p. 838.

the material relations of persons and the social relations of things; each of these relations, from the material side and from the social side, is in a dialectic with the other, each complements and supplants the other, together forming the mediate relation of the purchasers and sellers of the private labors and making up the ensemble of the exchange relations of social labor. What they are not is direct social relations; but to take them as such leads to the fetishism of commodities. However, the dialectic of the mediate relation is not all that there is to the matter, it is but the first step. The material relations of persons alone is not the fetishism, nor is the social relations of things: these are what the commodity relations are. Their mystification rests on our having taken their indirect relation as a direct relation. On the other hand, the human beings in the world of commodities and their relations stand to each other indirectly in two senses: first, in material relations as persons, bearing character masks, and second, in the social relations of things. The indirect relation alone is not the fetishization of the human being, it is the elimination of the direct individual relations and their substitution by the formal, material relations that contributes to such a fetishization.¹

The person is the juridical person engaged at once in the commodity relation and its fetishism. But that fetishism has its internal development from a simple to the complex relation. In its simple form, it is merely a mystification in the minds of the classical economists, who considered the social relations of production of men, and the determinations which the things subsumed under these relations undergo, to be the natural properties of things. This is a crude materialism, and is just as much a crude idealism, indeed a fetishism, which ascribes social relations to things which are supposed to have their determinations immanent in them, and, by conceiving them in this way, mystifies them. The fetishism is an intellectual act, not a social relation; it is a notion in the minds of the economists, which through elimination of the relations between things substituted the immanent social relations.² The second stage in the fetishism is also a mystification, but its setting is now transferred from the writing desk of the economist to the market place. The order in which Marx developed the thought of fetishism is the opposite of the order of its historical ap-

¹ In the French translation of *Capital*, Marx eliminated the phrase "material relations between persons", and wrote only "social relations between things" (*Le Capital*, op. cit., p. 29). In his ultimate formulation on the subject, Marx shows the fetishism commodities to be the opposite of mediate or material relations between human beings. The fetishism is the substitution of the social by the material relation, or the direct by the indirect relation. It is the determination of the human by the material relation.

² Marx, *Grundrisse*, op. cit., p. 579.

pearance, which is first as the relation in society, then in the minds of the theoreticians. Between these two extremes lies the simple fetishism, according to which human beings endow the product of their own creation with a life of its own.¹

The juridical person is the same as the fictional person, or the *persona ficta*, made by conscious relations between human beings. This person is a pure figment of the law, in which relations between human beings are reduced and recreated in the formal side, as external relations invented for the purposes of commercial law, penal law, public law. It is the relation between things that is taken as the relation between human individuals. By this fiction, human beings appear as juridically equal, but their equality, even though it has a useful function, has only a formal, apparent validity. The corporate person, the joint-stock company of limited liability, has no private identity, it is anonymous, it has no private relations or life.² It is an automaton which is possessed by an individual whose creature it is, and who has created the creature which possesses him in turn, which he has endowed with a consciousness and will of its own. That creature is the capitalist, the creation is the business corporation. But the capitalist and the corporation have no different standing in the law; juridically, the individual entrepreneur and the private corporation are one and the same. Nor is the wage worker any different in his contract for work from the capitalist, or the representative of the corporation that engages in the contract, or the corporation. They are all juridical persons. Thereby, the subjectivity is eliminated from the social relations. By the capitalist development, human beings stand to each other as objects. But this relation is only an appearance which cloaks and seeks to destroy reality, the human being as subject-object. It is the effect of relations in political society or, what is the same thing, civilized society, that the two sides are divided and opposed, subject opposed to object. The political society, and capitalist

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, ch. 1, § 4. The fetishism of the commodity relation rests first on the transformation of the commodity into a fetish by the persons engaged in its exchange; but the persons themselves undergo a fantastic transformation at the same time, standing to each other as things exchanged. This is a second dialectic movement, a form of reification of human beings by their dehumanization, and the personification of things, which is a fantastic process. But more than this, commodity fetishism in this second dialectical movement is in turn twofold: the human being is first dehumanized and reified, second personified, made into an artificial person. See the next section, in which this movement is further developed.

² In ancient Rome, mercantile ventures were undertaken by a *societas* composed of *socii*, associates or partners. Modern social science is the child of commercial practice.

society as the highest development of this, excerpts the objective side of the human being from its human context, and takes this side up alone, as the formal, juridical person, the person as business corporation.

V

THE MYTHOLOGY OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION. PERSONIFICATION

The person is further manipulated in capitalist society; it is the personification of the non-human being and the reduction of the human being to a non-human entity, which is then personified. What is this rhetorical figure, a trope of the Homeric epic, doing as prop and mainstay of the capitalist mode of production? The rhetoricians of antiquity referred thus to the device whereby the dawn is given a human shape, Eo/Aurora becomes a name like that of any human being. The personification of the dawn is a subjective act requiring the assent of the auditors to the words of the bard, whereby it is transformed into an objective datum; yet in ancient Greece it was not torn forth from its subjective origin thereby. In the folk epic the tropes are at once subjective and objective. In capitalism, the formal category of the person or the formal side of the human being is conceived objectively, loosened from the whole human being, made into a thing, the formal side being a personification, and the loosening from the human complex of subject-object a reification. The personification is an invention, the figment is made into an abstract, fantastic thing. Whereas the personifications that are found in Homer were the innocent figments of natural forces in their human representations, the personification in capitalism is the reification of the human being, the objective part ripped loose from the subject, as the representation of the social relations between things. It is the social relation in alienated form.

The personification, as the composition of a mythical person, in reference to the dawn or the wind is the attribution of some human motive or a physical trait to a thing, which is by definition a non-human object. So far, it is not a reification, for a human being is not turned into a thing. Yet the attribution remains an external relation. Who can get inside the dawn? Nevertheless, Homer gave Aurora a set of human attributes. Mythology in one of its aspects is the representation of the mastery over nature in the human fantasy, and as such has given way before immodestly proclaimed recent victories over these forces. Yet our mythopoeists today, though lesser talents, are no further in the mastery of society and social laws, that is, over human nature, than the mythopoeists of ancient Greece, and they can refer to an entire nation as "fatherland", attributing to it bellicose or peaceable inten-

tions, think of the whole, not of the mutually antagonistic parts that compose it, and conceive of its motives as human.¹ The objective world of the state and nations is as by magic transformed into a subjective world of human beings, which can be flattered or cajoled. But these have neither friends nor enemies, they have interests; Lord Acton well understood that the subjective feelings must give way to objective relations in history.

The personification under capitalist conditions is that of the business corporation, the attribution to capital of a will and consciousness, human qualities attributed to an inhuman thing. But the behavior of the capitalist in no way differs from that of the capitalist corporation. The capitalist is the personification of capital, in turn. The personification is, as we have seen, the making of a person in the literal sense. Thus when we are speaking of a biological person, we are attributing to nature the processes of culture, for the juridical person is not made by the insemination of the ovum. The fantasy, however, has social reality, the fine paid by the corporate person or business corporation is no less real than that paid by the individual person. The transformation that is implied thereby attracted the attention of the ancient and medieval lawyers and theologians, from Tertullian to Sinibaldus Fliscus (Innocent IV). In the early period of capitalism the fiction of the corporate body as person was invented in order to account for this transsubstantiation of the earthly flesh. It aroused the wonder of Otto Gierke, who believed in a superorganic being that was constructed out of the human mold, but transcended it in the social whole. The wonder was given a new formulation by Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer; Emile Durkheim sought to demystify it, but did not do so aptly. It was remystified again by A. L. Kroeber by his notion of the superorganism of human culture. The person and the group person, the corporate person and the corporation sole are social fantasies, but these thinkers have all been seized of their prodigy as Pygmalion of his Galatea.

The difficulty is that in capitalism the movement in personification is not a simple dialectic as it was in Homer. It is the transformation of thing into human by attribution of human qualities to the former; it is also the opposite, the attribution of the quality of a thing to a human being, of capital to the capitalist, and thereby in turn, the attribution of the quality of the reified human being, of the reified will and consciousness, to the thing, capital. The human subject is instated into history, by becoming dehumanized. The will and consciousness are originally the subjective relations of the human being. Marx did not eliminate the human subject from history, but considered

¹ On the mythology of nature see Marx, *Grundrisse* pp. 30f.

that it is transformed, embodied in capital in the form of the capitalist, who is capital personified. Capitalists are juridical persons, the formal side of the human being; in the same way, they are the reified side of the capitalist mode of production. This personification is quite other than personification as a mere rhetorical device, in which we speak of the marriage of *M. le Capital* and *Mme la Terre*. The invented person enters into history and really does reduce the natural limits of human capacity to the point of least resistance for the purpose of increased profit.¹

The person thus manufactured is a class-person, a human being as-though. The capitalist as an individual is robbed of his humanity. In what way is he different from a corporation? The corporation does not know human sentiments of mercy or charity. If it makes a charitable contribution it is in order to gain tax relief, or because it will sit well with the public, it is good publicity. The corporation is not impersonal, it is a person, but an inhuman person. All capitalists, human or not, cause their behavior and their relations to conform to that of the corporation, which is the ideal type of capitalist; it is that person toward which the capitalist tends. Thereby the subjectivity is taken away from the human individual, who is liable to human weaknesses of mercy, charity and pity; it is deposited in the corporation, where it is endowed with will and consciousness. The subjective is thereby transformed into its opposite, the multitudinous; the plural, the multi-individual capitalist precedes the multi-national corporation both logically and in time. It is not only that the corporation has the advantageous attribute of perpetuity, as H. S. Maine thought. An individual father can perpetuate his enterprise by bequest to his son or partner. It is not only that the corporation can raise large amounts of credit. An individual can do the same, and could do so in Elizabethan times as well. It is that the corporation is inhuman and eliminates the individual, selecting certain elements of the objectivity-subjectivity, by the application of objective standards, thus introducing them into history. The form absorbs the content and makes of it something else. The formal side of the individual is all that is left. If the capitalist shows that he has human qualities, these are called weaknesses, and he will go under. It is best to leave business affairs to inhuman corporate persons.

The several institutions of society are related to human individuals, each by a characteristic means; the individual develops a feature of his character relative and conformable to the given institution, such as the juridical person relative to the law and the state. If this con-

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 425. See also *Grundrisse*, p. 356; *Kapital*, Vol. 1, pp. 99f.; Vol. 3, op. cit., pp. 832f.

formity does not take place then either the individual will go under, or, if enough individuals do not conform to the exigencies of institutional adaptation, that institution will go under. The example of the formal character of the person, which is extruded by the human being in order to comport in relation to the formal side of political society, or the law of the state, was then cited. In capitalist society the immensely plastic human individual has extruded a feature as capitalist in order to comport in relation to capital. The human characteristics of will and consciousness are applied in order to appropriate unto capital the productive power of social labor, and the productive power of society in its general form, or science. Personification is the magic wand whereby accumulated stock, which is found in all the modes of production of civilized society, whether Asiatic, ancient or feudal, is transformed into capital in the capitalist mode of production. In capitalist society the most appropriate form of the human personality for the particular end of mastery of capital has been thereby developed.¹

The accumulation of stock takes place in fact wherever commodity exchange and production take place, wherever indeed hoarding and usury by private persons and the surplus product of society is stored in the state treasury, in the public sector of the economic whole. The characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is the transformation of the stock accumulated into capital; the means whereby the transformation takes place is the personification of capital in the capitalist. Richard Jones had written that wealth is produced by successive functions and had called attention to the gradual manner in which these successive functions are introduced by capital or capitalists indifferently. The *or* is important; it is not capital that operates, but capitalists. Things, capital, are acted upon, they are not agents in history; human beings are the agents, although they do not act as individuals, only as class-individuals. The as-if of the class-individual is a social fiction taken as real. The agency of the human beings in the transformation of stock into capital is the assumption of the role, of the character mask as capitalist; in this case the individual becomes transformed into a juridical person, and it is a matter of indifference whether it is a corporation or an individual that we have in view. Jones held that stock is capital, Marx opposed this notion, holding that the accumulated stock by becoming a person then "takes up the function of advancing wages" to men (Jones).² The social relations have in-

¹ The capitalist himself is only the master of capital as its personification. See Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, I, in MEW, Vol. 26.1, p. 365; III, p. 419. See Richard Jones, *Textbook of Lectures on the Political Economy of Nations* (Hartford, 1852).

² Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, p. 420; Jones, *op. cit.*, Lecture III.

tervened in the economic functions of stock accumulation, advancement of a wage, and formation of capital; concretely, the formation of the person is not the direct result of the relations in the economy, but of the relations in society in its juridical aspect. It is indirectly that the economic relations enter into the formation of the juridical person.

The subjective factor in history is introduced by Marx through its eradication, by absorbing it into the class-individuals, the capitalists as a class, and by providing this class with a subjective content, the embodiment of consciousness and will. This subjective content is in turn eradicated by its attribution to a juridical person, a class-person in which is deposited a host of safeguards against the arbitrary exercise of the will and consciousness, of these subjective endowments. In a direct way the law of property, its protection, sale, bequest, etc., is established to safeguard one of the forms of capital, private property. Crimes against property such as false stipulation and breach of contract are capitalist crimes, that is, crimes of capital endowed with a will and consciousness; corporate persons as well as individual persons are punishable by law for such crimes, which fall within the law of contract; likewise, all juridical persons are subject to punishment for breach of tax law, non-payment, evasion and the like. These crimes are different from those other crimes against property of persons such as robbery, theft and burglary, which do not presuppose a corporate person, but an individual bearing socially and legally recognized rights and obligations. The class-interest calls forth another sort of control over the subjective factor in society: the quest for profit is not free and untrammelled. The agencies of the state intervene to prevent the sale of capital, military weapons, patent-rights and services to class enemies, such as socialist countries, or rebels in capitalist countries against the state. The motive-factor of the capitalist, the hunger after profit, is not subjective, it is a reified subjectivity. It is constrained by rules that control trade both within the country and internationally. The sale of truck parts and replacements of factory machinery to Cuba during the 1960s was prevented by law in the United States, even though such sale would have produced a profit for private businessmen; the sale of similar equipment and even of commercial airplanes to Chile during the Allende government was prevented and for the same reason: the subjective factor was constrained by law and submitted to the overriding interest of the ruling class and the state; whereby the initiative of private persons was vetoed.

Freedom is a subjective factor in history, insofar as it is contained by laws of persons, by means of which the subject is transformed into its opposite. The end-result is the formal expression of the human

individual, in which the subjectivity is reduced, controlled and regulated by the social class, and by the institutions of the whole society. The formal expression is likewise the reduction of the objective side of human life to a cut-and-dried formula, life according to rule, without any degrees of freedom. The first step in the reduction of the subjectivity and objectivity of the individual is the formation of the juridical person both in time and in a logical sequence; the time covered is both social-archaeological time and the time in the life of the individual.

The psychologist Erik Erikson has written of the identity crisis of the individual in late adolescence, which is the time that he becomes a person before the law. At this time the young people take on the character masks which identify them to themselves and to others; the character masks are the personifications of social relations between persons; it is the public side of the human being that is the bearer of these relations.¹ The private side continues in its relations to family and friends, or would do so unless otherwise acted upon. The identity crisis does not come from within the private sphere, it comes from without: the official end of schooling, and the entry into the job market. The family then becomes the bearer of these forceful changes, which are borne in upon the young individual. The families do not regard higher education, unless it is normally connected with a step in a career, as a class-undertaking. For the working-class family, higher education means the way out of the working class, loss of the son or daughter; for the middle-class family it means the prolongation of idleness, failure to earn money, that is, do useful work. The students, who are in financial difficulties, have to take extraordinary steps in order to gain support, public or private, through the official acts of the public authorities directly, and indirectly through the family, which acts as the mediator and expression of the official view. The individuals do not stand to each other directly in their social relations, but only through their character masks. The family stands to the sons and daughters indirectly, formally; it does not seek to understand the intentions of the latter, nor to support those intentions materially, but only to cause the young to adopt a doctrine for which the elders are the mouthpiece, which these elders personify. It is an economic character mask in the first place: who does not work shall not eat.

The fetishism whereby the products of labor in society appear to acquire an independent power and stand to each other as though they were relations between people is a form of the fictitious life of capital.

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 100: the economic character masks of persons are but the personifications of the economic relations, who stand to each other as the bearers of these relations.

This fetishism is a mystification of human relations, to which a further fictitious relation is appended, the figure of the person of capital, its personification; the personification assumes the garb of a human being, it is a thing that speaks with a human voice. But human beings had to put this consciousness, will, voice and figure into the thing, capital, in the first place, for in the entire realm of nature on earth there is only one subject, and that is the human subject, whose attributes are consciousness, a will, a voice, a figure, etc. We have then a twofold dialectical moment, each the reverse of the other: people endowing things with human attributes, the things then comporting, with the accord of their craftsmen, as human. The subjective factor in history has been taken away from its proper home, humanity; it becomes objectified. The personification, which is this subject objectified, is a necessary relation among the economic, legal and formal factors, and these are the objective ones; thereby the human being is reified, made into thing.

There was mentioned earlier a second voice in the chorus of capital relations, the equality of the contracting parties, the worker and the capitalist. Marx asked how it was that Aristotle, who had discovered the relation of equivalence in the expression of value of commodities, did not take the second step, of the composition of the substance of value through labor time, a step taken by classical economists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo at their head. The secret of the expression of value lies in the equivalence of all human labors, labor in the abstract; but this secret could only be deciphered when the concept of human equality had achieved the fixity of a popular prejudice. This, added Marx, is possible only when the commodity form becomes the general form of the labor product, and the relation of men to each other as commodity possessors the dominant social relation.¹ This process is not simple; it is just as complex as that of the subjectivity-objectivity of fetishism and of personification. The subject engages in a contract with another; this is the grammatical subject, the parties mentioned. In fact both persons show only the objective, formal and external sides of their humanity; they are dehumanized to that extent. Both parties are equal before the law, but their equality is formal, without content, without a subjectivity. The commodity relations of exchange, production and possession are the presupposition to this relation of formal equality; it is also presupposed that these commodity relations are now generalized throughout the society: we are no longer talking of society in general, but a particular one, the capitalist society, for this society has fulfilled two of the basic conditions of capitalist production, the generalization of the commodity relation to the point of dominance,

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

and the formal equality of the parties to the work contract, of labor and capital. The objective factors in history have created a new subjectivity: equality has become a matter of popular belief, it acquires the fixity of a popular prejudice. The wage worker believes he is equal to any other person; he is a juridical person as any other, and is accepted as such by the capitalist, the law, the state, etc.

This subjectivity was not accessible to Aristotle, the commodity relation had not become general, still less predominant in ancient Greece. The lack of freedom of the slave and the formal inequality of the slave and master were the materials of Aristotle's relations in society. In ancient Greece, the Sophists Antiphon, Hippias, among others, and in ancient Rome, the authors of the doctrine of natural right, held that men are equal by nature. The doctrine of equality is not supported by the social practice of the Greek *polis* and the Roman Republic and Empire; it is a subjective judgment, the objective judgment being found in Aristotle. But because of that, Aristotle could not take the second step, and it was left to a new set of relations to nature and relations in society to establish the objective conditions under which Smith, Ricardo and Marx could establish the theory of the expression of value, the substance of value and its measure. The objective conditions were made into a popular prejudice. The fictions of equality, of freedom, have no content, no social reality, they are but formal freedom, formal equality, hence they have no objective existence. With the establishment of capitalist society, the conditions of formal inequality, bondage in the form of slavery, clientage, serfdom, are all done away with. The objective condition of freedom is established, but it exists only as a potentiality. The content of freedom and equality are not achieved, therefore freedom and equality are not actual but potential. There is a popular fiction that humanity is free and equal under capitalism, but that is a judgment which mistakes form for content.

The advantage that William Petty, Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Karl Marx had over Aristotle in the establishment of the expression of value is this: objectively, the laborer had been freed from the bondage to the soil in the capitalist mode of production and is formally the equal of the capitalist; these relations are, however, but the appearance of freedom and equality, which is mistaken for their real existence in society. The latter is an illusion in which we subjectively concur. There is no doubt that the objective transformation of the social relation to production has taken place; its beginning and end points were given historical expression by the classical economists, and the historical course was given its conscious expression by Marx. The theory of value in classical economics and in the doctrine of Marx rests

on both these objective and subjective conditions and considerations. History is not composed of iron laws, mistakenly propounded as objective laws by Ferdinand Lassalle and Robert Michels. The concerns of capital are with its production, reproduction, expansion and surplus production; these are assured, as they are opposed, by objective laws. In these objective historical factors and laws a subjective element is at work, and this subjective element peeps through in a distorted, reified form, as the hot hunger after profit and the impersonation of capital by the capitalist. The opposition is distorted by another subjective element, the play upon love of fatherland; that opposition is reified as economism, or the quest by agencies of the working class after material goods.

The capitalist, we have seen, is taken historically not as an individual but as the personification of a category, capital; in this form the category subsists in the consciousness of its bearers, the capitalists. The category in turn is given formal expression as the juridical personality of capital, while in a wholly parallel manner the landlord appears to represent the land as juridical personality, and the wage laborer as juridical personality sells his labor power. Capital, land and labor are determinate social forms, the trinity of political economy, they have a particular social character. Personified, they become social characters or masks and are at once things; the charade of *M. le Capital* and *Mme la Terre* is of the same fetishized matter. Capital, however, is to begin with a relation between social beings engaged in production; it is a relation of production, moreover, of a particular social formation, in which the means of production are transformed into capital. It is a twofold relation, at once the material relation between persons and the social relation of things. In its form as fetish, capital is endowed with an independent life, will and consciousness, separate from its producers, it becomes the personification of the product and the reification of the relation of production.¹ From having been relation it becomes ever more thing, which bears the social relation, incorporates it. The means whereby this thingification is effected is the transformation of capital into a fetish; capital becomes the fetishized form of the relation, not real but fictive, a thing which relates to itself as a fantasmagorical product of the human brain, a social relation in a disguised form. As such it is not directly the social being, sensory-suprasensory, but its fantastical representation or product, which is wholly and solely imaginary, suprasensory. Capital in its forms as commodity, profit, etc., is thereby given its fetish form,

¹ Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 177; Vol. 3, p. 838 and ch. 48 passim; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, p. 475.

the juridical personality of capital; the *persona ficta* is its practical shape.

The subjective life of the individual, wherein resides the consciousness and will, is driven out, exorcized by the ghostly essence, the stately form of the juridical person, which assumes a life of its own in the law and on the streets, and in this form, disguised as a living individual, is seen in all its finery, as the world saw Eugene Onegin, not the man, in the end, but the mask. But external form and subject are not the same, and likewise form and object are not the same; the formal side of the human being is not the objective side. Thus, the objective side is driven out, exorcized, together with the subjective, by the process of formation of the juridical personality. For the human being has both subjective and objective constituents as necessary components, each dependent on the other. In the absence of either, the human being is but a form, evoked by the relation of capital, just as the juridical person is called forth by the quintessence of formalism, the agency of the state. It is not the sensory-suprasensory being-in-society but its formalization as commodity, or alienable form of capital, and as profit, alienated form of capital, which replaces the consciousness and will of the individual as capitalist. The formalization of the individual is the fictive representation of the individual, or the fetish in one of its social characters. This fiction is the form of its reality, or the real form of its existence. It is the form in which it lives in the consciousness of its bearers, the capitalists, mirrored in their conceptions.¹ The mirroring, however, is not only the act of the consciousness, it is the consciousness in reified form. The consciousness is not only an agent, it also suffers the relation.

The last element in the trinity which makes up the capitalist mode of production is the land. The land is not the raw, disordered mass of which Ovid sang; it is neither more nor less ordered than the culture which has encompassed it. The land, moreover, is not inert, as Sartre has most recently led us to believe. In a civilization of cultivators, it is in a reciprocal relation to those who labor on it, being both agent and patient. In this matter, Lucretius is more reliable than the others.² The landowner who does not work the land himself has a formal relation to it, empty of content. Land has risen in value as a means of exploitation by capital, and this includes its use as housing sites.³ The

¹ Theorien über den Mehrwert, III, p. 474. This is not the criticism by Marx of the mirror theory of consciousness, but it is its initial positing.

² Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book I; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris, 1960), pp. 504f.; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Book V.

³ Adam Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 796.

land as the field of cultivation, or location of factory, house, roadway, is the patient. As means of sustenance it is instrumental, agent. Without the tiller, no tilth; without the tilth, no tiller; no produce without tiller and tilth. It is not the fertility of the soil alone which is the determinant of value; it is not only that rent is diminished by improved methods of cultivation;¹ above all, the relation of the cultivator to the soil in this Ricardian capitalist condition is the realization of the potential relation already posited in the condition of Melanesian (Malekulan) production, and carried forward in the ancient Asiatic, Roman, etc. The landlord relation described by Smith, Ricardo, Marx, is the abstraction and formalization of this relation to the soil. The owner of record who does not labor on the soil is the reified expression of this abstraction.

The relation of wage labor and arable, just as the relation of capital, becomes ever more thing; reification undergoes its evolution, just as abstraction, alienation, and fetishization. It does not rest quiescent, but has a potentiality which is realized in political society by labor and expansion of capital, whereby it has attained, in the capitalist mode of production, its highest development to date. Capital, labor and land have alike undergone stages of depersonalization, and in alienated form their representatives become conscious each of his reified state.

VI

SCIENCE, MATERIALISM AND RELIGION

Vico had distinguished between human history and natural history, the history that we have made and the history that we have not made, between *factum* and *verum*. The distinction was introduced in the struggle against the rules for the direction of the mind according to Descartes, and was closely followed by Marx,² who built upon this basis the edifice of the criticism of science and materialism, and of religion and science. In agreement with Descartes, Marx held that there is a method of the science of the human mind, but contrary to Descartes held that it is a scientific method because it is materialist. The materialism leads in two directions: it is concrete and historical, and it is critical insofar as it is concrete both in relation to science and religion, for both lead into the direction of abstraction unless they are regulated,

¹ David Ricardo, *op. cit.*, pp. 42ff. and 275.

² Giambattista Vico, *Dell'antichissima sapienza italyca*, in *Opere*, Fausto Nicolini ed. (Bari, 1953), pp. 248ff., 305f.; Karl Löwith, *Vicos Grundsatz: verum et factum convertuntur* (Heidelberg, 1968). On Vico, see Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 393, note: to Vico is attributed the distinction between human history, which we make, and natural history, which we do not.

but these *regulae* are the opposite of the Cartesian rules, which are abstract and dualistic.

The study of religion is first of all a historical science, which is critical only if it takes up directly the activities of humanity in relation to nature, to the process of production in society of human life, to the social relations connected with it, and the spiritual conceptions that arise therefrom. The order of these activities is important; they are: 1) the technical, 2) economic, 3) social and 4) mental activities of mankind. Religion *eo ipso* is uncritical, it is the abstraction of these activities and relations; the history of religion that abstracts from the material base is no less uncritical. That material base is not the technology alone, or relation to nature, nor the economic activities, but the order in which these are introduced. In fact, technology reveals the active comportment of mankind in relation to nature, and is the starting point; the link between the relation of human beings to nature and in society is the economic process of production.¹ The representation of these

¹ Marx, *ibid.*: "Die Technologie enthüllt das aktive Verhalten des Menschen zur Natur, den unmittelbaren Produktionsprozess seines Lebens, damit auch seiner gesellschaftlichen Lebensverhältnisse und der ihnen entquellenden geistigen Vorstellungen." Technology does not constitute the activity of human society in relation to nature, but is the record, as fossil evidence or current form, that discloses what that relation was or is. The direct process of the sustenance of human life is appositive to the activity of the society in its natural relations which the technology has laid bare. The activity of the society is not caused by the natural relations, nor does the activity of the society act as a causal or determining factor directly; the direct process of production of the material life and the social relations are in a reciprocal relation, standing to each other as mutual determinants. Yet the order of the introduction of the members of the sequence is first, the material relations of production, and second, the relations in society. This order is underlined in the French translation of *Capital*, which Marx controlled, where in place of the construction "damit auch" he caused to be inserted "par conséquent", which is more causal, making the relation in society rather more determinate, the relation to nature rather more determinant (*Le Capital*, p. 162, col. 1, note). The intellectual ideas and conceptions flow from the social relations; here the relations are clearly expressed as determinant and determinate, in contrast to the relations of the relations between human society and nature and those within the society. – The problem of Marx on technology has occasioned a great debate: N. I. Bukharin, *Theorie des historischen Materialismus* (Hamburg, 1922), had proceeded directly from technology to society without taking the intervening step of introducing the economic production process, and without reference to the relations in society. Georg Lukács, in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, XI (1925) (repr. Lukács, *Schriften zur Ideologie und Politik*, P. Ludz ed. (Neuwied, 1967), pp. 188ff.), had objected to this. The same accusation against Bukharin was made by Sidney Hook, *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx* (New York, 1933), p. 142. Bukharin had in fact given a better account of his position; see his contribution "Theory and Practice from the Standpoint of Dialectical Materialism", in: *Science at the Crossroads. Papers Presented to the*

relations in religion goes in two directions: the cloudy forms of religious thought have their earthly core; this is easy to show. It is more difficult to proceed in the opposite way, that is, to develop out of the actual relations of social life their celestialized form; this is in fact the invention of religion. The critical nature of the process of going from the social relation to its religious representation is a *concretum*, it is materialist and hence scientific, it is anti-abstract, a historical process.

Science is no less materialist, historical, concrete, but its spokesmen at times venture forth from their specializations, to make abstract ideological pronouncements, their abstract natural-science materialism excludes the historical process. The result is uncritical because abstract, exactly as the result of religion. Materialism is the scientific method, however, only insofar as it is historically concrete and critical; the scientific spokesmen are abstract ideologists, abstracted from the context of their social labors, specialists speaking in a field for which this specialization has not prepared them, indeed disabled them. The result of their abstraction of science is just as uncritical as the religious mysticism, but it moves in another direction. The more difficult form of the religious abstraction is to proceed from the actual relations of life to the celestialized form of the same. The spokesmen of the abstract ideology of science have already performed the more difficult task, they have excluded the historical process from their activities. Structuralism, which excludes human history, has established itself in the abstract, misty empyrean. The critique of the activities of these mysterious beings is therefore the simple one of revealing their earthly core, or their material interest. Negatively the abstract science is freed from any control by practical considerations, by relations to nature and in society; positively the abstract science is related to goals that delve out the pure form of thought, the conceptual scheme which relates matter and form, and gives them their completion as structures. The latter is the more difficult form of abstraction.

In the foregoing pages the principles and contradictions of the anthropology of Karl Marx have been set forth in reference to the society of human beings. We begin with the alienation of humanity from nature, which is secured by the socialization of the human kind. But since

International Congress of Science and Technology (1931), p. 22 (repr. with new front matter by Joseph Needham and P. G. Worsley (London, 1971)). None of those participating in this discussion had made the distinction, which is clear in Marx's conception, that technology is not the relation between human society and nature, but is the record of that relation. From this it follows that we can comprehend more of the content of the relation between the human kind and nature than that which is evidenced by its formal and external side, or the technology alone.

there is no other existence than life in society, we are doomed to this alienation in a primary sense. Although alienation was, therefore, not introduced in political society, yet it has been developed in the latter, and has been carried to its highest point in capitalist society. If alienation is the primitive condition of humanity in general, yet the separation of subject-object in society is the work of political society, and has reached its most extreme development under the conditions of capitalist production. It comes forth in direct relation to the separation and opposition of the social classes, with the rise of political society and the state. The result of these historical processes is, as we have seen, the reification at once of the human individual and of human society. The materials for this analysis have been taken not from the usual subject matter of academic anthropology, which is the comparison of primitive societies, but from the anatomy of civil society, or the economic relations of human beings in capitalist society, their transformation into wage workers, capitalists, juridical persons, alienated and reified people, which is the subject matter of Marx's works. The history and critique of the terms and relations of a concrete society, the civil society of capitalism, has been set forth dialectically, which is the only way to develop them in a manner conformable to that of Marx.

This is in opposition to a tendency among contemporary writers who have transformed the Marxian dialectic into an existentialism, and have thereby parted with the frame of reference of the dialectic. Although the will to a revolutionary transformation of society in the cases of Jean-Paul Sartre and Herbert Marcuse among existentialists is not to be doubted, yet they have introduced the *a priori* categories of existence, being, ontology, substance. They have made it dependent on selected categories, which they conceive to be ultimates. This is an anti-scientific, anti-material procedure, for instead of deriving the categories from the relations of society, they have derived the social relations from the categories. By the separation of the abstract from the concrete society, as by the reversal of the relation of the categories to the particular society, they have arrested the flow of the dialectic, not in history, but in their thought. The construction of the categorical ultimates as a stone wall is but another form of the alienation and reification of the human individual under the conditions of capitalism.

(Part II in the next issue)