

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

MARX'S THEORY OF ALIENATION

BY

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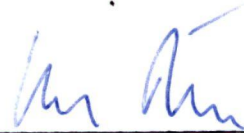
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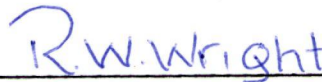
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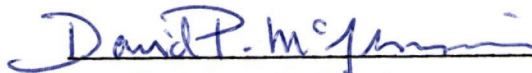
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the writings of Marx from youth to maturity, in philosophy, economics and political analysis in an attempt to uncover the underlying theme of alienation. By Marxian definition, to be less than free is for man to be alienated from his species potentials and, hence, his essence. The different disciplines of study engaged in by Marx are, therefore, to be viewed as interdisciplinary means to developing, expounding and then acting upon the attainment of man's freedom as a member of his species. Marx's conception of alienation was developed as a synthesis of Hegelian idealist and Feuerbachian materialist philosophies. Marx found an earthly basis for his perception of alienation in the capitalist system for which he prescribed a political remedy of revolution to be borne by the working class. The outcome would be a future historical phase that would guarantee the freedom of man by allowing him to develop himself as species man through his labour activity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people who I must thank for their dedication to seeing me through the, not always so pleasant, thesis process. In particular, my supervisor Dr. Horst Betz must be admired not only for his enviable grasp of economic thought, but also for his incredible patience with young graduate students who refuse to listen to the voice of experience. I thank my good friend Yusuf Umar, whose dedication to the attainment of knowledge served as inspiration at times when too little made sense. Finally, I thank my parents who, each in their own way, have allowed me the luxury of my eccentricities.

## DEDICATION

Once there lived a village of creatures along the bottom of a great crystal river. The current of the river swept silently over them all— young and old, rich and poor, good and evil, the current going its own way, knowing only its own crystal self. Each creature in its own manner clung tightly to the twigs and rocks of the river bottom, for clinging was their way of life, and resisting the current what each had learned from birth. But one creature said at last, "I am tired of clinging. Though I cannot see it with my eyes, I trust that the current knows where it is going. I shall let go, and let it take me where it will. Clinging I shall die of boredom." The other creatures laughed and said, "Fool! Let go, and that current you worship will throw you tumbled and smashed across the rocks and you will die quicker than boredom!" But the one heeded them not, and taking a breath did let go, and at once was tumbled and smashed by the current across the rocks. Yet in time, as the creature refused to cling again, the current lifted him free from the bottom, and he was bruised and hurt no more. And the creatures downstream to whom he was a stranger, cried, "See a miracle! A creature like ourselves, yet he flies! See the Messiah, come to save us all!" And the one carried in the current said, "I am no more Messiah than you. The river delights to lift us free, if only we dare let go. Our true work is this voyage, this adventure."

— Richard Bach

This thesis is dedicated to all those who allow the river to lift them free so that their true work may be the voyage, the adventure.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis will deal with the concept and theory of alienation as developed and analyzed by the German philosopher-economist Karl Marx. The purpose of the thesis is to prove that alienation is the conceptual foundation upon which Marx's philosophy, economics, and political analysis can be integrated. Thus, the concept of alienation is of pivotal importance in Marx's intellectual system and provides the link between Marx's early thoughts, in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The German Ideology*, et al., and his mature work in *Capital*. Therefore Marx's writings in philosophy, economics, and politics are not disparate categories of intellectual endeavor but rather complementary, interdisciplinary components of a continuing study on man's alienation from his human essence. Without the concept of alienation, both Marx's writings as intellectual enterprises and the communist revolution as an historical act would be incomplete. In the course of this proof I shall investigate whether Marx's prescription of abolishing private property is sufficient to guarantee the de-alienation of species man.

The body of this thesis will consist of four chapters. The concept of alienation will be analyzed in two separate, though intricately related parts. First, I shall discuss Marx's general conception of alienation, tracing it back to its historical genesis. In so doing I shall present alienation in its theoretical form. Therefore, chapter

one will investigate Marx's conception of man in his natural and species forms followed by a discussion of his general theory of alienation. The second chapter traces this theory to Marx's philosophical predecessors, Georg Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach. In addition, Marx's critique of both these philosophers will be provided so as to place his ideas in historical context. Second, I shall discuss Marx's specific conception of alienation in the capitalist system and its implications for subsequent systems. Therefore, chapters three and four will provide a socio-economic justification for Marx's philosophical conception of alienation and present a political prescription for de-alienation. In essence, the second part of this thesis deals with alienation in its practical form. Chapter three focuses on Marx's theory of the history of social man. Since it is necessary to explain why he places such great emphasis on the capitalist phase of history, the second part of the chapter will deal with the economics of capitalism as Marx saw it. This will be followed by a presentation of alienation in its specific forms under capitalism. Chapter four will analyze the contradictions inherent in capitalist production leading to its breakdown and the inception of a new historical phase. The final section of chapter four will be dedicated to addressing the question of whether, in this subsequent phase based on the abolition of private property, alienation will be eliminated. As well, there will be a brief discussion concerning the applicability of Marx's theory of alienation to modern-day capitalism. The thesis will then be summarized by means of a conclusion.

\* \* \*

While many of Marx's works have been used at least in part in preparing this thesis, some of his books served as constant references.

These were *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The German Ideology*, *Grundrisse*, *Capital*, and *The Communist Manifesto*. In investigating whether the abolition of private property will result in the de-alienation of the human essence, I shall focus on two different interpretations of Marx's writings. The first is based on a present-day conception of private property and the division of labour. The second suggests that Marx viewed private property and the division of labour as interdependent relations. The implication of the first interpretation is that abolishing private property will not be sufficient to guarantee de-alienation, given the division of labour to be the cause of alienation. The implication of the second interpretation is that abolishing private property is tantamount to abolishing the division of labour and thus would result in man's de-alienation.

A number of writers have studied Marx's theory of alienation in an attempt to discern whether the prescription of abolishing private property is sufficient to ensure de-alienation. It would appear that those who believe that Marx viewed reality in terms of social relationships rather than individuated factors whose ties were contingent agree that, for Marx, the division of labour and private property were interchangeable concepts. Thus, Marx did not err in his logic when he prescribed the abolition of private property for the phenomenon of alienation. One man who did not come to this conclusion regarding Marx's perception of reality was Adam Schaff in his book *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon*. He writes:

. . . work does not cease to be alienated work under socialism simply because private ownership of the means of production has been abolished. The main causes of the alienation of work will continue so long as . . . the division of labour continues,  
 . . .<sup>1</sup>

And

The abolition of private property, although it may lead to the elimination of a market economy, does not by itself overcome the social division of labour and thus the alienation of work. The abolition of private ownership is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for overcoming the alienation of work.<sup>2</sup>

By viewing private property and the division of labour as independent factors, Schaff disagrees that abolishing private property would result in the de-alienation of man. His critique of Marx revolves around an argument concerning market phenomena rather than the social relations of production. By Marxian definition, Schaff's approach epitomizes "vulgar economics."<sup>3</sup>

Marx believed that the empirical magnitude with which conventional economics occupied itself was mere appearance or symptomatic of an underlying reality that had to be investigated in different terms.<sup>4</sup> This is recognized by C. J. Arthur in his editor's introduction to *The German Ideology*:

. . . the question with Marx in all of his work is how to penetrate beneath the abstract categories of political economy and social life generally, to the human reality underlying them; and then in turn to exhibit the meaning of these apparently self-subsistent spheres and categories in terms of human reality.<sup>5</sup>

Although Arthur's analysis does not specifically address the question of labour and private property, he does assert that private property is not an eternal, self-subsistent entity. More importantly, he understands that there exists an internal relation between private property and the division of labour that needs to be examined so as to properly interpret Marx's writings.

In *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, R. Tucker displays an understanding of Marx's peculiar manner of viewing reality, i.e., in terms

of social relations.

By the abolition of the old division of labor he [Marx] and Engels mean, first, the abolition of the class division of society into owners of the means of production and non owning workers.<sup>6</sup>

Tucker is implying that, for Marx, abolishing private property is the same as abolishing the division of labour which originates in class division. Therefore, because Tucker saw the division of labour and alienation in Marx's system as having the same meaning, to abolish private property would be equivalent to abolishing alienation.<sup>7</sup>

In *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Shlomo Avineri discusses the relation between the division of labour and property.

Marx shows that the initial emergence of property must by necessity be tribal, since it originates in the capacity of a human group to gain possession of land. Such an act depends on a priori existence of group cohesion, i.e., some kind of social, tribal organization, . . .<sup>8</sup>

Originally, therefore, property depends upon tribal organization. Such a social organization is based on rudimentary divisions in labour. Thus, with respect to Marx's writings on private property, Avineri continues:

. . . the roots of individual property are found in common property, and property does not pre-date society but results from it. . . . Since with this social structure the relation to property is mediated through membership in the group, property appears as a relationship signifying social identification.<sup>9</sup>

The definitive phrase here is "property appears as a relationship."

Avineri does not interpret Marx's use of private property as referring to finite objects. Rather, he understands private property to represent social relationships. Therefore, in reference to abolishing private property, Avineri writes:

For Marx property is not the realization of personality but its negation: not only are the property-less alienated, but so are those who have property. The possession of property by one person necessarily entails its non-possession by another— . . . Consequently the problem is not the assurance of property to all—to Marx an inherent possibility and immanent contradiction—but the abolition of all property relations as such.<sup>10</sup>

Avineri interprets Marx's conception of private property as characterizing the relation between two major groups in capitalism, the property owners and the property-less. Therefore, he suggests that Marx is not calling for the abolition of private property in its finite forms but rather the abolition of the social relations epitomized by private property. From Avineri's discussion on social organization it is clear that the division of labour is the key to establishing social relationships and thus will be abolished with the abolition of private property.

Marx's manner of viewing "things" in terms of relations is examined in detail in Bertell Ollman's book, *Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*. In it he writes:

. . . it is man's alienated relations to his activity, products and other men, as expressed in the overt relations between things, that is the subject of Marx's economics. The immediate links between these relations of alienation and the rest of what is commonly understood by "economics" are the division of labor and private property.<sup>11</sup>

Ollman places the origin of Marx's economic analysis in the division of labour and private property, but not as independent entities. Although he clearly states that as independent objects private property is the result of the division of labour, as relations "They are 'identical' in being facets of the same whole which can be deduced from a full exposition of either."<sup>12</sup> Because Ollman recognizes that Marx conceived of things as relations, he writes that the condition of a thing's existence is taken to be part of what it is and therefore is to be

viewed as a relation.<sup>13</sup> Hence, the division of labour as the condition for the existence of private property is to be understood as part of what private property is. To abolish private property, therefore, would be to abolish the division of labour and thus alienation.

\*                    \*                    \*

It has become apparent that the key to interpreting Marx's writings is to first understand his manner of viewing social reality. By not understanding this, much of what Marx has written will be misinterpreted and deemed faulty. As has been shown, this has particular relevance with respect to interpreting the effectiveness of Marx's prescription for the de-alienation of man.

## INTRODUCTION

Notes

<sup>1</sup> A. Schaff, *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon* (Great Britain: Permagon Press, 1980), p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 202-203.

<sup>3</sup> T. Sowell, "Marxian Value Reconsidered," *Economics* (August, 1963), p. 299.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>5</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with Introduction by C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> R. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 27-28.

<sup>7</sup> R. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 188.

<sup>8</sup> S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 112.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> B. Ollman, *Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 28.



## Chapter One

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ALIENATION

The purpose of this chapter is to sketch the various forms of alienation in a capitalist society as seen by Marx. To this end the initial analysis will focus on the essence of man as the foundation of all of Marx's theorizing. For the most part, the chapter is definitional and will serve as a point of reference for the chapters that follow.

#### The Essence of Man According to Marx

Every economic, political or social theory either tacitly or explicitly makes some assumptions on the nature of man. These assumptions in a sense constitute the metaphysical infrastructure of the theory in question. Marx's theory is no exception. To understand his system of thought is to understand man as Marx conceived of him. The first obvious characteristic of man according to Marx is that he is a natural being. As a natural being he is made of natural powers, desires and needs which reflect the animal side of man; without them man cannot survive as a natural being confronted with the rest of the world. These desires and needs can best be understood as instinctive urges; they are not sensations consciously contemplated but function as built-in survival mechanisms for natural man who is unconscious of himself as man. His animal consciousness is only concerned with the immediate sensuous environment. Nature appears to him as an

all-powerful and unassailable force.<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, need refers to the desire natural man experiences for a "something" that is usually not immediately available, whether this something be food, shelter, or other people for physical gratification. As a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being, animal man is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature because these objects which he needs exist outside of him, i.e., are independent of him.<sup>2</sup> To this extent, they constitute nature for him.

Need is not a sufficient condition for survival. There must exist means by which natural man can satisfy these needs. Operating as mediator between man's needs and his nature are the natural powers with which he is endowed. These powers exist in him as tendencies and abilities. In Marx's view man's needs and powers are inseparable in that need is the means by which man becomes aware of the existence of his powers and in turn the realization of these powers is the means by which man's needs are satisfied. Thus, a need will go unsatisfied if the powers responsible for its satisfaction cannot be realized.

Man's powers are historically determined in the sense that at any given time his needs and level of consciousness dictate exactly what kind of powers are necessary to subdue nature so as to satisfy the need. This is a continuing process which underlies historical development and the various stages of development through which man has gone individually as well as collectively. In this light, power also suggests "potential" and, in particular, the possibility of its enhancement.<sup>3</sup>

At this stage, man has not differentiated himself from nature. He is an extension, albeit an active extension that influences and is influenced by nature at the same time. As was mentioned, however,

natural man's influence on nature is not a conscious act. It is an act whose purpose is to satisfy a need, yet also one which ties man ever closer to nature. Natural man not only develops through nature but is also limited by it; the availability and quality of objects necessary to fulfill certain needs control man; regulating when and how his powers may be used. Nature determines all that man is and can become.

Completely controlled by natural forces, natural man's actions are spontaneous rather than voluntary, and for this reason Marx suggests that in action he is not yet "man" but still animal, a natural being. Natural being is immediately one with his activity. He cannot distinguish himself from it. He is what he does. Man is not conscious of himself as man. Labour for him is mere energy expended to maintain physical existence. Natural man produces, but only what is immediately necessary for survival and thus he only produces himself.<sup>4</sup>

Natural man also possesses no "apparent" qualities that make him unique among animals. However, as close as man is to animal he is not fully animal. He is inherently different from any other animal in that he represents a potentiality in search of actualization. This is the human side implicit in natural man. Thus, the issue becomes one of natural man realizing his potentials by becoming conscious of himself as "man," as a "species" being.

Whereas natural man is not conscious of being human, species man can "apprehend in thought not only his own individual self, but also his own species character."<sup>5</sup> Thus he develops qualities particular to man. Species being, however, not only manifests and confirms himself as such in knowing but also in being. He is able to distinguish between himself as an actor and his acts; thus he is aware of himself as an individual

active in pursuing his own ends.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, his species consciousness includes "an awareness of the self as being a member of the species, as sharing a common nature with others."<sup>7</sup> So, not only does species man realize his own actions, he also realizes the actions of others. Specifically, he realizes that these actions have similar aims and are even connected to his own. This implies species man to be a social being. Along with being conscious of himself and others, species man is conscious of having a past and by integrating this knowledge with the realization of a present, he is aware of a future, i.e., he is aware of time and its passing.

Man then manifests himself as species in two ways. First, he looks, sounds, smells, feels and tastes like man. Second, and more importantly, man engages in activities of a kind, quality and pace that could only be done by human beings. Man is able to set himself off mentally from whatever he is doing. He is conscious of a distinction between his acts and himself as actor, and it is his choice on any occasion to act or to rest. Species man, therefore, has conscious life activity which is immediately distinguishable from animal life activity. Man becomes aware of this distinction as soon as he begins to produce his own means of subsistence.<sup>8</sup> "Such conscious and willed activity is unique to man among all living creatures."<sup>9</sup>

Along with natural powers species man also possesses species powers. Over the course of the development of consciousness, man becomes aware of his needs and the objects in nature that will satisfy them. He becomes needful for things beyond those ensuring his survival. These needs constitute species needs. The powers summoned to satisfy such needs are unique to man because the needs giving rise to them are

unique to man. Such powers are his species powers. Like natural powers they can only be established through particular relationships with nature because only in natural objects can species powers find objective realization.

The true distinction between natural and species powers becomes obvious if we try to conceive of the latter without the former. If only vested with natural powers man can survive in the form of an animal. However, man cannot survive if solely vested with species powers. He must first possess natural powers to guarantee survival. Without animal relations to nature man does not exist. Natural powers therefore establish the framework within which life itself is carried on.<sup>10</sup>

Having established species needs and powers, we now turn to the character of the species. In an attempt to summarize human nature in general Marx said, "the whole character of a species . . . is contained in the character of its life activity."<sup>11</sup> This is to say that in order to identify the character of man's species, it is necessary to determine what his life activity is, i.e., those activities distinguishing the human species. Marx sees productive work to be at the core of man's life activity. What species man is coincides with what he produces and how he produces it. Species man produces even when he is free from physical need and he reproduces the whole of nature. He knows "how to produce in accordance with the standards of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty."<sup>12</sup> The object of species man's labour is the objectification of his species life. He duplicates himself intellectually as well as materially in reality. Thus, by consciously transforming his environment he comes to see

himself in a world that he has created.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the species character can be summed up as free and conscious activity. Given freedom to be "the positive power to assert one's true individuality," free activity allows for the active unfolding of all man's species potentiality.<sup>14</sup> Marx's concern is to link freedom with the full development of species man's powers.<sup>15</sup> In the Marxist sense such development would be impossible in a society where the means for production were privately owned by an elite group, i.e., in capitalism. He believed that under such conditions the most complete suspension of individual freedom would prevail. Species man would not be allowed to cultivate his potentials and thus he would be alienated from his true essence. The reasons for Marx believing species man to be alienated from his essence under capitalism will be discussed next.

### Alienation

Marx intended his theory of alienation to be used as a focal point from which to view man's relationship with himself, his species and nature. His theory concentrates not only on why these relations exist but also why they break down. Marx contended that man's alienation within these different relationships was only fully completed in the relation between wage labour and capital.

In capitalist production this relation between wage labour and capital has the effect of estranging man from his products. He no longer has control over what he produces or what becomes of it later. Similarly, man is separated from his life activity; he plays no part in deciding what he does or how he does it. Thus, man is also separated from his species. Any powers with the potential for human development

are used solely for human survival; no channels exist for free activity. Finally, man is said to be separated from man because competition and class hostility inherent in capitalist society render most forms of human co-operation impossible.

An obvious question arises from this. "What is left of man?" Man has become an abstraction because he has lost touch with his human specificity. With little remaining of his relations to his product, his activity and other men, it becomes difficult to determine what the peculiar qualities of his species are.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, conceptually as well as practically, man is reduced to an animal.

*The Alienation of Man from his Product*

The most obvious expression of alienation in a capitalist society is the worker's inability to own the product of his work.

The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him independently as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien.<sup>17</sup>

Three different relations have been referred to here. By identifying and discussing each, the significance of man's separation from his product will be brought to light.

The first relation is that between potential labour activity and actualized labour. "The product of man's labor is labor congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor. Labor's realization is its objectification."<sup>18</sup> Through this process of applying labour activity to nature to create new forms of material existence man comes to master his world. As this is a necessary element of all human social life, objectification of labour is a

supra-historical phenomenon.

However, Marx sees the objectification of labour in a capitalist society as taking on characteristics unique to this historical phase.

The worker can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world. It is the material on which his labour is realized in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces. But just as nature provides labour with [the] means of life in the sense that labour cannot live without objects on which to operate, on the other hand, it also provides the means of life in the more restricted sense, i.e., the means for the physical subsistence of the worker himself. Thus the more the worker by his labour appropriates the external world, sensuous nature, the more he deprives himself of means of life in two respects: first, in that the sensuous external world more and more ceases to be an object belonging to his labour—to be his labour's means of life; and secondly, in that it more and more ceases to be means of life in the immediate sense, means for the physical subsistence of the worker.<sup>19</sup>

In both respects, the worker is enslaved to the object of his production. He can no longer use what he creates in further productive activity and thus his products are no longer the means of life for his labour. Similarly, the worker cannot directly use his products to keep himself alive; they are no longer a means for his physical existence. No matter how great his needs are, the worker cannot use what his own hands have created, and as a result he does not recognize the products as his.

Consequently, in the second relation man sees his creation to be independent of himself. The products come to exist outside him as something alien to him. Only indirectly, through spending the wage he receives for his labour, can the worker take possession of part of what this same labour has created.<sup>20</sup> The products necessary for survival are beyond the worker's control. The forces of production, too, products of yesterday's labour, 'appear as a world for themselves,



quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individual."<sup>21</sup>

This leads to the final relation. Man's products, once independent, become a power on their own confronting him. Whereas man as man has the power to control nature, through exercising this power his product is now in a position to control him.<sup>22</sup> The individual stands helpless before his product.

The worker puts his life into the object but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object. Hence, the greater this activity the more the worker lacks objects. The more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself—his inner world—becomes the less belongs to him as his own. . . . Whatever the product of labor is, he is not.<sup>23</sup>

The more commodities the worker creates, the cheaper labour becomes as a commodity, labour having produced not only products but also itself as a commodity. As the world of things increases in value, it must be that the world of men devalues and the relationship between men is obscured as a relationship between products. Man is reduced to a thing, an appendage of the world of products.

What remains of the worker after having his products taken from him, the products needed to live and to carry on his work, is an abstraction, someone humanly impoverished. Marx concluded that this form of alienation could not be overcome while productive relations alienated human relations into relationships between objects and while economists forgot that the essence of commodities is objectified human labour.<sup>24</sup>

Although Marx's emphasis lies on the alienation of economic products, all of man's products are subject to alienation, be they

economic products, socio-political institutions or ideological products.

The state, as a creation of man, is, according to Marx, a manifestation of alienation par excellence. It is not a power externally forced upon society but rather a product initially created by society to keep social classes with conflicting economic interests from consuming themselves. It acts as a power for keeping conflict within the bounds of order.<sup>25</sup> Marx proposed that due to its origin in a divided society, the state would become the servant of one class and the master of another. The state would act in accordance with the priorities of the owners of the means of production and assure the obedience of the worker. The human subject becomes the object of his own product.

This is also true of religious ideologies which originate in the slave-master relationship.<sup>26</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach maintained that those human attributes which seem to be lacking in present man are projected on the imagined figure of God.<sup>27</sup> God, therefore, is a creation of man's mind. However, upon inferring life into the object, God, man is made into a predicate of his product and thus human reality is mystified. On the same premise that the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he has created and the poorer he becomes, so it is in religion that "The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself."<sup>28</sup>

In general, man's relation to all of his products in a capitalist society is neither free nor conscious. The object of his creation becomes alienated from him, regardless of what man thinks about himself or how he experiences the product. In this respect alienation is an objective relation. In exercising his life activity man experiences

not only his products as alien, but also his participation in productive work becomes involuntary. He is alienated from the productive process, i.e., he becomes self-alienated. To this we turn next.

Man's Relation to his Productive Activity

Alienation is 'manifested not only in the result but in the act of production, within the producing activity itself,'<sup>29</sup> for,

How could the worker come to face the product of his activity as a stranger were it not that in the very act of production he was estranging himself from himself? The product is after all but the summary of the activity of production. If then the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation. In the estrangement of the object of labour is merely summarized the estrangement, the alienation in the activity of labour itself.<sup>30</sup>

Man's productive activity is the effective mediation between the individual and the outer world. It is the chief means by which he appropriates objects. Three social relationships exist between man's activity and his powers: (i) activity is the foremost example of the combined operations of powers; (ii) activity establishes new possibilities for the fulfillment of powers by transforming nature and hence all nature-imposed limitations; and (iii) activity is the main means by which the potential of powers is developed.<sup>31</sup> In a capitalist society these relations become obscured by the existence of alienated labour. Labour becomes external to the worker. As a commodity labour power is sold and thus no longer belongs to the worker but rather to another. The result is that in his work he cannot affirm himself. The worker feels outside of his work. It is not voluntary but rather forced, seen as being performed only in the service and under the domination of another man. The worker engages in his productive activity only on the

sufferance of the capitalist. When the latter decides he has had enough, i.e., when further production will not yield a profit, the activity stops. It loses all spontaneity and creativity, and man only feels freely active in his animal functions. "In his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal."<sup>32</sup>

The effects of wage labour on the relations between activity and power then are as follows. With the development of the division of labour and the consequent repetitive character of each productive task, productive activity no longer requires all of man's species powers.

Also

Instead of developing the potential inherent in man's powers, capitalist labour consumes these powers without replenishing them, burns them up as if they were a fuel, and leaves the individual worker that much poorer. The qualities that mark him as a human being become progressively diminished.<sup>33</sup>

These consequences are not immediately visible as they feed on potentials realizable in the future. But what has capitalist labour done to workers on a level where the results are visible? Where man cannot develop freely his physical and mental energy, he "mortifies his body and ruins his mind."<sup>34</sup> In Marx's words, the worker is a "mere fragment of his own body," "a living appendage of the machine" and "he looks the part with stunted size, bent backs, over and under developed muscles, enlarged lungs, death pale complexions."<sup>35</sup> With respect to the worker's mind, it becomes ruined by the nature of the tasks he must do under the conditions he must do them. Symptomatic of this ruination is a decaying will power, mental inflexibility and ignorance. Marx suggested that industry produces in its labourers "idiocy" and "cretinism."<sup>36</sup>

Labour activity does not exist in and for itself. It does not

satisfy the need for labour activity but rather is reduced to a means for satisfying external needs. If capitalist activity does not allow for the development of man's powers to their fullest, but rather hinders and retards them, then it must be that this estranged labour separates man from his species being.

### Man's Relation to his Species

Man is a species being not only because he recognizes himself as individual man but also, as we have seen, because he recognizes his own species character. He is aware of being a member of one species among other species. "The whole character of a species—its species character—is contained in the character of its life activity; and free, conscious activity is man's species character."<sup>37</sup> Productive life is man's life activity. When productive life becomes a means for maintaining physical existence, as in capitalist society, the character of the species becomes physical existence. The object of labour is man's species life objectified. He duplicates himself consciously, intellectually and actively in reality and therefore comes to see himself in a world he has created. Capitalist production, by tearing the object of man's production from him, tears from him his species life and man's advantage over animals is transformed into disadvantage.<sup>38</sup> Man's purpose of work becomes survival. Because his consciousness is directed toward staying alive, his consciousness does not raise him above the animals. He becomes so much an individual trying to stay alive that he fails to recognize himself as a member of the species. He fails to see the similarities of himself with others. In order that he recognize himself first as a man in general, he must recognize these similarities

that he shares with other men. Only then may he distinguish himself as one man in particular by comprehending his basic differences in comparison to others. Overall, if man's similarities go unnoticed, he cannot develop self-consciousness as a species and he will have no basis for the development of his consciousness as a particular member of that species. Consequently, man is reduced to an animal; he is what he does.

Given that man is no longer a being for himself, not recognizing himself as a man among other men, he becomes alienated from man. This is the last form of alienation to be discussed.

#### Man's Relation to his Fellow Man

An immediate consequence of man being estranged from the products of his labour, from his life activity, and from his species being is the estrangement of man from man.<sup>39</sup> What applies to man's relation to his product, to his work and to himself also holds true with respect to man's relation to other men, to their labour and to the objects of their labour. "The estrangement of man and in fact every relationship in which man [stands] to himself, is realised and expressed only in the relationship in which a man stands to other men."<sup>40</sup> This implies that within all the different relationships of estranged labour, man views other men in accordance with the relationship he finds himself as a worker. Presenting this in terms of capitalist production, the questions are asked, "if the product of labour is alien to me, if it confronts me as an alien power, to whom then does it belong? If my own activity does not belong to me, if it is an alien, a coerced activity, to whom does it belong?" The answer: "to a being other than myself."

But "who is this being?" It is not the gods; the alien being can only be man himself, a man who is not a worker but rather to whom labour and the products of labour belong, the owner of the means of production.<sup>41</sup> To the extent that the worker puts his life into these products only to involuntarily relinquish them, the capitalist appropriates the lives of the workers by taking control of their products.

Thus if the product of his labour, his labour objectified, is for him an alien, hostile, powerful object independent of him, then his position towards it is such that someone else is master of this object, someone who is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him.<sup>42</sup>

The nature of a capitalist society, divided into the classes of worker and non-worker, is characterized by man's inability to recognize the universal similarities between men. The worker does not see himself in the non-worker and vice versa. Man feels "apart" from his true self because he cannot see himself in others.

In this chapter I have explained the different forms of alienation Marx saw existing in a capitalist society: alienation of man's product from himself, alienation of man from his productive process, from his species and from man. The understanding of these estrangements is necessary for anyone who is serious about studying the works of Marx, for they appear implicitly if not explicitly in all his writings from the young to the mature Marx. It has also become clear in this chapter that the concept of the nature of man is a developmental concept. Man's nature is a product of his life activity and a product of his history as a species being. Man starts as a natural being, goes through a process of alienation, overcomes alienation and realizes himself as a species being. This distinction between natural and species man is the

generally unrecognized foundation on which Marx erects his entire conception of human nature.<sup>43</sup> In the chapter that follows I shall trace the genesis of Marx's philosophical conception of alienation.



## Chapter One

Notes

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> B. Ollman, *Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> J. O'Malley, Introduction to *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, by Karl Marx, ed. J. O'Malley (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), p. xli.

<sup>6</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> O'Malley, Introduction to *Critique* by Marx, p. xli.

<sup>8</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 112.

<sup>10</sup> While natural powers serve as the basis for developing species powers, they also retain the possibility of becoming species specific if exercised in a way markedly different from that of animals.

<sup>11</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, trans. R. Dixon (Moscow, 1956), p. 176.

<sup>15</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 118.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 144.

<sup>21</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 65.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 64.

<sup>24</sup> S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 108-109.

<sup>25</sup> F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, vol. 3 (Moscow: MESW, 1970), pp. 326-327. As taken from A. Schaff, *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon* (Oxford: Permagon Press, 1980), p. 106.

<sup>26</sup> See "Lordship and Bondage" in G. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*.

<sup>27</sup> L. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, ed. H. Schmidt (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 7-20. As taken from Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>28</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 64. Further discussion of Feuerbach's interpretation of the relation between man and God will be given in the second chapter where Marx's philosophical predecessors will be investigated.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

<sup>31</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 138.

<sup>32</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>34</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 66.

<sup>35</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, trans. 3rd German edition S. Moore and E. Aveling, ed. F. Engels (New York: Random House, Inc., 1906), p. 306.

<sup>36</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>43</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 76.

## Chapter Two

### THE GENESIS OF ALIENATION

Marx developed his conception of alienation as a reaction not only to the social circumstances of the time but also to philosophical fervour resulting from changing notions regarding alienation. It is important to the understanding of Marx's philosophy and ideas of history that this genesis of alienation be traced. Only by doing this can one understand why the concept of alienation is so important in Marx's writings.

In the course of tracing this genesis two of Marx's philosophical predecessors will be discussed, Georg Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach. By outlining their ideas with respect to alienation and showing Marx's reaction to them, not only will Marx's ideas be revealed but also how and why they were developed.

The format of the chapter will be as follows. First, I will explain how alienation for Hegel is the alienation of infinite Spirit from its essence due to a lack of self-consciousness of being Spirit. Emphasis will be placed on Hegel's view of history as the process of development of Spirit's self-consciousness and special attention will be paid to the role of philosophy in this development. This will be followed by Hegel's explanation of the culmination of history in the rational state whereby this state allows for the overcoming of Spirit's alienation. Second, I will introduce Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's

theory and show how he transformed Hegelianism to support his own theory of alienation, the "alienation of the abstract, non-historical and non-class man."<sup>1</sup> At that point I will be in the position to examine Marx's reaction to the theories of both philosophers, citing critique and approval. By this method insight will be gained into the importance Marx placed on the concept of alienation as a continuing underlying theme in his writings.

### Hegel's Concept of Alienation

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Georg Hegel was one of the most prominent philosophers of Germany. He added great depth and breadth to an already very rich period of intellectual pursuit. To fully appreciate this man's contribution to philosophical endeavor is an enormous undertaking and one that is outside the bounds of the task at hand. As a student of Hegelian philosophy, Karl Marx paid greatest attention to Hegel's philosophy of history. The manner in which Hegel interpreted history dictated what alienation meant to him. This in turn influenced Marx's perception of what alienation was and what the driving forces behind it were. For this reason my analysis of Hegel will focus on his philosophy of history.

The subject and primary moving force in history according to Hegel was "Spirit." He viewed Spirit much like Christian theology views God, except he saw it as a great error to posit a God as eternally complete to the exclusion of all "negation." Instead he offered a God who must actualize himself. It is this God, or Spirit, that experiences alienation. At the outset of creation, Spirit is implicitly all encompassing but is not conscious of itself as such. According to Hegel,

this is alienation. The underlying question was by what means could Spirit emerge into full and clear self-consciousness of itself? Hegel responded to this with a theory of history as the self-realization of God.

This manner of viewing history constituted a new philosophical movement. Hegel objected to the prevailing Christian theology in that it severed human nature from the divine. God had been placed in another world. To this other world man contributed nothing, and into which, at best, he could beg his way.<sup>2</sup> Hegel questioned whether man should behold the divine outside himself, postulating absolute differences in their respective essences. Rather, he chose to emphasize man's self-actualization as a divinely perfect being, locating God within man. Thus, to the extent that man strove to become like God, he would be striving to be his own self. Hegel argued that any religion making God an "alien other" would be intolerably confining, not allowing man to discover within himself an all-encompassing nature. The developing consciousness of man would be one and the same as the developing consciousness of Spirit. This process of Spirit's developing consciousness will be discussed in detail.

In the beginning, Spirit contains all the qualities of an infinite Spirit but is not conscious of them. They exist in seed form. In content Spirit is complete but in form is underdeveloped. It is all potential with no actuality. This contradiction between content and form lends itself to an urge for self-development. According to Hegel, "Only what is living and spiritual moves, bestirs itself within and develops."<sup>3</sup> This urge manifests itself in an inherent creativity, the aim of which is Spirit's self-consciousness. Because of this initial

contradiction and subsequent urge for development, Spirit is driven out of its potentiality. It makes itself objectively existent, putting itself into externality.<sup>4</sup> What is implicit in Spirit, in seed form, must become an object to it. This object in its concrete form must be presented to Spirit's underdeveloped consciousness so that Spirit may become explicitly aware of itself. As an externalization of Spirit the existence of the object implies that it contains, in miniscule portion, the truth of Spirit's totality. However, so long as Spirit does not apprehend the object as a part of itself, the object will appear alien and finite, and thus will contradict Spirit's essence of totality. Hence, Spirit will be alienated from itself. Once recognized as a creation of Spirit's, the object, in its one-sided existence, will be transcended and Spirit will become more aware of itself. This will not refute Spirit's content. What will be refuted is the present form taken by Spirit. It was the most developed or highest in its time but ceases to be so. It is negated, i.e., degraded, to being only one factor in the following stage of Spirit's development.<sup>5</sup> This continued activity of externalization, confrontation and transcendence gives further form to what has previously been formed. In this way Spirit becomes more inwardly developed and the gap between content and form or potentiality and actuality is slowly diminished.

The mechanics of this progressive development of Spirit's self-consciousness is called dialectics. Hegel refers to this metamorphosis as *Aufhebung*, translated as sublation, emphasizing the two-fold connotation of destruction and preservation. The externalization or alteration must be of such a character that what emerges is still identical with what has been there from the beginning. In this way the potentiality

is not annihilated and the emergent forms subsequently become parts of the whole. The dialectic illustrates that the spiritual development is not an inactive process but rather endless labour, activity directed on something present and transforming it.<sup>6</sup> As well, because of the nature of the Spirit's development whereby Spirit is striving to completely unify the contradiction between its content and its form, dialectics reveals that this development is not to be envisaged as a straight line. Rather, it is circular, returning into itself. "Development is precisely the Spirit's self-deepening in such a way that it brings its depths into consciousness."<sup>7</sup> Spirit is no longer alienated from itself when it is alone with itself and this occurs when it is at home with itself in its other. It sees itself in everything that it has created. The world is without contingency and Spirit knows that it is alone and always has been. Content and form are one and the same, and Spirit is free.

This process of Spirit coming to know itself as Spirit does not take place in some dimension unbeknown to mortal man. It has an earthly basis. When Spirit externalizes itself it does so into two spheres: nature and man. Nature is externalized Spirit that is unconscious of itself as Spirit, God in his spatial existence; whereas man is Spirit in the act of becoming conscious of itself as Spirit, God in his temporal development.<sup>8</sup> The reason man is Spirit in the process of self-consciousness is because Spirit uses man's mind as a tool for its self-development. The developing consciousness of man is actually the developing consciousness of Spirit, it coming to know itself for what it is. Only man's mind may serve as a tool for Spirit because only man can engage in thought that is separate from his actions. The mind of



generic man thus is an interpretive tool, but in particular it is the minds of philosophers that are not only tools for interpretation but, more importantly, vehicles for Spirit's direct advancement in self-consciousness. As philosophers these men's thought center around thinking itself. They are not concerned with concrete objects. Thus their thinking is untrammelled, it is confronted with no barriers imposed by the limitation of the finite characteristics of objects. Thinking about thinking is philosophy, and the significance of it is that it is thought at its best. Hegel maintains that philosophy is the consciousness of the Spirit. Therefore, the aim of philosophy is to know the "one truth" or comprehend it in thought.<sup>9</sup> Thus, "philosophy is identical with the spirit of the age in which it appears."<sup>10</sup> It must be then that every philosophy as it has appeared over time is the earthly counterpart of Spirit's knowledge of itself at that same time. For this reason, the earliest philosophies were necessarily quite simple and abstract, reflecting Spirit's minimal awareness of itself in the beginning. The more developed philosophy of a later age is essentially due to the preceding labours of the thinking Spirit. The history of philosophy, therefore, is the history of the development of Spirit, an exhibition of the decisive stages of Spirit's development as they have followed one another in the course of time.

The advancement of philosophy is necessary as it reflects the advancement of Spirit's consciousness. But just as Spirit's development is dialectical whereby everything externalized and transcended is retained and further complements what has come before, so it must be that every subsequent philosophy must contain the specific characteristics of its predecessors. The younger the philosophy, the more

developed, richer and profound. Thus, a more precise way to speak of the many philosophies over time is to regard them as necessary stages in the development of "the one philosophy."<sup>11</sup> The order in which they appear over time is set and no philosophical stage can appear sooner than it does. So, too, no philosophical stage can be repeated as this would indicate a backward movement in the development of Spirit's self-consciousness, and the nature of the dialectical progression would not allow this. Overall, this ideal manner in which Hegel perceives history as the process of Spirit's self-development manifests itself in an earthly fashion as a history of philosophy. This is to say, Hegel's philosophy of history is a history of philosophy.

This process of Spirit's development and thus philosophy's progression culminates in Spirit coming to know itself as Spirit in the mind of philosophers. Spirit's de-alienation would be the product of the thinking process. To this Hegel suggested that he was the particular philosopher in whom God had finally come home to itself. Thus in Hegel's mind his philosophy was the one philosophy and there would be no impetus for philosophy to proceed any further.

For the ideal of such an ascending development to be credible, it must have an effective terminus in view. The achievement of Spirit's self-consciousness and thus freedom must actually be possible. Spirit desires to reconcile itself with reality through the minds of men and, according to Hegel, it has a means to such reconciliation in civilization and especially the state. State in the Hegelian sense is the "ethical whole" where the individual can realize his own freedom as a part of the community. Freedom for Spirit and freedom for man are obviously not the same thing, but the first necessarily implies the

second. By using the minds of men to come into consciousness of itself, Spirit will come to realize that man is one of its creations, or rather man is objectified Spirit. For Spirit to be conscious of this via the use of man's thinking, then it must be that man, or more specifically philosopher, becomes aware of this. Spirit cannot be fully conscious of itself as Spirit unless man is conscious of himself as an externalization of Spirit. Through community, the individual will come to realize his part in history as part of, as well as instrument for, the growing consciousness of Spirit. As an objectification of the one truth or Spirit, being man means being free. However, if man is not aware of being Spirit's objectification, then he is only free in himself, i.e., potentially free. Upon becoming conscious of one's own freedom, man is free for himself but this is not genuine freedom if he does not know why he is free. It is only when the consciousness of freedom advances to a knowledge that the fact of being man is the reason for being free, one is free in and for himself.<sup>12</sup> The condition for this real freedom is the acknowledgement that as externalization of Spirit, all men are free. In this sense man's freedom is achieved through and maintained in thought.

Spirit's freedom is attained when man, living in community, becomes conscious of his own freedom. This community or state, as Hegel refers to it, is specific in character. The state recognizes civil rights but over time the individuals learn to recognize public interests as their own basic interests and acquire the will to promote the universal even when it negates the individual.<sup>13</sup> Freedom is attained at the price of giving up the whims of self-will. The state, Spirit's highest form of objectivization, represents the general will. Within this state,

Hegel demanded that man's actions be answerable to Reason, or the absolute truths that Spirit had up to then revealed. This is contrasted with relative truths, the superficial realities that were particular to place and passed with time. Thus, laws based on Reason were immune to the will of the majority. However, Hegel put forth that it was impossible for Reason to rule in a situation where it had to assert its demands by violence. Systematic coercion was a mark of an immature society where subjective individual will clashed with the general will. In any case, where general and individual wills are in conflict it is the state, the embodiment of Reason, that must prevail.

In this subordination of individual will to general will the opposition between freedom and necessity ceases to exist. The necessity prescribed by Reason of history comes about not through compulsion but through free will.<sup>14</sup>

The state, representing absolute truth, was beyond reproach; there was no need to evaluate truth once it had been discovered.

In the very act of perceiving something as a portion of evolving Reason, we accept that something. . . . The submission of the intellect to the authority of the Absolute is an indivisible whole composed of simultaneous understanding and trust in its wisdom.<sup>15</sup>

Hegel believed it vain and foolish to imagine ideals independently of the actual state of history or to postulate a radical opposition between the world as it was revealed to man and as it should be.<sup>16</sup> If history reveals Reason based on universal truths, then there should be no questioning of what the world ought to be for it is just exactly as it should be, the universal Spirit's cultivated potentials. There is no question of right or wrong. What we see is part and parcel of the infinite Spirit or absolute truth. According to Hegel, philosophy's aim was to know this truth or to comprehend it in thought. Thus, he

said, "We will have nothing to do with opinion; in philosophy and its history we have no business with what has perished."<sup>17</sup> All universal truth, i.e., truth not relative to time and place, would be retained. Therefore, Hegel's history of philosophy and hence philosophy of history was concerned with the past but no less with the present.

Summing up, Hegelian knowing means self-discovery. Spirit in a given conscious subject comes to recognize itself in what had appeared to be a world apart from it but what was, in actuality, a product of its own activity of self-externalization. When confronted with an alien and hostile external world, man was Spirit in his state of self-alienation. Knowing the world as self-is, Spirit returned to himself out of alienation.

#### Feuerbach on the Issue of Alienation

To the extent that Hegel was the dominant figure of German thought between 1820-1840, Ludwig Feuerbach was his philosophical archrival. It has been contended that "one doesn't continue Hegel except in opposing him. This conclusion is finally brought home to Feuerbach."<sup>18</sup> Feuerbach's relation to Hegel is one of a struggle to overcome the dominance of the master.

. . . from imitation to critical emulation, to a more critical selection of the viable and enduring elements in Hegel's thought . . .; to a rejection of the masters's fundamental presuppositions, and the revelation of their inadequacy; and finally to the proposition of a dialectical counterthesis.<sup>19</sup>

Feuerbach began his critique of the Hegelian concept of alienation by first positing that Hegelian philosophy, like all philosophies, arose at a determinate time, was preceded by a definite philosophical tradition, and would be modified and to some degree replaced by philosophies

to follow. Therefore, he felt justified to suggest that the Hegelian concept of Spirit was limited and conditional.

Feuerbach's reform and transformation of Hegelian philosophy acted as harbinger for new philosophies. He saw as his main task an inversion of Hegel's philosophy. In Hegel's system man was considered a mere predicate of idealist reasoning or of thought. Feuerbach conversely believed the true relation to be one where man was the subject and thought was the predicate. This process of transformation of the subject-object relationship has come to be referred to as the Feuerbachian transformative method. Hegel's self-conscious Spirit was understood to be one-in-the-same with "God" and thus with such a transformation Feuerbach contended that the foundation upon which religion was erected was simply the projection of man's essential desires and capacities. Because those characteristics ascribed to God were really only ideal attributes of man, man was separated from himself. For Feuerbach this constituted true alienation.

The intrinsic necessity by which God changes from an object of man to his subject, to his thinking ego, can be derived . . . in the following way. God is an object of man, and only of man; he is not an object of animals. The essence of a being is recognized however, only through its object; the object to which a being is necessarily related is nothing but its own revealed being . . . If, now, God is an object of man—and indeed, inasmuch as he really is a necessary and essential object—what is expressed in the being of this object is merely the peculiar essence of man.<sup>20</sup>

From this it can be seen that Feuerbach believed that the attributes of God were essentially the attributes of man alienated by man himself and projected on a supreme being. The supreme being was nothing but man truly understanding himself as such. Thus, Spirit could be nothing more than the definite minds of humans, and hence the secret of theology was

no more than anthropology in that the idea of the divine was developed over man's history. Furthermore, throughout this history the eternity of God would be nothing but the eternity of man through the species.<sup>21</sup>

According to Feuerbach, man's alienation is manifested through a fantasy that he has about God. Compare this to Hegel's notion that man does not realize himself as God. Given the apparent differences, the corresponding remedies for overcoming alienation are considerably different. In Hegelian philosophy it requires the transcendence of the limits enforced by space and time. This would allow thinking man to comprehend the totality of all men. Compare this to Feuerbach. The overcoming of alienation requires the removal of all traces of transcendental and supernatural. This would have the effect of fully and completely reducing man to space and time.<sup>22</sup> Man would realize God to be a projection of his own mind. "The motive power for this projection is provided by man's needs and wants which arise because of man's finite being."<sup>23</sup> Hence, Feuerbach argued that religion was a product of real emotional needs and would not collapse.<sup>24</sup> However, he offered in place of an idealist religion a new religion recognizing and renouncing fetishistic tendencies and accepting the fundamental truth that the consciousness of God is nothing else than the consciousness of the species.<sup>25</sup> Man falls into error when he is unconscious of his own creations, e.g., a God, not understanding the passions and desires driving him to such a creation.

Feuerbach is critical not only of the content of Hegel's philosophy but also of its method, the dialectic. He argued that no matter what was chosen as the starting point in experience, Spirit's developed self-consciousness would be the ending point. This suggested to

Feuerbach that Hegel knew what he wanted to prove and considered it to be true a priori. As well, Feuerbach criticized that the only way Hegel could continue to adhere to the notion of such a dialectical progression was by denying the validity of sense perception.<sup>26</sup> For Feuerbach, sense perception was the primary medium through which man came to understand himself in nature. He claimed his new philosophy to be "basically nothing other than essence of feeling elevated to consciousness."<sup>27</sup>

Truth, reality, and sensation are identical. Only a sensuous being is a true and real being. Only through the senses, and not through thought for itself, is an object given in a true sense. The object that is given in thought or that is identical with thought is only idea.<sup>28</sup>

The reason why Feuerbach's transformative method of inverting Hegelian idealism was so important for the time was that it postulated a completely new starting point for philosophy.<sup>29</sup> His theory that God was a creation of man's and not vice versa was seen to be applicable to practically every social institution for by uncovering religion as an alienation from man, it could be shown that the whole of society was pervaded by a religious principle. For philosophies to follow, Feuerbach's critique of religion was the beginning of all critiques.

### Marx's Critique and Reconstruction of the Concept of Alienation

To ascertain the impact Hegel and Feuerbach had on the intellectual development of Marx, we have first to note what Marx perceived to be the redeeming characteristics of their theorizing and then examine the criticisms he launched against each of them. By doing this, the genesis of Marx's philosophy will become apparent.

As a young scholar, Marx was a student of Hegelian philosophy. He saw the outstanding achievement of Hegel to be his dialectics of



negativity as the moving and generating principle in history whereby objectification is conceived as loss of the object, alienation, and transcendence of this alienation.<sup>30</sup> Also the dialectic "grasps the essence of labour and comprehends . . . man—as the outcome of man's own labour."<sup>31</sup> This labour for Hegel was solely mental and abstract. In this sense, Marx was impressed with the emphasis Hegel placed on the activity of the mind in the knowing process. Marx believed that objects of knowledge did not impress themselves upon a passive consciousness.

More specifically with respect to dialectics, Marx placed great emphasis on Hegel's method of grasping wholes as multiplicities of stages and phases, whereby the whole becomes more developed and determinate with the passing of every stage. This aspect of Hegel's interpretation of history contained, for Marx, the germ of a radical critique of man's estrangement.

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Between the years 1841-1844 Marx's thinking became influenced by Feuerbach. Marx applauded Feuerbach's transformative method because it called for a "reconstruction of philosophy as a method of approaching the practical problems of men."<sup>32</sup> This validated Marx's view that human beings in their social contexts were the carriers of the historical process. As well, like Feuerbach, Marx explains man's false traditional conceptions of the world in terms of fetishistic expressions of activities unconsciously engaged in.<sup>33</sup> Marx suggests that Feuerbach's transformative criticism leveled against an idealist philosophy such as Hegel's could easily reveal that the real subject, the individual, was represented as a mere predicate of an abstraction, an abstraction that

had been hypostatized into an independent, all-embracing subject. Thus, Marx accepts Hegel's concepts and system as a whole and then subjects both to Feuerbach's transformative criticism with the belief that this criticism would act as a cipher, enabling him to unveil the hidden truth in Hegel's thought.<sup>34</sup>

The reason for Marx accepting Hegel's concepts and system yet believing the truth in Hegel's thought to be hidden was that Marx recognized a double error in Hegel's reasoning. Since Hegel asserts state power, for instance, is only thought entity, that the mind posits it as a concept and that it has no ontological being outside the realm of thought, then as an entity it is estranged from the human being only as a thought. To overcome this alienation it is necessary that as a concept it be understood.<sup>35</sup> Marx argues that this solution is inadequate because it is solely ideal. Hegel's process of overcoming alienation is merely a mental phenomenon with no objective basis. Marx disagrees that mental labour alone is sufficient to humanize nature, although admittedly necessary. Because of this, Marx saw Hegel's philosophy as inherently dangerous by putting a seal of approval on the present world and not promoting any change in man's objective nature. The germ of radical critique which Marx saw as important in Hegel's work was not used by Hegel to remedy social problems. Hegel's dialectic was radical but only with regard to mind.

The second error according to Marx was that Hegel regarded the consciousness of man and man's products, religion, state power, etc., as products only of the mind and, to that extent, spiritual entities.<sup>36</sup> "The only labour which Hegel knows and recognizes is abstractly mental labour."<sup>37</sup> The physical labour of man was simply peripheral and had no

bearing on the historical process. Marx deemed this characteristic of Hegel's philosophy as its "one-sidedness." Marx agreed that in order to overcome alienation, mental alienation must be dispelled, but this would not be sufficient. The point was to change the conditions in reality that gave rise to the alienation; thus de-alienation required both mental and physical labour. It follows that Marx saw the movement of history to be a result of the physical and mental activities of man, a man trying to satisfy natural and species needs. Against Hegel he said, "History's movement was not imposed by the creative fiat of an Absolute Mind."<sup>38</sup>

Another area where Marx could not agree with Hegel was the role and purpose of the state. As we have seen, for Hegel the state was the rule of reason in society, the incarnation of freedom. Marx, however, saw the state as proof of the irreconcilability of class conflict. Its purpose was not to guarantee the freedom of all, but rather to preserve social antagonisms while preventing social disruptions. Marx saw the state as a tool used by the owners of the means of production to reconcile classes to their lots. For this reason the state would exist so long as economic classes existed. In Marx's opinion, to free the state of its deficiencies would be, in the ultimate, to abolish it.<sup>39</sup> Because of Hegel's idealistic approach to the attainment of freedom in his rational state, Marx maintained that "Hegel's political philosophy set the seal of approval upon a reality defective and distorted."<sup>40</sup>

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Marx begins his critique of Feuerbach by attacking his traditional material approach to viewing the human mind. For Feuerbach the human mind was to be conceived as passive and receptive, and therefore the

part human beings played in reacting upon, altering and transforming their environment was not recognized. Man was essentially all senses. Marx condemned this from the perspective of an idealist whose contribution was insight into the essential activities of the mind.

Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinct from the thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as objective activity. Hence in *Das Wesen de Christentums*, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practise is conceived and fixed only in its dirty-judacial manifestation. Hence he does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary," of "practical critical," activity.<sup>41</sup>

Sense certainty for Marx was not the ultimate criterion of truth. Traditional materialism made thinking appear either unnecessary or miraculous; hence Marx saw it necessary to provide a materialistic basis for the discoveries idealists made in the analysis of consciousness.<sup>42</sup>

As an explanation of religious thought and behavior, Marx saw Feuerbach's theory inadequate for even though Feuerbach rejected the subject of religion, God, he did not reject its predicate, the divine. Marx saw in Feuerbach's theory of religion something essentially human that Feuerbach wanted to preserve. He concluded, therefore, that all that needed to be shown was the earthly origins of religion. To this Marx asked, "Why should the earthly transcend itself to heaven?"<sup>43</sup> Feuerbach's critique stops with the demand that men understand why they postulate a God. To understand this was to recognize the conditions giving rise to the need for a God. Marx goes beyond this and demands the removal of such conditions, the same request he made of Hegel. Marx writes, "after the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be criticised in theory and revolutionised in practise."<sup>44</sup> But Feuerbach could not do this

because, Marx argued, he never saw that religious sentiment was a social product. Like Hegel, his solutions could not provide leverage to change existing social conditions because they had no relevance to the concrete needs of man in concrete social institutions. Marx criticizes Feuerbach as accepting and at the same time misunderstanding existing reality. Feuerbach contended that the existence of a man is his essence and any exception to this is unfortunate but unalterable. Thus, the misfortune of the proletariat was unavoidable and would have to be borne quietly.<sup>45</sup> Marx suggested that because of Feuerbach's inability to actually change any existing state of affairs with his ideals, he made a religion out of them. For Marx this religious attitude consisted in the worship of unhistorical abstractions of the nature of man.

"Eliminating God and concretizing man was for Feuerbach two sides of the same coin," but Marx declares that because of Feuerbach's abstractions, he never did concretize man.<sup>46</sup> He didn't address specific causes producing differentiation in the human species, but only concentrated on characteristics of an ideally defined human species. Because Feuerbach did not conceive of man in his given social connections and existing conditions of life, Marx argues, Feuerbach never arrives at the really existing active man but rather stops at an abstraction.<sup>47</sup> Feuerbach did not understand that the human species could not be analyzed outside of a particular form of society. He focused solely on the private individual against Marx's conviction that concretized man must be placed in a social context. To this he wrote:

. . . the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Feuerbach who does not enter upon a criticism of this real essence, is consequently compelled:  
(1) To abstract from the historical process and to fix the

religious sentiment as something by itself and to presuppose an abstract-isolated-human individual. (2) The human essence, therefore, can with him be comprehended only as "genus," as an internal, dumb generality which merely naturally unites the many individuals.<sup>48</sup>

The importance of Marx's criticism with respect to Feuerbach's conception of man must be appreciated in the light of what Marx understood to be the essence of man and what the implications of this were in his theory of alienation. Marx could not isolate man from nature. Man must, he argued, constantly interact with his nature in order to survive and through this interaction he comes to know himself and change the world. Hegel's conception of the essence of man as spirit or reason was no less abstract than Feuerbach's. Feuerbach's demand for man of flesh and blood was seen as important and, indeed, a necessary step toward concretizing man but, Marx asserted, this was not enough. Hegel's and Feuerbach's perceptions of the essence of man explain the reasoning behind their conceptions of alienation and hence what was necessary to overcome alienation. The crux is that, for both, alienation and de-alienation were purely mental happenings and Marx argued that this was wrong. "Liberation," he argued, "is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions."<sup>49</sup> This was by virtue of the fact that nature restricted man and thus only by working in and with nature could man overcome these limitations and thereby realize his true essence. Therefore, it was not enough for Marx to understand alienation; the point was to eliminate the conditions responsible for it. This would require overcoming alienation not only in theory but also in practise.

Marx's view of philosophy as a unity between theory and practise was revolutionary. Hegel had seen philosophy as an activity of thought

with its sole purpose to clarify historical events in terms of logical necessity. The task of the philosopher, therefore, was to discover the meaning behind this logical necessity. For Hegel there was no need for philosophy "to do" anything in way of reform, just to understand, to rationalize the existent. Marx criticized both Hegel and Feuerbach for this. To philosophize about the nature of what was good or bad, right or wrong, without ever trying to bring about good and right was to accept existing situations, and then philosophy would be in fact "doing" something. It would be approving a situation that Marx saw to be intolerable. Because of this, Marx developed a philosophy that criticized standpoints and methods relative to the conditions under which they emerged. He saw the task of philosophy to explain why the present was what it was in order to make it different. To this end he argued that given the fact that all philosophies had their own material presuppositions, truly radical criticisms would necessarily involve changing the material conditions at their basis.<sup>50</sup> This could be accomplished only through practise. The overcoming of alienation would require these material conditions to be changed. Committed to this very task and acting in the service of history, Marx believed his philosophy would unmask human self-alienation in its unholy form given that Feuerbach had revealed it in its holy form.<sup>51</sup> This unmasking would allow man to better understand his relations with himself and his nature thus making Marx's philosophy of unity between theory and practise a vehicle for increasing man's self-consciousness in the pursuit of becoming fully species. Thus, Marx's entire approach to philosophy can be summed by the following. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."<sup>52</sup>

## Chapter Two

Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. As taken from K. Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> R. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> G. Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-94.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth*, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92.

<sup>12</sup> Q. Lauer, *Hegel's Idea of Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1971), pp. 30-31.

<sup>13</sup> Z. A. Pelczynski, *The Hegelian Conception of the State*. As taken from *Hegel's Political Philosophy. Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Z. A. Pelczynski (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 73-74.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, p. 62.

<sup>18</sup> S. Hook, *From Hegel to Marx* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1958), p. 142.



- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 220.
- <sup>20</sup> L. Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. with an Introduction by M. H. Vogel (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), p. 9.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 17.
- <sup>22</sup> M. H. Vogel, Introduction to *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* by Feuerbach, p. xlv.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. xxiii.
- <sup>24</sup> Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 245.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 248.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 226.
- <sup>27</sup> Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, pp. 53-54.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 51.
- <sup>29</sup> S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 12.
- <sup>30</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 131.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 272.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, pp. 13-14.
- <sup>35</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 129.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 130.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 131.
- <sup>38</sup> Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 277.
- <sup>39</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 5.
- <sup>40</sup> Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 16.
- <sup>41</sup> K. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*. As taken from *The Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. and trans. L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1967), p. 400.

<sup>42</sup> Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 275.

<sup>43</sup> M. H. Vogel, Introduction to *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, by L. Feuerbach, p. lxv.

Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, p. 401.

Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 61.

Vogel, Introduction to *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, by L. Feuerbach, p. xxv.

Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, p. 402.

Ibid.

Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 61.

Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 27.

A. J. Gregor, *A Survey of Marxism* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 9.

Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, p. 402.

### Chapter Three

#### MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Marx's philosophy is based on his perception of man and nature. It lays the foundation for his theory of history which can be viewed as a philosophy of history as he attempts to give significance to the course of human events. The creation of this philosophy was clearly a conscious act of translation of Hegel's theory of the dialectic evolution of the "Spirit." Marx took the dialectic to be the valid and scientific form upon which the meaning of history would come to be understood. Viewing the world as ever changing, he suggested that the course of history was governed by inner laws. Wherever chance seemingly prevailed there lay hidden laws that had to be discovered. Marx emphasized that his version of the dialectic with respect to the interpretation of the history of man was based on a world of material things, not on thoughts. Thus, his theory came to be referred to as historical or dialectical materialism. He asserted that a materialism that merely contemplated the world did not go beyond the limits of idealist philosophy. Hence, by uncovering the laws of history, these laws could in turn be used to actively transform the future stages of man's history. The question of historical laws was inseparable from the meaning Marx prescribed to history for he believed there was a pattern of logical and dialectical necessity in history that would guarantee a final stage of history where man would be allowed to freely develop his

species potentials.

Marx discovered that the law propelling the evolution in human history was based on a very simple premise. Man had first of all to eat and drink, to have shelter and clothing, and this had to be guaranteed before he could pursue politics, religion, science, art, etc. Thus, the first premise of all human history is the existence of living human individuals.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which man produces his means of subsistence depends on the nature of the actual means he finds already in existence. Production is not to be considered simply as the reproduction of man. Rather, it is a definite form of expressing life. The nature of the individual therefore depends on the material conditions determining production.<sup>2</sup>

Production of man's way of life expresses itself in two relationships. The first is man's relationship with nature; man providing for his continuance by working in and through nature with a specific level of productive know-how. This relationship of the forces of production constitutes the core of production. To varying degrees this presupposes the interaction of individuals with one another. Men inevitably enter into definite social relations with one another that are appropriate for the corresponding development of their material forces of production. Thus, man's production expresses itself in this second relationship, that of man with man. Together these two relations of production constitute a specific mode of production or economic structure of society. This economic structure is the foundation upon which a legal, political, and ideological superstructure arises. Corresponding to this superstructure is a definite form of social consciousness.<sup>3</sup> Hence, Marx's view of history is based on two

underlying themes: one, the gradual cumulative improvements of the forces of production and, two, how these forces of production reveal themselves in social relationships. By studying the various historical modes of production, Marx believed that the laws governing the course of mankind could be discovered.

Over man's history Marx designated in broad outlines four different modes of production. These different modes were characterized by the degree to which the division of labour had been carried. Each new productive force, insofar as it was not merely a qualitative extension of existing forces, would bring about a further development of the division of labour.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, "the various stages of development in the division of labour (and hence mode of production) are just so many different forms of ownership."<sup>5</sup>

The first form of ownership or mode of production was tribal ownership where the division of labour was confined to an extension of the natural division of labour imposed by the family. The superstructure took the form of tribes. The second mode of production was characterized by communal and state ownership proceeding from the union of the tribes. Movable as well as immovable private property were developing, and the initial antagonism between town and country developed into an antagonism within the towns themselves, i.e., between industry and maritime commerce. The third form of ownership was the feudal or estate property. The main forms of property in this epoch were landed property and the serf labour accompanying it versus individual labour and small capital commanding the labour of journeymen. The fourth mode of production was and is the capitalist one. It is characterized by private ownership of the means of production and a high degree of the division

of labour. This productive mode will be further analyzed later in the chapter.<sup>6</sup>

Marx contended that the succession of these economic systems was the result of existing material forces of production coming into conflict with prevailing social relations due to new developments in the consciousness of species man.

These three moments, the forces of production, the state of society and consciousness can and must come into contradiction with one another because the division of labour implies the possibility, nay the fact that intellectual and material activity—enjoyment and labour, production and consumption—devolve on different individuals . . .<sup>7</sup>

With the development of new technologies the forces of production are altered. The division of labour is further developed and thus social relationships must be redefined. Such a change in the mode of production is necessarily accompanied by a transformation of existing legal, political and ideological forms, and thus the superstructure. Transformation from one mode of production to another is of particular form. While the old mode in its specific form is abolished, it is at the same time preserved in part. A more developed form of the productive mode supersedes the previous one, but in so doing preserves to some extent the old mode of activity or manner in which the labouring activity is performed. Thus Hegel's dialectical mechanism is given a material basis in that each stage in man's history is depicted by a sum of productive forces and historically created social relations that are handed down to each generation and which are modified by the new generation but also which prescribe the conditions of life.<sup>8</sup>

Marx maintained that contradictions between forces of production and social relations would manifest themselves in class struggle and

eventual revolution; thus the law of human history was class conflict rooted in contradictions of the methods of production. After having discovered this law of history, Marx focused sole attention on the capitalist phase of history. He placed particular emphasis on this historical phase because he saw it as the foundation to a future stage that would guarantee the freedom of man to fully develop himself as species man.

With respect to capitalism, Marx depicts it as a stage under which "the existing relationships only cause mischief and which are no longer productive but destructive forces." "Connected with this a class is called forth, which has to bear all the burden of society without enjoying its advantages . . ."<sup>9</sup> The class of which he speaks is the proletariat, typified by an advanced division of their labour powers. Such a high degree of the division of labour would imply that as long as activity was not voluntary, man's own deeds would become an alien power opposed to him, which would enslave him instead of being controlled by him.<sup>10</sup> Against the proletariat class Marx posited the bourgeoisie or the private owners of the means of production. It would be at the hands of this class that the proletariat's labour would be divided. The bourgeoisie would be relatively few, thus the proletariat would form the majority of all members of society. From this group would come the consciousness necessary to facilitate a revolution in the mode of production. According to Marx, this final revolution, however, would abolish private property and consequently the division of labour would cease to exist. This is a crucial point insofar as species development is concerned because "For as soon as labour is distributed, each man has a particular exclusive sphere of activity,

which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape."<sup>11</sup> Hence, private ownership of productive means and a highly advanced degree of labour division restrict man from developing his species potentials. This is to say that under the capitalist mode of production, man feels his greatest alienation. Thus, according to A. Schaff, "It is impossible to fully understand Marx's analysis of the economics of capitalism if one does not understand its genetic and methodological links with the theory of alienation."<sup>12</sup> In light of this it can be found that in Marx's major writings on capitalism, *The Grundrisse*, *Capital* and *Wages, Price, and Profit*, the underlying theme is the alienation of man.<sup>13</sup>

The purpose of the remainder of this chapter is to outline the fundamental economics underlying capitalism as Marx saw it. Following this analysis it will be possible to discuss in greater detail the alienation of man inherent under the capitalist mode of production. By familiarizing ourselves with the economics and resultant alienation of capitalism, the process through which the capitalistic forces of production and their accompanying social relationships come into contradiction will be revealed. This, along with a discussion of socialism, the historical stage to follow capitalism, and its relationship with alienation, will be left for the final chapter.

### An Introduction to Marxian Economics of Capitalism

#### Use Value and Exchange Value

Regardless of the historical stage man must interact with nature expending labour power in order to secure the necessities for survival. Every product of man's labour has utility or usefulness for him because, through personal consumption of that product, some of his needs are



satisfied. If a man produces a product that he does not intend to consume himself, the product can then be exchanged. For a product to have exchange value it must have use value for someone other than its producer and it must form a non-use value for its producer. Products that have both use value and exchange value are referred to as commodities. Clearly, every product of labour is, in all stages of history, a use value but it is only when it is exchanged that it becomes a commodity.

When speaking of the value in exchange of such a commodity, it is meant the proportional quantities in which it exchanges with all other commodities.<sup>14</sup> In exchange, a commodity can only be expressed relatively or in terms of some other commodity. It is therefore necessary to reduce all values of commodities to an expression common to all, thereby distinguishing them only by the proportions in which they contain that identical measure.<sup>15</sup> Marx concluded that a commodity is only such because it is a definite mass of congealed labour time and that as a commodity it has value only because it is a crystallization of social labour.<sup>16</sup> The commodity is nothing more than the materialization of so many hours or so many days of social labour.<sup>17</sup> A commodity's value depends therefore on the amount of social labour necessary for its production.<sup>18</sup> To measure the quantity of labour in each item, one measures the time the labouring lasts. To apply this measure the different variations of labour embodied in different kinds of commodities must be reduced to their common quality of human labour in the abstract, to average or unskilled simple labour.

Given that a producer may want to exchange his product because it contains no use value for himself but a second producer, wanting that

product, has nothing to exchange that the first producer wants, it is necessary that there exist a commodity, measured by its labour time, that acts as a store of value.<sup>19</sup> The first producer receives for his product this commodity in such a quantity to represent equal labour time and which in the future he can exchange for a product he desires from some other producer. Any commodity can assume this numeraire function, but from the moment it becomes restricted to one particular commodity it acquires social validity. That commodity then becomes the money commodity and serves as money. Its value is determined, as with all other commodities, "by the labour-time required for its production and is expressed by the quantity of any other commodity that costs the same amount of labour-time."<sup>20</sup>

With the interjection of money into the exchange of commodities the previous commodity-for-commodity transaction becomes commodity for money for commodity. No one can sell unless someone else purchases, but no one is bound to purchase even though he has just made a sale. From the earliest development of commodity circulation, there has existed the desire to possess and command money. It thus follows that commodities are not sold for the acquisition of use value but rather to be replaced by money, i.e., for the acquisition of exchange value. Therefore, the purpose of circulation is no longer exchange for the sake of consumption but exchange for the sake of exchange.<sup>21</sup> As a commodity, money becomes private property and circulation takes the form of money-commodity-money or M-C-M.<sup>22</sup> When the final product of commodity circulation becomes money itself, that money takes the first form in which capital appears.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, capital in the form of the money commodity can be viewed as "a certain quantity of labour stocked and stored up to be

employed."<sup>24</sup>

The Generation of Surplus Value

To the extent that money is both the initial and final commodity in exchange and one parcel of money is distinguishable from another only by its quantity, exchange has no purpose so long as both quantities of money are equal. Therefore, the only reason for the circulation of money must be that more money is withdrawn from circulation at the end than was injected at the beginning.  $M-C-M$  thus becomes  $M-C-M'$  where  $M' = M + *M$ ,  $*M$  being some positive increment.

In order that  $M'$  be greater than  $M$ ,  $C$  must be a commodity whose value at sale is greater than the sum of the values of commodities used in its production. Thus, it must be that at least one commodity has a use value greater than its exchange value, and for this to be true that commodity must be capable of creating value when in use. The capitalists find such a commodity in human labour power. Labour power becomes a commodity when its possessor offers it for sale, whereupon it becomes wage labour. The capitalist thus is able to convert his money into capital because the labourer disposes of his labour power as a commodity. This is as a result of the labourer being short of everything necessary for the realization of his own power due to the capitalist having come to privately own the means of production.<sup>25</sup> The result of this wage labour is the worker or proletariat, as distinct from the capitalist, is subjected to a highly developed division of labour.

The wage received or value of labour power is determined, as in the case of any other commodity, by what is necessary to maintain it as a

commodity. Thus, the value of labour power is equal to the value of the means of subsistence sufficient to maintain the worker in his "normal" state as labourer. Suppose that the average amount of the daily necessities of a labourer requires six hours of average labour for their production and these six hours are incorporated in gold equal to three shillings. Then three shillings is the price corresponding to the value of a man's labour power.<sup>26</sup> Six hours of daily work will reproduce the worker's labour power and thus is designated as "necessary labour," but this does not prevent him from working more than six hours in a day. Even though the exchange value of labour power is recouped in six hours, the use of that power is limited only by the active energies and physical strength of the labourer. When labour time is no longer "necessary," the worker's labour creates surplus value by exerting surplus labour.<sup>27</sup> The daily cost of maintaining labour power and its daily expenditure in work are two totally different things. The former distinguishes labour's exchange value and the latter its use value. Labour not only has a use value but creates an exchange value greater than its own.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Absolute and Relative Surplus Value*

Because the source of the capitalist's profit is surplus labour time generated from the production process, it is to his advantage to procure as much surplus labour time from production as possible. He has two means at his disposal by which to do so: the production of "absolute surplus labour" and "relative surplus labour."<sup>29</sup>

The production of absolute surplus labour or value turns exclusively on the length of the working day. To increase surplus labour

absolutely the capitalist simply lengthens the work day. Given that time embodied in a working day consists of necessary labour time and surplus labour time, this has the effect of leaving necessary labour time unaltered. If the length of the working day is fixed such absolute increases in surplus value cannot be gained. Thus, the capitalist has recourse to shortening the necessary labour time of the worker while leaving the length of the working day unaffected. This would result in a relative increase in surplus value whereby through the shortening of necessary labour time, surplus labour time is automatically increased. The generation of relative surplus value turns upon the productivity of the labourer; an increase in productivity being synonymous with a decrease in the time necessary to produce the worker's means of subsistence. Because of the nature of the production of relative surplus value, its production would revolutionize the technical process of labour and thus alter the corresponding social relationships between men.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, the production of surplus value by whatever means is the chief aim of the capitalist, his profit originating from having something to sell for which nothing has been paid. Therefore, profit originates solely from the surplus labour produced by wage labour and thus it is surplus labour that allows the capitalist to continue functioning as a capitalist. A measure of the extent that this extraction takes place is found in the rate of surplus value or the rate at which surplus labour time is amassed. This rate is determined by the proportion of surplus to necessary labour value; e.g., suppose \$180 to be the new value produced. Subtract from this \$90, the capital advanced in wages. Clearly the surplus value created is also \$90, meaning

one-half of the working day consists of unpaid labour. The rate of surplus value is therefore  $100\% = (\text{surplus labour value} / \text{necessary labour value})$ .<sup>31</sup>

### Laws of Motion

#### The Accumulation of Capital

If surplus value is not reinvested in circulation but consumed by the capitalist in the form of revenue, it can be said that surplus value emanates from capital. However, if part or all of surplus value is thrown back into circulation and thus is used as capital, then capital is in fact arising from surplus value. This is referred to as the "accumulation of capital."<sup>32</sup> As capital, surplus value must be employed either as means of production, i.e., constant capital, or as sustenance of the labourer, i.e., variable capital. For a given level of production and technology, the ratio of constant to variable capital is referred to as the organic composition of capital. Replacement of the constant and variable capital used will allow for production to remain at a current level. However, for the enhancement of production a portion of surplus value must be applied to the production of additional means of production and subsistence over and above the quantity required to replace the capital advanced.<sup>33</sup> This enhancement is necessary given the nature of the development of capitalist production because the extension of production via progressive accumulation acts not only to increase capital but, more importantly, to preserve it against fierce competition.

The relation between the magnitude of accumulated capital and the magnitude of surplus value becomes obvious; conditions determining the

latter act to determine the former. Thus, the preservation of the capitalist qua capitalist depends solely on the generation and reinvestment of surplus value. There therefore exists a constant tendency on the part of the capitalist to force the cost of labour, measured in necessary labour time, down by increasing its productivity.<sup>34</sup> A point is reached where the development of the productivity of social labour becomes the most powerful lever of accumulation and hence competition. The increase in the number of products produced by an individual in a given time and under a given intensity of labour appears in the "diminution of the mass of labour in proportion to the mass of means of production moved by it," or a decrease in the variable as opposed to constant portion of capital, thus an increase in the organic composition of capital.<sup>35</sup>

#### Concentration and Centralization

Upon progressive accumulation the quantity of capital under each one's control increases, making possible an enlarged scope of production. This is the "concentration of capital." Such concentration of the means of production and of the command over labour is identical with accumulation.<sup>36</sup> The portion of capital domiciled in each area of production is divided among many capitalists who face one another as independent producers competing with each other.<sup>37</sup> The result is an increased volume in industrial establishment that "forms everywhere the point of departure for a more comprehensive organisation of the co-operative labor of many."<sup>38</sup> This leads to a wider development of labour's powers as once isolated processes of production are now carried on in socially combined processes. With this increase of capital, the quantity of output produced increases and competition forces prices

down, thus profit on capital diminishes. The first to suffer is the small capitalist. This leads to a process of "centralization of capital" whereby capitals already in existence are combined and redistributed. Thus, centralization is not dependent upon the positive growth of the volume of social capital.<sup>39</sup> Unlike concentration, centralization is not a function of accumulation but rather supplements it by accelerating and intensifying its effects. Which producers survive to overtake others is decided in the battle of competition fought by the cheapening of commodities. These commodities become cheaper because labour as an input commodity becomes cheaper with increases in its productivity. Because it is the scale of each producer's operation that dictates his ability to utilize new technologies that will increase labour productivity, it is the larger scale capitalists that survive. Thus, there is a tendency within capitalism away from competition among producers towards the formation of monopolies. As this revolves upon the increasing productivity of labour, it is clear that the emergence of monopolies is closely connected with the rising organic composition of capital, i.e., because of the nature of centralization those surviving do so because theirs is the most productive labour. A smaller quantity of labour is needed to set in motion a larger quantity of machinery and raw materials so that variable capital relative to constant capital is reduced with every increase in labour's productivity.

Another force emerges to aid centralization, the credit system. Initially favoring accumulation, it acts as a modest aid to capitalists by drawing the scattered money resources into the hands of individual or associated capitalists. Soon, however, it becomes a most formidable



weapon in the competitive struggle and transforms itself into an all-encompassing social mechanism for the centralization of capitals.<sup>40</sup>

The effects of accumulation aided by centralization are two-fold. First, it leads to the co-operation of labourers among themselves and thus a growing worker's consciousness. Second, it leads to an ever-increasing organic composition of capital, with a relative decrease in necessary labour. Too, labour productivity increases more rapidly than increases in the demand for labour, and since this demand is determined not by the amount of capital as a whole but by its variable constituent, increased productivity results in labour demand falling progressively with the increase of total capital.<sup>41</sup> "The decrease of relatively necessary labour appears as increase of the relatively superfluous labouring capacities—i.e. as the positing of surplus population."<sup>42</sup> This is to say that a population emerges of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital.<sup>43</sup> A condition therefore of the capitalist mode of production is a disposable industrial "reserve army." As a mass of human material always ready for hire, it serves for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital.

Marx's form of analysis of the economics of capitalism reveals the nature of the contradictions he saw inherent in this mode of production. I shall briefly introduce these contradictions now and then address the previously discussed forms of alienation as they pertain specifically to capitalism.

### *The Contradictions Inherent in Capitalism*

In both *Capital* and *Grundrisse* the starting point of analysis is the commodity. To be a commodity it must have social use value and be

exchanged for its equivalent in money. Thus, only through a sale can exchange value be realized. A commodity therefore is the unity or identity of use value and exchange value.<sup>44</sup> Marx's entire economic analysis is addressed to the historic, economic, and political conditions on which this identity depends. However, the underlying purpose of his work was to demonstrate that contradictions existed within the identity, contradictions that would necessarily lead to the suspension of its conditions. Of main consideration is that the unity of production and realization is not immediate but rather attained through a process. From the producer's viewpoint, this process takes the form of M-C-M'. Suppose this process breaks down. The commodity is an exchange value only insofar as it is, at the same time, a use value. It ceases to be an exchange value when it ceases to be a use value or when M' is not achieved. This being the case, the capitalist's money has been transformed into a worthless product and has not only not realized a surplus value but has also lost its original exchange value. Capital production's first barrier to accumulation then is the need for consumption.<sup>45</sup> This barrier arises because use value in itself does not have the boundlessness of exchange value.<sup>46</sup> Hence, the mediating movement of money could fail to take place. For Marx the identity of use value and exchange value was conditional, but its breakup was unavoidable. The interjection of money into the process of exchange allowed the capitalist to exploit the difference between the use value and exchange value of the labourer. However, the division of the exchange process into purchase and sale contained the general possibility of crises. Thus, Marx wrote, "in the splitting of exchange into two acts, there lies the germ of crises."<sup>47</sup> To this Marx added that

"although circulation of money can occur therefore without crises, crises cannot occur without circulation of money."<sup>48</sup>

The implication of this form of crisis is that labour capacity can perform its necessary labour only if its surplus labour can be realized. If this process is blocked, labour capacity itself appears outside the conditions of the reproduction of its existence. Necessary labour appears superfluous.<sup>49</sup> By its nature, therefore, capital production posits a barrier to labour and the creation of value. Overproduction will be further discussed in chapter four.

Now suppose that the movement of money does occur but that the increment in M, or mass of surplus value, is not great enough to maintain a capitalist's normal rate of accumulation. From the capitalist's perspective this rate of accumulation is his rate of profit. This is distinct from the rate of surplus value. The difference will be examined in chapter four. The accumulation of capital is accompanied by a progressive mechanization of the process of production. Therefore, the same amount of labour is able to process more materials and turn out an ever-increasing volume of finished goods.<sup>50</sup> The result of this is that as the productivity of labour increases, the volume of necessary labour required by capital necessarily and continuously decreases, i.e., the use value of labour increases while its exchange value decreases.

This continual relative decrease of the variable capital vis-a-vis the constant, and consequently the total capital is identical with a progressively higher organic composition of social capital . . .<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, the mass of surplus value relative to the invested total capital has a tendency to decline even though the absolute mass of surplus value may increase. Given that this ratio is an expression of

the self-expanding ability of capital, continual increases in productivity will result in a falling tendency of the rate of profit. The capitalist's goal, therefore, is not simply to replace the originally advanced mass of capital but to replace the value of the advanced capital with a 'usual rate of profit.'<sup>52</sup> Once the achieved rate of profit goes below the normal level, capitalists will curtail operations. Thus production is depressed. The falling tendency of the rate of profit as a form of crisis shall be further discussed in chapter four.

Marx adamantly contended that the contradictions of the forces of capitalist production would necessarily result in recurring crises of ever-increasing magnitude. This was to be coupled with the increasing class consciousness of the proletariat. As the number of co-operating labourers increased, so too would their resistance to the domination of capital.<sup>53</sup> An increased worker consciousness would in turn result in a need to redefine social relationships. The contradiction of these three moments, the forces of production, the social relations and consciousness, would necessarily result in the downfall of the capitalist mode of production.

### Alienation of Capitalism

#### *The Alienation of Man from his Product*

The foundation for alienation in capitalism is the estrangement man experiences from his product. The product of labour, objectified labour, is endowed by living labour with a soul of its own, and establishes itself opposite living labour as an alien power.<sup>54</sup> Marx also called this phenomenon the "fetishism of commodities." He saw the true nature of commodities as objects and as objects they could possess no

power of resistance against man. How then could such products become independent, alien, and hostile in a capitalist system? Articles of utility become commodities because they are products of divided labour. Workers do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their products; thus they deal with each other only through the market. Hence, the specific social character of each producer's labour does not show itself in the act of exchange.<sup>55</sup> The implication of this is that the individual's labour asserts itself only by means of the relations which the act of exchange establish directly between products and indirectly between producers.<sup>56</sup> The basic relation between men assumes in their eyes the fantastic form of a relation between things, thus "an expression of human creativity appears to be a natural object."<sup>57</sup> Things engage in social relationships and men engage in material ones. While products are differentiable, people are not. Hence, labourers become subordinate to a world of commodities.

Commodities appear as independent beings endowed with life, their supposed activities being attributed qualities which only humans could possess. Once these objects become independent beings, subjects unto themselves, man as producer is left devoid of objects and realization.<sup>58</sup> "Society ceases to be a texture of interhuman relations and appears to be a system dependent upon objects and objective laws."<sup>59</sup> Once the world of commodities has achieved its independence and subjected the producer to its sway, the producer comes to see the commodity world in the same way he views the world of nature itself. It comes to constitute a second nature of sorts but this nature stands outside of and opposed to its members.<sup>60</sup> Such a reification of social relations has the effect that the categories of capitalist, value, rent, wages,

profit, etc., are treated as inevitable categories of economic life.

This attribution of independent power to things is nowhere more evident than in the division of the factors of production into land, labour, and capital, each believed to produce an income for its owner. In *Capital Volume III, The Trinity Formula*, Marx specifically addresses this mystification by revealing that wages, profit and rent all originate out of labour even though the capitalist and landlord appear as commodity owners with something to sell. Such a fallacy is promoted by relations of a seemingly free and contractual nature. The worker may not initially understand that his lack of access to the means of production forces him to work on terms dictated by those who monopolize the productive means. Hence, the labourer does not realize he is being exploited for the benefit of others by alienating his own labour into the form of a commodity. So in the same manner that the capitalist's profit originates not from some intrinsic value in capital but rather from labour, land rent also is siphoned from labour.

Just as products confront the producer as an independent force in capital and capitalists who actually are but the personification of capital—so land becomes personified in the landlord and likewise gets on its hind legs to demand as an independent force its share of products with its help.<sup>61</sup>

The domination of landed property over workers is misinterpreted as deriving from the land itself rather than from the landowners. Consequently, the function of labour itself is misunderstood. Labour activity is seen to generate only that part of value which is returned to the worker in the form of wages. The worker does not realize that his commodity of wage labour is the source for profit and rent because by receiving wages at the end of a work period the fact that surplus

value is not compensated is concealed.

Money as a commodity is also instrumental in obscuring the social relations between men. When money becomes part of the exchange process it splits the identity existing between the relinquishing of one's own creation and the acquisition of another's. Hence, it appears to possess powers unto itself by functioning as mediator between man and all of his objects.<sup>62</sup> Such a misconception originates from the following:

What appears to happen is not that gold becomes money in consequence of all other commodities expressing their values in it, but, on the contrary, that all other commodities universally express their values in gold because it is money.<sup>63</sup>

Money is not recognized as a commodity created by man for the use of man. It appears to create itself out of its own intrinsic properties. Rather than labour, therefore, money is deemed the producer of wealth. The supposed power of this money belongs to its possessor and thus man's goal becomes the acquisition of money.

That which is for me through the medium of money—that for which I can pay—that am I myself, the possessor of the money. The extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money's properties are my—the possessor's—properties and essential powers. Thus, what I am and am capable of is by no means determined by my individuality. . . . Does not my money, therefore, transform all my incapacities into their contrary?<sup>64</sup>

As man's product, money comes to be the alienated ability of mankind.

Clearly, then, in capitalist society reality is perceived in terms of form rather than substance. Surface relations between things hide the true underlying relations between men. A false consciousness regarding reality permeates the structure of thought. On this false foundation there has been erected an entire superstructure which serves

to justify the existing order and to regulate man's conduct towards it.<sup>65</sup> By attributing independent life to various forms of value, people actually succeed in transferring to them certain powers for regulating their own existence.

To conceive of machines as needing workers is to accord machines the power to need workers. Likewise, to conceive of money as having the power to buy everything is indeed to have money which has the power to buy everything. The laws of capitalism operate as eternal necessity in the same manner. They become necessary in virtue of everyone thinking and acting as if they are.<sup>66</sup>

Consequently, what appears to be true when in actuality is an obscured reality becomes true and thus "the greater the extent to which labour objectifies itself the greater becomes the objective world of values, which stand opposite it as alien."<sup>67</sup> Man's products are independent and hostile, and his alienation from them is a reality preserved and enforced by the capitalist mode of production.

#### *The Alienation of Man from the Process of Production*

A product is the summary of productive activity. If a product, as soon as it is produced, is an alienation, the process of production must be active alienation, i.e., man is alienated from what he produces because he is alienated from how he produces it.

Contrary to popular trends in political economy, Marx denied that labour was naturally coercive. It was not the nature of labour per se that rendered labour coercive, but the historical conditions under which it was performed.<sup>68</sup> If the activity of labour serves only as means for existence rather than content of life, then the worker experiences alienation from the activity of production.

In the capitalist system the worker sells his labour in return



for a wage. In so doing his existence is brought under the same conditions as the existence of every other commodity.<sup>69</sup> If, as Marx posits, labour is life, then life itself is a commodity that is sold in order to extend its own duration. The worker achieves this extension not by taking ownership of what he has produced but rather by receiving a wage. This being the case, the worker does not see his labour as life, for life in the commodity form is tantamount to slavery.<sup>70</sup> As long as labour is involuntary each worker has a particular exclusive sphere of activity which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, with an ever-increasing development of the division of labour and productive tasks that are highly repetitive, productive activity no longer affords a good example of the operation of man's potentials. The worker is rendered uni-dimensional with the result that competition is carried out not only between men but also between men and machines for once the worker has sunk to the level of a machine he can be confronted by the machine as a competitor.<sup>72</sup> The nature of capitalist production therefore curtails the spontaneity and creativity of labour activity.

More specifically with respect to capitalist production, the worker, by having no voice in how his labour is to be used, gives more in labour time than he receives in wages. The limits of the working day are not determined by what is necessary for labour's maintenance but rather the limit of the labourer's rest time is determined by how much labour can be subsequently squeezed out of him daily.<sup>73</sup> In the example provided earlier, we saw that even though the exchange value of the labour power was recouped in six hours, the use of that labour was limited only by the active energies and physical strength of the

worker. Hence, all of the labourer's disposable time is also devoted to the expansion of capital because the labourer is compelled to make his individual consumption, be it food or rest, a mere incident of production.

The act of production posits this resulting surplus value as capital, as independent and indifferent towards living labour capacity. Therefore, separated from the conditions of his realization, the worker has appropriated for himself only the means of subsistence.<sup>74</sup>

The worker emerges not only not richer, but emerges rather poorer from the process than he entered. . . . the realization which lies as a possibility within him, how likewise exists as surplus value, . . . He has produced . . . the alien wealth and his own poverty . . .<sup>75</sup>

The productive process affords the worker only the means of subsistence and not even this can be guaranteed. Through concentration of the means of production and increased productiveness of labour, a portion of the labouring population is rendered superfluous. The positing of surplus capital requires a relative surplus population in order that the capitalist will have access to a readily available reserve of workers to facilitate the increased expansion of his capital.<sup>76</sup> Thus, a major consequence of accumulation is the condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by the overwork of the other part. Such a reserve army subsequently falls into poverty. Further developments in the productivity of labour act to reinforce the existence of this army. As well, with this development in productivity, the objective conditions of labour grow relative to living labour. Therefore, over time these objective conditions assume an ever more colossal independence, represented by their very extent, opposite living labour.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, the worker can neither affirm himself in work

by selling his labour nor out of work by not selling his labour. By selling it he falls under the instruction of the capitalist and the seeming independence of the objective conditions of labour. By not selling it he has not the means to survive. In either instance the worker is alienated from the process of production.

This points to a critical consideration of the worker's position in capitalism. All of his activity is dedicated to survival which he cannot secure outside the realm of productive activity. With no access to the means of production, the worker must enter into the capitalist market as a commodity.<sup>78</sup> With the division of labour and the accumulation of capital as characteristics of this market, the worker becomes machine-like. So although he cannot exist outside the capitalist mode of production, living within it requires total submission of the worker's own uniqueness and creativity. The guise of worker independence vis-a-vis the production process is maintained by changes in employers and the existence of contracts that in reality bind the worker inextricably to capitalist production. The worker thus is alienated from his product and from his productive activity but must remain so in order to survive. This is at the cost of his species capabilities.

#### *The Alienation of Man from his Species*

Free and conscious activity is the species character of man. He duplicates himself as a species in what he creates. Historically, production has served to widen and enlarge human opportunities and personal faculties.<sup>79</sup> This ceases to be the case in capitalist production. With no existence outside of this productive realm, the worker exists as a worker only when he exists for himself as capital,

as a commodity. In turn, he exists as a commodity only when he can add his labour to previously existing capital or dead labour. The existence of capital thus becomes species man's existence. As species, he cannot become rich by functioning as a commodity because, in exchange for his labour capacity as a fixed, available magnitude, he surrenders its creative powers and thus necessarily impoverishes himself.<sup>80</sup> Hence, existing as wage labour in a situation characterized by repetitive, menial activity wrought by the division of labour, man becomes what he does. His occupation is his main characteristic. The division of labour traps him within his own partial self.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, a multitude of man's potentials goes unmurtured with the development of selected abilities to the exclusion of all others.

The world of such a uni-faceted man is reduced to a relentless struggle for survival. Only through the continual sale of labour power can man secure the physical means of subsistence. Given productive life to be species man's life activity, when worker production becomes solely means for survival the character of the species becomes physical existence rather than free and conscious activity. Man is thus trapped within the confines of capitalism and labour activity no longer serves as an avenue for his species expression. As an appendage to production man functions as a machine. Hence, capitalist production does not simply produce man as a commodity but also produces him in keeping with the role of a mentally and physically dehumanized being, totally alienated from his species.<sup>82</sup>

To break from the capitalist mode of production and what appear to be universal ideologies in an attempt to be more fully human is, except in isolated instances, impossible. Just as the worker is tied to the

productive process, so the species is locked within the capitalist mode of production where ruling ideas are ideal expressions of the dominant material relations. Therefore, as long as production is based on the private ownership of means of production, species man continues to be alienated.

As a manifestation of the capitalist material relationship, money acts to transform the essential powers of species man into characteristics of abstract, anonymous labour.

Money is the general distorting of individualities which turns them into their opposite and confers contradictory attributes upon their attributes.<sup>83</sup>

It is not the potential of man that receives attention but rather the potential of money, no concern being given to what man is capable of through productive activity. Instead, man's concern focuses on what he can purchase with the wage he receives from his production. Man allows his species character to be represented through what he can buy. Money confounds and confuses all natural and human qualities.<sup>84</sup>

Until now the emphasis regarding alienation has been placed on the worker. However, the capitalist too is alienated. Caught up in his crusade for wealth, he becomes a mere machine for the conversion of surplus value into additional capital. The entirety of his energies is directed toward such accumulation, leaving his species potentials as well virtually unexplored. Separated from his species, man in capitalism becomes an isolated entity having nothing in common with his fellow man.

*The Alienation of Man from Man*

Two distinct groups of people exist within capitalism: those who privately own the means of production, the capitalists, and those who do not, the workers. The worker sells his labour to the capitalist, and

so complete is his [the capitalist's] control that he determines the form of labor, its intensity, duration, the kind and number of its products, surrounding conditions and—most important of all—whether or not it will even take place.<sup>85</sup>

The labour activity is not voluntary but performed only in the service and under the domination of another man. What is produced and reproduced is not only the presence of objectified labour but also its presence as a value belonging to an alien subject, the capitalist.<sup>86</sup> By taking control of the workers' products he appropriates their lives. The worker sells his labour in order to earn a livelihood and the capitalist buys it in order to make a profit. Thus, in the eyes of the workers the capitalist is alien, hostile, powerful and independent of them.

The capitalist employs his capital where, risks being equal, the greatest profit is yielded. This employment is not necessarily the most useful for society, the capitalist's interests being diametrically opposed to those of the labourers.<sup>87</sup> In the pursuit of greater remuneration individuals do not care to help develop the potentialities of others. Competition, be it between capitalists or workers, has the effect that man is interested in minimizing the potentialities of others. "Individuals become self-enclosed atoms." Therefore the basic interhuman relationship becomes one of antagonism. The productive process and corresponding social infrastructure encourages the

perpetuation of this distinctiveness.<sup>88</sup> Marx was adamant that the purpose of the capitalist state, as the embodiment of the prevailing ideas of the owners of productive means, was to enforce and maintain the alienation of men from one another.

With a social structure set up to accommodate the capitalist's extraction of surplus value from the worker, the capitalist is allowed to continue functioning as a capitalist. He wants to be able to increase this rate of exploitation and the simplest way to achieve this is by extending the length of the working day, leaving necessary labour time unaltered.<sup>89</sup> The capitalist holds that

. . . the working day contains the full twenty four hours, with the deduction of the few hours of repose without which labour power absolutely refuses its services again.<sup>90</sup>

To this Marx added that the determination of what a working day is in capitalist production presents itself as the result of a struggle between the class of capitalists and the working class.<sup>91</sup> Thus, two classes with opposed interests confront each other. The confrontation is decidedly antagonistic, each knowing that the intentions of the other are opposed to its own. The consequence is mistrust and hence the application of inhuman means to attain strictly personal goals.<sup>92</sup>

If the length of the working day is set, the rate of extraction of surplus value is increased through the increased productivity of labour. The social implication of this vis-a-vis the alienation of man from man may not be immediately apparent because even though the value of labour has diminished it does command the same amount of commodities as before. Regardless of the worker's standard of living remaining constant, his relative wage has decreased with respect to the capitalist and hence his relative social position has fallen.

Hand in hand with the increased productiveness of labour and increased accumulation of capital via centralization is the development of the reserve army, an impoverished sector of unemployed workers whose survival depends upon the desire of capitalists to further invest surplus value. Just as this group of workers falls into the ranks of pauperism, so a group of capitalists descends into proletarianism. Competition not only separates capitalist man from working man, it also separates capitalist men from one another. Prior to the co-operation of labourers among themselves, no cohesive group identity exists at any social level. Men as individuals feel alone within capitalism because competition for survival sets them apart from one another. Furthermore, there does not even appear to be a need for men to come together in the interest of one another so long as men and money come together. "Money then appears as this distorting power both against the individual and against the bonds of society, . . . ." <sup>93</sup> "That which mediates my life for me, also mediates the existence of other people for me. For me it is the other person." <sup>94</sup>

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It is apparent that the different relations of alienation are not distinctly separate from one another. Marx saw the various forms of alienation to be parts of a whole. To study one part would necessarily lead to the study of all parts. Therefore, overlapping explanations were not to be avoided. This overlapping nature of the alienation relations has obvious repercussions with respect to de-alienation. To implement measures to eliminate, for example, commodity fetishism would necessarily result in the elimination of all alienation relations. For this reason Marx suggested that the abolition of the private



ownership of the means of production would lead to man's de-alienation.

The capitalist mode of production is founded on private property accompanied by the division of labour from which emanates the sale of labour as a commodity. Thus, to do away with private property would be synonymous with the elimination of the division of labour and, hence, labour as a commodity. Thus, no distinction between worker and capitalist would exist. With the cause of the various forms of alienation eliminated, alienation would cease to exist and man would be free to pursue his species potentials. Therefore, in retrospect, alienation would be considered the consequence of private property. Whether this is the case will be left for discussion in the final section of chapter four.

The purpose of this chapter has been to familiarize ourselves with Marx's conception of the capitalist economy. This only has relevance if viewed within the framework of his philosophy of history. Understanding capitalism within an historical framework allows for a discussion of the process by which capitalism will inevitably succumb to a new historical phase. Having examined Marx's philosophy and criticism in chapter two and his economics in this third chapter, it should be noted that his

. . . theoretical labours were not concerned with economics for the sake of economics, philosophy for the sake of philosophy, or criticism for its own sake; but rather that the aim of this work was to prepare, to educate the next generation of leaders of the working class in the objective preconditions, possibility and necessity of the historic task.<sup>95</sup>

This task and the corresponding process, along with the nature of the phase to follow, shall be addressed next.

## Chapter Three

Notes

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> K. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, with an Introduction by M. Dobb (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> For further information see Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp. 8-15; and see K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. with a Foreword by M. Nicolaus (Great Britain: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973), pp. 471-514.

<sup>7</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> A. Schaff, *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon* (Great Britain: Permagon Press, 1980), p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> *Grundrisse* is a series of seven notebooks rough drafted by Marx to be used in the preparation of *Capital*. Its chief purpose was self-clarification and, as such, was not intended for publication. It represents, in writing, the mental processes engaged in while uncovering the essence of production based on capital. Because *Capital* was written for publication and hence offers greater ease of readability, I shall rely predominantly on *Capital* for direct quotation. However, when further reference is required, I shall point to sections in *Grundrisse*.

<sup>14</sup> K. Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975), p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> Labour can be classified as either abstract or social. Abstract labour is nothing but "the expenditure of human labour power," which "exists in the organism of every ordinary individual." Abstract labour

makes no reference to the task or form of labour. Social labour on the other hand is a definite useful kind of labour, satisfying a definite social want, thus holding its place as part and parcel of the collective labour of all. It can serve as a definite kind of labour for a producer because it serves as abstract labour in the market. (K. Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, trans. from 3rd German edition S. Moore and E. Aveling, ed. F. Engels (New York: Random House, Inc., 1906), pp. 51, 84.)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>18</sup> Given a constant technology and a producer producing several of a homogeneous commodity, separate values are not assigned to each item. Rather, the value assigned to all is determined by what is deemed by that society as average labour working under average conditions. This value then represents, in labour time, what is socially necessary for the production of that particular commodity.

<sup>19</sup> "... a commodity only realises itself as exchange value, in so far as its owner does not relate to it as use value." (Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 881).

<sup>20</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 104.

<sup>21</sup> For further reference see Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 148-149, 601.

<sup>22</sup> For further reference on the difference between C-M-C and M-C-M see Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 201-218, 295, 667-668.

<sup>23</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 163.

<sup>24</sup> A. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, p. 295 (Garnier, t. 1, p. 61). As taken from Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974); p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> For further reference see Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 295-296. To become a capitalist or conscious representative of the augmentation of exchange value, the individual must initially have money at his disposal. One becomes such a proprietor through inheritance whereby the power which this money conveys is the power of purchasing. (Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, pp. 26-27. As taken from Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 35).

<sup>26</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, pp. 191-192. See also Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit*, p. 47, and Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 282-283, 322-324.

<sup>27</sup> For further reference see Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 321, 324-325, 359-360, 451.

<sup>28</sup> The value of the worker's labour is divided between labour, capital and land, their respective shares coming in the form of wages, profit and ground rent; the latter two being components of surplus value. Capital owners and land owners shall henceforth be referred to as capitalists. To distinguish between them, vis-a-vis surplus value,

would only act to obscure the relationship of surplus value. However, for further reference see K. Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, ch. xlviii, The Trinity Formula (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962) and Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, Rent of Land, pp. 48-61, and Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 616.

<sup>29</sup> For further reference see Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 386-387.

<sup>30</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 559.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 634.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 636.

<sup>34</sup> "The more, therefore capital increases by means of successive accumulation, the more does the sum of the value increase that is divided into consumption-fund and accumulation-fund. The capitalist can therefore live a more jolly life, and at the same time show more "abstinence." (Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 667). For further reference see Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 386-395.

<sup>35</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 683.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 686.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 688.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 687.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 690.

<sup>42</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 609. See also Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 608, 610.

<sup>43</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 691.

<sup>44</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 881.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 404.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 406.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>48</sup> Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*, p. 96.

<sup>49</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 198.

- <sup>50</sup> P. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Modern Readers Paperback, 1942), p. 96.
- <sup>51</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, p. 208.
- <sup>52</sup> Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*, p. 142.
- <sup>53</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 363.
- <sup>54</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 454.
- <sup>55</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, pp. 82-83.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 91.
- <sup>58</sup> S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 117.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 118.
- <sup>60</sup> G. Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Berlin: Der Malik Verlag, 1923), pp. 96-97. As taken from Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*, p. 36.
- <sup>61</sup> K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, trans. G. A. Bonner and Emile Burns (London, 1951), p. 122.
- <sup>62</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 87.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 105.
- <sup>64</sup> W. Shakespear, *Goethe*. As taken from Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 120-121.
- <sup>65</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 39.
- <sup>66</sup> B. Ollman, *Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 202.
- <sup>67</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 455.
- <sup>68</sup> Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, pp. 103-104.
- <sup>69</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 21.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33.
- <sup>71</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 22.
- <sup>72</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 25.

<sup>73</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 291.

<sup>74</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 452.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 453.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 610.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 831.

<sup>78</sup> To say the worker is a commodity is the same as saying the worker's labour power is a commodity because labour power originates from within the worker's physical self. Therefore, to sell one's labour power for a specific time is to actually sell one's self for that time.

<sup>79</sup> Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 122.

<sup>80</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 307.

<sup>81</sup> Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 122.

<sup>82</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 76.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>85</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 140.

<sup>86</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 642.

<sup>87</sup> J. B. Say, *Traite d'economie politique, ou simple de la maniere dont se forment, se distribuent, et se consomment les richesses* (T. 1-2, 3 me ed, Paris, 1817), pp. 130-131. As taken from Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 38.

<sup>88</sup> Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 123.

<sup>89</sup> The method used earlier in chapter three to determine the rate of surplus value, i.e., surplus labour value/necessary labour value, shows the real degree of exploitation of labour by being a ratio of unpaid to paid labour.

<sup>90</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, p. 290.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>92</sup> F. Engels, *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*. As taken from Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 155.

<sup>93</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 122.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>95</sup> M. Nicolaus, Foreward to Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 24.

## Chapter Four

### THE CONTRADICTIONS OF PRODUCTION BASED ON CAPITAL

The dominant form of circulation in capitalism is  $M-C-M'$ .<sup>1</sup> Capitalism is production for profit, and thus the capitalist focuses attention on  $M' - M = *M$  or, more specifically, the size of  $*M$  relative to the magnitude of his original capital, fixed and variable,  $M$ . If something happens to negatively affect the relative size of  $*M$  within the process of circulation, the capitalist will reconsider the desirability of immediate reinvestment against withholding money. If variation in the size of  $*M$  is such that reinvestment is postponed, the circulation process will have been interrupted. The specific form of capitalist crisis is exactly such an interruption. It follows that a discussion of the causation of crisis must run in terms of the forces operating on  $*M$ . With respect to the contradictions of capitalist production briefly mentioned in chapter three, overproduction is indicative of the surplus value or  $*M$  not being realized because the exchange value generated exceeds the needs of consumption, and the tendency for a falling rate of profit is indicative of absolute increases in  $*M$  being offset by a more than compensating rise in the organic composition of capital.<sup>2</sup> In either contradiction it is the size of change in the magnitude of money that dictates the stability of capitalism and its tendency toward crises.



### The Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit

The capitalist advances his total capital without distinguishing between the different roles played by constant and variable capital in the production of surplus value. Because he cannot exploit labour unless he simultaneously advances constant capital, he lumps the two together in his mind. As far as he is concerned, therefore, the actual rate of gain is not determined by its proportion to variable capital but to total capital. Hence, he is not interested in the rate of surplus value,  $S/V$ , but rather a rate of profit,  $S/C+V$ .<sup>3</sup> Therefore, under all circumstances where surplus value is generated, the rate of profit will be less than the rate of surplus value but the sum of profit will be equal to the sum of surplus value. Whereas the latter rate is an expression of the degree of labour exploitation, the former is an expression of the self-expansion of capital.

Given that the rate of profit is  $p = s' (1-q)$ , where  $s'$  = rate of surplus value and  $q$  = organic composition of capital, if we suppose a constant rate of surplus value, then the rate of profit depends on the relation between the part of capital exchanged for living labour and the part existing in the form of raw material and means of production, i.e., on the organic composition of capital.<sup>4</sup> With respect to the portion of capital exchanged for living labour, an increase in the productivity of labour reveals itself in two ways: (i) a decrease in the number of labour hours necessary to sustain the labourer as labourer, (ii) a decrease in the quantity of labour power employed to set in motion a given capital.<sup>5</sup> This last point can further be expressed as less necessary labour creating the same exchange value, realizing more material and a greater mass of use value.<sup>6</sup> Variable

capital relative to constant capital decreases resulting in an increase in the organic composition of capital. The smaller the portion exchanged for living labour, the higher the organic composition of capital, thus the smaller the rate of profit.<sup>7</sup>

. . . since the mass of the employed living labour is continually on the decline as compared to the mass of materialized labour set in motion by it, . . . it follows that the portion of living labour, unpaid and congealed in surplus value, must also be continually on the decrease compared to the amount of value represented by the invested total capital.<sup>8</sup>

This is to say, the rate of profit,  $S/C+V$  or  $*M/M$ , is falling. To ensure steady accumulation the capitalist must replace the value of advanced capital with a usual or normal rate of profit. A fall in the rate of profit results in an interruption in accumulation. Thus, the development of the productive forces suspends the self-realization of capital instead of positing it. Beyond a certain point the development of the powers of production becomes a barrier for capital.<sup>9</sup>

The means—unconditional development of the productive forces of society—comes continually into conflict with the limited purpose, the self-expansion of capital. The capitalist mode of production is, for this reason, a historical means of developing the material forces of production and creating an appropriate world-market and is, at the same time, a continual conflict between this its historical task and its own corresponding relations of social production.<sup>10</sup>

Hence the highest development of productive powers together with the greatest expansion of existing wealth will coincide with depreciation of capital, degradation of the labourer, and a most straightened exhaustion of his vital powers. These contradictions lead to explosions, cataclysms, crises, . . .<sup>11</sup>

### Overproduction

The consumption of the worker is equal to his cost of production. Any surplus above this is appropriated by the capitalist as production

for the sake of production, the capitalist's main concern being the enhancement of exchange value. As soon as he desires accumulation for the sake of enjoyment rather than the enjoyment of accumulation, the capitalist becomes unsuited for his function. Thus, capitalism attempts to expand production without reference to consumption, i.e., to use value.

As soon as surplus labour has been materialized in commodities surplus value has been produced. These commodities must be sold though in order to realize the surplus value. However, "the conditions of direct exploitation and those of realization of surplus value are not identical."<sup>12</sup> The realization of this surplus value is determined by the consuming power commanded by the subsistence wage of the worker. Such a wage, however, relegates the consumption of the majority within narrow limits. Furthermore, competition between workers resulting from their increased productivity leads to a decrease in wages. Hence, even less can be consumed. Society's consuming power is further restricted by the capitalist's desire to accumulate. However, the production of a relative surplus value requires the production of new consumption so that the consuming circle within circulation expands with the productive circle. This can be achieved by a quantitative expansion of existing consumption, by creation of new needs through the propagation of existing ones, and by production and discovery of new needs.<sup>13</sup>

If the production of new surplus value cannot be realized in consumption, then capitalist production is interrupted. This realization is limited by consumption requirements of society in general and, more specifically, by the requirements of a society whose majority is poor. Clearly there exists a tendency in capitalism to employ resources

in such a way as to distort the relationship between potential supply of and potential demand for consumption goods. This is to say there is an inherent tendency for the growth in consumption to fall behind the growth in the production of consumption goods. "Overproduction takes place in connection with realization, not otherwise, . . ." <sup>14</sup> i.e., the \*M is not realized, thus expressing itself in crisis. In such a crisis an epidemic breaks out that would have seemed absurd in earlier epochs, the epidemic of overproduction. <sup>15</sup>

The bourgeoisie makes provisions to overcome this crisis by destroying a mass of productive forces as well as by conquering new markets and intensifying exploitation in old ones. However, if the development of capitalism is synonymous with the falling tendency of the profit rate and a consumption demand lagging further behind production, then the ills of the system can be expected to grow with time. Capitalist relations themselves become a fetter on the further development of society's productive forces. <sup>16</sup> Provisional measures to counter crises can only offer temporary alleviation. <sup>17</sup>

The growing incompatibility between the productive development of society and its hitherto existing relations of production expresses itself in bitter contradictions, crises, and spasms. The violent destruction of capital not by relations external to it, but rather as a condition of its self-preservation, is the most striking form in which advice is given it to be gone and to give room to a higher state of social production. <sup>18</sup>

### Proletariat Class Consciousness

The capitalist system will continue to experience production crises on an ever-expanding scale, but the system itself will not collapse until the class consciousness of the proletariat is sufficiently developed. Only then can this class and this class alone, through

revolution, bring about the downfall of the capitalist mode of production. Defined by their economic behavior, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are brought together in productive activity. With the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number but also becomes concentrated in greater masses.<sup>19</sup> Within the ranks of the proletariat the interests and conditions of life become more equalized. As well, the proletariat's livelihood becomes more precarious with the increasing improvement of machinery; thus alliances within the working class develop. Consequently, to promote the interests of their class the workers turn to politics. A necessary consequence, therefore, of the advances of capitalist production is the development of a worker class consciousness. Thus, the forces of capital production, the social relations complementing these forces, and the consciousness of the proletariat become incompatible. So not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself, i.e., capital production and all of its inherent contradictions, but it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletariat.<sup>20</sup>

Marx believed that as a united force the proletariat could, through revolution, transform capitalism into socialism, a society devoid of class structure and allowing all men to fully cultivate the species potential. Political consciousness prepared by economic struggle would be an indispensable condition of proletariat success. However, the working class was not to welcome economic disaster but rather use it when it occurred for revolutionary purposes. Hence, economic struggle should not be expected to yield triumphant results. Its main purpose would be to foster proletariat political consciousness. In practical

terms this would mean economic struggle as a means to political action and political action as a means to post-revolutionary economic emancipation.<sup>21</sup>

## The Revolution

### Goal of the Proletariat Revolution

The goal of the proletariat revolution is the abolition of the alienating conditions of labour.<sup>22</sup> A society that will abolish alienation will not abolish labour, only its alienating conditions so as to increase the quality of life epitomized by the worker. This is not to be confused with the standard of living. What is fundamentally at issue in the social revolution are not the conditions of consumption but those of production. It is man as a frustrated producer rather than man as dissatisfied consumer who is compelled to revolution. Thus, material satisfaction as such is never the aim of the proletariat.<sup>23</sup> Marx never implied that the absolute position of the worker would endlessly deteriorate and, hence, his critique of capitalism was not directed at an inability to feed the proletariat physically.

It must be stressed that Marx did not view capitalism as a lamentable disaster. Stressed against romantic critique, he saw it as a progressive stage that would create a presupposition of its own abolition.<sup>24</sup>

It (capitalism) has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time Marx saw this epoch of bourgeois supremacy characterized by

Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation . . .<sup>26</sup>

The immediate aim of the revolutionary proletariat would be the formation of a class so as to overthrow this supremacy. This could be achieved by the "abolition of private property."<sup>27</sup>

. . . labour, the subjective essence of private property as exclusion of property, and capital, objective labour as exclusion of labour, constitute private property as its developed state of contradiction—hence a dynamic relationship driving towards resolution.<sup>28</sup>

According to Marx, abolishing private property would eliminate the foundation upon which class distinction was based, thereby guaranteeing that the existence of the proletariat would no longer be subject to the interests of the bourgeoisie. With private property abolished the basis of wage labour would be lost. Therefore, the proletariat would be in control of its own labour activity and hence its physical and spiritual products. Thus, it would no longer be subjected to the material forces of its own creation.

The abolition of existing property is not a distinctive feature of Communism.<sup>29</sup>

Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things.<sup>30</sup>

All previous social relations based on prevailing forms of property have been altered due to changes in historical conditions. "The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property—private property."<sup>31</sup>

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of nine-tenths . . .<sup>32</sup>

To this Marx added that communism would not deprive man of appropriating society's products, but it would deprive him of the powers to subjugate the labour of others by means of appropriation, i.e., man could not privately own the means of production. Freedom, therefore, would consist in socialized man, the associated producers rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control.<sup>33</sup> The life of the vast majority would cease to be mere struggle for subsistence. Man would at last be allowed self-realization through creative work, a fully human, productive life.

Human self-realization meant more to Marx, though, than the return of man to himself out of his alienated labour in capitalist production. It also meant the transcendence of all previous modes of production in which man had historically led a life of alienation.<sup>34</sup> "The positive transcendence of private property, as the appropriation of human living, is, therefore, the positive transcendence of all alienation . . ."<sup>35</sup> Thus, the act by which the proletariat appropriates the alienated world of private property will be one of self-abolition as a proletariat.

This resolution is possible only in a practical way, by virtue of the practical energy of man.<sup>36</sup> This supports Marx's critique of Hegel's and Feuerbach's prescriptions for alienation. The "resolution is therefore by no means merely a problem of understanding but a real problem of life . . ." Thus,

. . . for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and . . . for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution . . .<sup>37</sup>



The Nature of the Revolution

For capitalism to become an intolerable situation against which men revolt, it must render the great majority of the population propertyless. As well, it must produce the contradiction of a world of wealth and culture, both presupposing a huge increase in productive power and a high degree of development.<sup>38</sup> Capitalist society is thus divided into two main classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Therefore, the revolution is a class war initiated by the proletariat masses against the bourgeoisie, the proletariat alone being a truly revolutionary class, other classes decaying and disappearing in the face of modern industry.<sup>39</sup> "Someday the worker must seize political power . . . he must overthrow the old politics."<sup>40</sup>

At the time of Marx's earlier writings he believed that there was no possibility of settling such a conflict through peaceful negotiations. However, with the changing circumstances of historical conditions Marx wrote:

. . . we have not asserted that the ways to achieve that goal (the proletariat seizing power) are everywhere the same. You know that the institutions, mores and traditions of various countries must be taken into consideration, and we do not deny that there are countries where the workers can attain their goal by peaceful means.<sup>41</sup>

Given either approach, the only possible formula for peace would be the total victory of the proletariat against the total destruction of all previous securities for and insurances of individual property. The process leading to victory would be communism, a revolution to overcome alienation. However, the proletariat would not destroy the concentrated means of industrial production developed by capitalism. Rather,

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State,

i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class;  
and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly  
as possible.<sup>42</sup>

The manner by which such victory would be achieved is as follows. In the early stages of the co-operation of labour, class struggle would be carried on by individual labourers and, in time, by the work people of individual factories. They would direct their attacks against the instruments of production, destroying production means that competed with their labour. At this point, the bourgeois conditions of production would not be attacked and the labourers would form an incoherent, scattered mass. With the development of industry, though, the proletariat would increase in number and become concentrated in greater masses. With increasing improvements in machinery, distinctions between labour would be obliterated and the livelihood of the proletariat would become precarious. More and more the collisions between individual workmen and bourgeois would take on the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the proletariat would begin to form combinations against the bourgeois. Improved means of communications created by capitalist industry would place workers of different areas in contact with one another. Also, due to the fierce level of competition among the capitalists, entire sections of the ruling class would be precipitated into the proletariat, supplying the working class with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress. Finally, when overthrow was imminent, a section of disillusioned bourgeois would join the revolutionary class.<sup>43</sup> With the bourgeoisie being relatively few in number, Marx foresaw a short revolutionary period, months to years versus decades.

The Nature of the Future Society

That private property characteristic of capitalism was to be abolished in the proletariat revolution served Marx as a starting point in his argument about the nature of the future society. However, as he became more acquainted with political realities, his interests focused more on organizing the revolution than in portraying the ideal society. Nowhere does Marx explicitly lay out his conception of the make-up of the future society. The reason for this being that such a conception would have been developed over a long period of time as new situations presented themselves, e.g., the felt need to expose the nature of capitalism, relevant situations such as the Paris Commune and attacks on his views by Duehring. Therefore, only by reading through all of Marx's works is it possible to gain insight into what he envisioned for the future.

Undeniably, the capitalist system has taken on such magnitude as even Marx had not predicted. With these changes has come a new perspective of the world and, hence, newly imposed biases in perceiving reality. Therefore, the problem exists of subjective interpretation of what Marx saw for the future. In an attempt to minimize this bias I shall present only what Marx himself wrote concerning the future.

It can be assumed that the goals Marx set out for the proletariat through revolution were to be understood as features of the future society. Its most prevalent characteristic, therefore, is unalienated conditions of labour based on property not privately owned.<sup>44</sup> This was to be tantamount to no one being relegated to an exclusive sphere of activity but rather becoming accomplished in the different areas of one's choice.

Marx's references to socialism are primarily in terms of production. His central concern, as has been exhibited throughout this thesis, was with man's activities as a producer and the conditions under which he carried on these activities. The result of the revolution would be production regulated by society, thus making it possible to

. . . do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.<sup>45</sup>

With production and distribution publicly organized, it would be creative need rather than demand for money that would keep the economic and industrial system in motion.

In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In Communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer.<sup>46</sup>

Marx did not believe the revolution could achieve these goals immediately. Between capitalism and communism would lie a period of revolutionary transformation. Hence, the category of worker would not be eliminated initially but instead extended to all men.<sup>47</sup> It would still be necessary to remunerate workers according to the amount of labour performed because communist society could not develop on its own volition but rather would have to emerge from capitalist society.<sup>48</sup> Marx referred to this stage of the revolution and future society as crude communism. It would not recognize class difference but would tacitly recognize unequal individual endowments, right never being "higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."<sup>49</sup> Crude communism would be a time characterized by

. . . means of despotic inroads on the rights of property and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable . . .<sup>50</sup>

Over the course of the proletariat movement these initial measures would outstrip themselves allowing for further inroads upon the old social order of capitalism. In the meantime, capitalist greed and competition would be substituted by general envy and the regression of man to

. . . the unnatural simplicity of the poor and crude man who has few needs and who has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not even reached it.<sup>51</sup>

Marx made it clear how these measures were to be implemented. Although he thought the state would disappear in a higher phase of communism, in its lower form of crude communism it would survive as a "dictatorship of the proletariat." In a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer in 1852, Marx writes, "What I did that was new was to prove: . . . that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat . . ."<sup>52</sup>

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>53</sup>

The dictatorship of the proletariat would be just as its title suggests, a dictatorship. The Paris Commune of 1871 was, in Engels' mind, what this dictatorship would "look like."<sup>54</sup> The first decree of the Commune was the suppression of the standing army, substituting for it the armed people. The government was essentially a working-class government. All administrative, judicial, and educational posts were filled by election on the basis of universal suffrage and subject to recall at any time by the electors. All officials received a wage

equivalent to other workers so as to create an effective barrier to "place-hunting" and "careerism." The Commune wanted to realize individual property by transforming the means of production into instruments of free and associated labour so that a united co-operative society could regulate national production upon a common plan. Recognizing its fallibility, the Commune published all of its doings and sayings, initiating the public into all of its shortcomings.<sup>55</sup>

This proletarian dictatorship was to be temporary; ". . . this dictatorship itself constitutes only the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."<sup>56</sup> However, it would take time after capturing the capitalist means of production for the proletariat to reorganize administration, production, and distribution, thus the provision for the transitional crude communism. As to the duration of this period, Marx was never committed. Although he understood the need for the proletarian dictatorship, he also recognized that changes were taking place that would not allow him certainty of its duration. However, as has been stated, because of the vast majority of proletariat relative to the elite bourgeoisie, in historical terms this period would probably be short, a period of months or years versus decades. In the 1872 preface of the German edition of *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote,

In view of the gigantic strides of Modern Industry in the last twenty-five years, and of the accompanying improved and extended party organization of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this programme has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes".<sup>57</sup>

The communist action of dissipating capitalist property would not in itself bring man the affirmative consciousness of himself as man. Such affirmation lay beyond crude communism and the immediate action against private property. There was not implied, however, a rigid line between the "lower" and then "higher" phase of communism. In Marx's general treatment of previous epochs, history was seen as a dynamic process never breaking and then beginning again on a higher plane. What can be said about this transition is that during its course the following would, in most advanced countries, be generally applicable: (i) abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purpose; (ii) a heavy progressive or graduated income tax; (iii) abolition of all rights of inheritance resulting from abolition of the family; (iv) confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels; (v) centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank and State capital and an exclusive monopoly; (vi) centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State; (vii) extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State, the bringing into cultivation of waste lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan; (viii) equal liability of all to labour, establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture; (ix) combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries, gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the population over the country; (x) free education for all children in public school, abolition of children's factory labour in its present form, combination of education with industrial production, etc.<sup>58</sup>

When the higher phase was fully achieved, people would no longer be remunerated for labour rendered but rather would receive according to their needs; ". . . the satisfaction of all reasonable needs will be assured to everyone in an ever-increasing measure."<sup>59</sup> Again to note, however, socialism in Marx's eyes did not turn principally on distribution but production. So, more importantly, "In the future life of the peoples . . . the inanimate forces of nature working in machines will be our slaves and serfs."<sup>60</sup> Such production would not necessarily involve industrialization because the proletariat would have won, through revolution, an already highly industrialized system.

Marx was more interested in production as an expression of species man than in increasing its scale, and with this view on activity that which would render man rich or poor in communism would be very different from that in capitalism.

The rich human being is simultaneously the human being in need of a totality of human manifestations of life—the man in whom his own realisation exists as an inner necessity, as need.<sup>61</sup>

Man would be able to realize his species potential through creative work made possible by the abolition of bourgeois private property. This directly corresponds to Marx's interpretation of overcoming alienation.

The positive transcendence of private property, as the appropriation of human life, is therefore the positive transcendence of all estrangement—that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, State, etc., to his human, i.e., social existence.<sup>62</sup>

In place of capitalist society with its classes and class antagonisms, there would exist an association in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."<sup>63</sup> More specifically with respect to socialism,



. . . it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species.<sup>64</sup>

For Marx the communist movement and the resultant socialist society would guarantee the de-alienation of man.

### Can Alienation Exist in the Future Society?

What has been presented is Marx's theory of alienation. We began by examining the various forms of alienation as Marx defined them, and then looked at his philosophical predecessors in the area of alienation. This was followed by a brief discussion of Marx's historical materialism and then an analysis of capitalism with respect to alienation. Finally, in this last chapter the contradictions inherent in capitalism and thus the inevitable proletarian revolution were examined with a description of the future de-alienated socialist society. With Marx's theory laid out, a question can now be posed: "Does the abolition of private property guarantee the de-alienation of species man?" In Marx's system this is analogous to: "Can alienation exist in the future socialist society?"

There are a number of considerations to keep in mind when addressing this question. One, the theory of alienation is a useful aid for understanding the conditions of man's existence in capitalism only for those who share certain beliefs with Marx. For example, one has to agree with the kinds of relations Marx sees existing between man and his product, his activity, his essence, and other men. To agree with this is to agree with Marx's conception of the capitalist and the worker. As well, it is to agree that man has uncultivated potentials.<sup>65</sup>

If one disagrees, the very term alienation will convey a meaning not intended by Marx.

A second consideration is that Marx approaches the question of de-alienation from a philosophical viewpoint. For this reason, he is vague concerning the make-up of the future society. The implication of these considerations is that in addressing the issue of alienation and its abolition, it is incorrect to judge whether Marx is right or wrong concerning the future. A more appropriate approach would be to investigate whether the internal construct of Marx's analysis is logical, i.e., whether his theory of alienation and with that his prescription for de-alienation is philosophically sound. Equally important in determining the effectiveness of Marx's prescription for de-alienation, analysis must be carried out from his vantage point using his definitions. Because of changing historical conditions reflected in modifications of the language, not employing Marxian definitions would result in his philosophical system not being adequately critiqued.<sup>66</sup>

I shall approach the posed question, therefore, by focusing on Marx's theory, examining whether his prescription for de-alienation reflects the nature of the premise of alienation. There exist two possibilities. One, the premise is reflected in the prescription and, two, the premise is not reflected in the prescription. Clearly, de-alienation will only result from the first possibility.

The entire tenor of Marx's analysis of alienation led him to the conclusion of the priority of private property and, hence, the annulment of alienation being tantamount to the annulment of private property. Based on Marx's prescription for de-alienation, i.e., the transcendence of private property, it would appear that the premise of alienation is

that private property is the cause. Thus, it is to blame for the worker's miserable situation. However, there is a problem in defining private property as the cause of alienated labour. Marx said exactly the opposite.

The relationship of the worker to the labour engenders the relationship to it of the capitalist . . . Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself. Private property thus results by analysis from the concept of alienated labour . . .<sup>67</sup>

Marx goes on to write,

. . . though private property appears to be the source, the cause of alienated labour, it is really its consequence, just as the gods in the beginning are not the cause but the effect of man's intellectual confusion. Later this relationship becomes reciprocal.<sup>68</sup>

Logically, abolition of the effect of alienated labour does not imply abolition of its cause. Consequently, private property is not the premise upon which the theory of alienation is based and, therefore, it would seem that de-alienation cannot be guaranteed through the means of abolishing private property.

This, in itself, is not an adequate argument for refuting Marx's theory of alienation. We are still left with the question of the origin of alienated labour. In *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx writes,

We have accepted the estrangement of labour, its alienation as a fact, and we have analyzed this fact. How, we now ask, does man come to alienate, to estrange his labour? How is this estrangement rooted in the nature of human development?<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately, the manuscript breaks off unfinished before Marx can address these questions. Later, in *The German Ideology*, an historical account of labour and property is provided. Marx and Engels argue that

the different forms of ownership are determined by the development of the division of labour and that the historical place of alienation is also to be found in this development of the division of labour.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover,

The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership, i.e., the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, and product of labour.<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, it is the division of labour and not private property that is the cause of man's alienation. Recall,

. . . these three moments, the forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness, can and must come into contradiction with one another, because the division of labour implies the possibility . . . and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labour.<sup>72</sup>

Marx is placing the origin of alienated labour in the division of labour and, hence, the division of labour as the indirect cause of private property.

With the division of labour . . . is given simultaneously the distribution and indeed the unequal distribution, both quantitative and qualitative, of labour and its products, hence property: . . .<sup>73</sup>

Finally, Marx concludes,

. . . the division of labour offers the first example of how . . . as long, therefore, as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally divided, man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore, Bertell Ollman comments that for Marx alienation exists in all societies where the division of labour is the operative principle

of economic organization.<sup>75</sup> Adam Schaff agrees that the division of labour is the source of alienation:

This is indeed the central problem: in order to abolish the alienation of work we must overcome the division of labour . . . The abolition of private ownership is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for overcoming the alienation of work.<sup>76</sup>

Schaff further adds:

Work does not cease to be alienated work under socialism simply because private ownership of the means of production has been abolished. The main causes of the alienation of work will continue so long as . . . the division of labour continues, which maintains the distinction between work in agriculture and industry, between physical and mental work, and which maintains the specialization of functions in industrial production.<sup>77</sup>

The premise for Marx's theory of alienation, therefore, lies in the division of labour. His prescription for de-alienation, however, rests on the abolition of private property. It would seem apparent that such a prescription could not lend itself to the de-alienation of man. The implication of this is that a future society founded on the abolition of private property would not be immune to alienation.

#### An Alternative Interpretation

The underlying theme in all of Marx's writings is the emancipation of species man.

Capital is a detailed study of the economic aspects of the process annunciated by Marx in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts: What was philosophically postulated in 1844 is now [in *Capital*] verified and vindicated by an analysis of capitalist economic activity undertaken with the tools of classical political economy.<sup>78</sup>

As a philosopher, economist and political critic, Marx dedicated a lifetime of work to analyzing the problem of alienation and offering insight into its abolition. As has been shown, it appears Marx erred in logic

regarding premise and prescription; however, the nature of the error in question is disturbingly obvious. This leads me to suggest the possibility that the error is not in Marx's logic but in the interpretation of those who read him. This is not to suggest that Marx was infallible, but when a thinker of such stature is so easily shown to be wrong, there is the possibility of him having been misinterpreted.

Undoubtedly, the biggest hurdle facing readers of Marx is his unusual use of words. To the extent that words express the understanding of a period, to interpret words using currently accepted meanings is to confine oneself to expressing ideas which are also current. Therefore, to understand Marx it is necessary to understand not only his form of expression but also his justification for that form.

The issue in all of Marx's work was to penetrate beneath abstract categories of political economy and social life to the human reality underlying them.<sup>79</sup> Engels said of Marx's presentation that his words were not fixed expressions. His terminology appeared inconsistent, a single word meaning different things at different times. Engels argued that readers should not expect to find

. . . fixed, cut-to-measure, once and for all applicable definitions in Marx's works. It is self-evident that where things and their interrelations are conceived, not as fixed, but as changing, their mental images, the ideas, are likewise subject to change and transformation, and they are not encapsulated in rigid definition . . .<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, Marx's words were meant to express a specific conception of changing things and their interrelations. Thus his definitions also have to be flexible. A consequence of this is that Marx's critics have generally avoided any serious investigation of his conception of social reality. The implicit assumption in this is that there is no

fundamental difference between Marx's conception of social reality and our own. If, in fact, there is a difference, then Marx's writings will be subject to misinterpretation. Because our senses tend to individuate what they perceive, we are inclined to conceive of the world as consisting of logically independent phenomena. Marx did not. He viewed reality as being in flux and composed of internally dependent parts. The reason for this being Marx's research into the manifold ways in which social factors were related. Therefore, his subject matter was not simply society as a mosaic of individual entities but society conceived of "relationally." What is distinctive in Marx's conception of social reality is best understood by examining the cluster of qualities he ascribes to individual social factors. He offers a conception of capitalist society in which factors we generally think of as "externally" related to each other are, in actuality, co-elements of each other. Therefore, any factor analyzed by Marx in his study of capitalism was not treated as an independent phenomenon whose ties with other factors were contingent. Rather, each factor was conceived of as a "definite social relationship." Thus, it is the relationship and not the factor which is the irreducible minimum in Marx's understanding of social reality. For example, capital, labour, value, commodity, etc., are all seen as relations, containing in themselves as integral elements of what they are, those parts to which we tend to see them externally tied.<sup>81</sup> Therefore,

In both presenting the same thing from different angles and apparently disparate ones as "identical" Marx is trying to mirror a reality where entities are connected as essential elements in each other's Relations.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, when Marx refers to what appears to be a specific object or part,

the interdependence of this part with all others is kept clearly in mind. As individuated concepts these parts represent "phenomena which show themselves on the surface."<sup>83</sup> As relations, these same parts represent "the invisible and unknown essence."<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the "whole" of the parts, or capitalism, represents this interdependence which may be conceptualized within any one of the parts.<sup>85</sup> Thus, each part or factor has the potential to take on the name of another part when they are associated.

Given that in my previous analysis of Marx's premise of and prescription for alienation I treated private property and the division of labour as independent, contingent factors, I now offer an alternative interpretation whereby these factors are treated as social relations.

In *The German Ideology* Marx writes,

Division of labour and private property are . . . identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity.<sup>86</sup>

By referring to the division of labour and private property as identical, Marx is not offering an empty tautology but directing us to the internal ties he saw existing between these two factors in reality. As relations they are identical in that both affirm alienation, a state encompassing the activity as well as the product, hence making the division of labour and private property necessary conditions for and results of each other. Moreover, they are identical by being facets of the same whole, i.e., capitalism, which can be deduced from an exposition of either. What we assume in Marx's system with respect to the ties between private property and the division of labour he assumes as constituent components of the factors themselves. Hence, in the social relation of private



property both the division of labour and private property are assumed, one relationship being referred to over the other depending upon the chosen emphasis, i.e., Marx is saying that at this particular time, in this context, this is the relation most worth noting.

The major consideration of this interpretation is that when Marx prescribes the abolition of private property he is implicitly prescribing the abolition of the division of labour, the latter being an inextricable facet of the former, and vice versa. Thus, Marx's prescription for alleviating alienation would reflect the premise of alienation. The result would be the de-alienation of species man in Marx's future system.<sup>87</sup>

From the different interpretations provided, it is important to recognize two separate approaches to economic analysis, one which focuses on individuated market phenomena and another which focuses on social relations of production. It has been suggested that Marx considered the second approach as the more fundamental inquiry. Therefore, even though Marx might use words that are recognizable, one should not be misled into thinking that their intended meaning is necessarily what is currently understood. The present method of perceiving reality makes absolute distinctions between an object and its qualities. The result of Marx's method of perception transgressing this norm, i.e., for taking each factor to be the sum of its qualities, is that his writings are subject to misinterpretation.

The conclusion of this analysis is that given Marx's system, when private property is conceived of as consisting of independent objects, its abolition will not lead to the de-alienation of species man. However, if by private property Marx meant the social relation in which

the division of labour was an intricate facet, then abolishing private property will result in man's de-alienation. Given either interpretation, it is apparent that what Marx had hoped to accomplish through political means was that which had been developed in his philosophical writings and verified in his economic analysis. The underlying theme in Marx's writings, from young to mature man, is the emancipation of species man.

### A Moment of Reality

Marx was adamant regarding the need to couple theory and practise. His major critique of Hegel and Feuerbach was that their philosophies did not provide a platform for man's activity. Therefore, in honoring Marx's methods his writings too must be subjected to a test of practicability. Marx perceived a problem of alienation for which he prescribed a resolution: a proletarian revolution based on the abolition of private property. In the resultant future society the realm of necessity, or the necessity for man to involuntarily render potential labour, ceases to exist. Man is free to choose the form his labour activity will take. This is not to suggest, however, that activity that capitalist man previously abhorred will be shunned in the future by socialist man. In his freedom to choose his activities, future man will volunteer a portion of labour potential to ensure the production of necessities. This is not to be confused as operating within the realm of necessity. Future man is not forced into the production of necessities. Rather, he chooses to participate because of a dialectically cultivated altruistic species characteristic. He willingly gives up a portion of labour time to the maintenance of society.

This scenario impresses itself upon the capitalist mentality as obviously utopian. It is exceedingly difficult to comprehend a truly altruistic existence. By denying the feasibility of cultivating species altruism, the practicability of Marx's theory of alienation diminishes. In particular, Marx assumed that moving from a capitalist system to a socialist system would in no way hinder the technological process. Analysis will show that this is not necessarily so. A question is posed regarding the future society. Given that man is free to do with his labour as he chooses and at the same time must provide for his existence, can the capitalist achieved level of technology be maintained? Engels addressed this question in general.

Only at a certain level of development of the productive forces of society, an even very high level for our modern conditions, does it become possible to raise production to such an extent that the abolition of class distinctions can be a real progress, can be lasting without bringing about stagnation or even decline in the mode of social production.<sup>88</sup>

Given the abolition of the division of labour and private property, unless people choose mundane, repetitive tasks, a technology based on such labouring could not be maintained. Assume: i) a technology less than full automation and hence objects of necessity that must be produced by the labour of the people; ii) people doing what they please with their labour, therefore there would exist some tasks that no one would choose, some of these tasks required for the production of necessities; iii) any increases in technology are reflected in increased opportunities for man to cultivate species capabilities. Human labour must be expended in order to guarantee human survival. However, socialist man is free not to choose to enter the work force in the production of necessities. If this is a predominant choice and the

available advanced forces of technology, characterized by repetitive, specialized tasks, are not utilized for production of necessities on a mass scale, then individually man will have to provide for himself. Because capitalist technology is typified by the tools of production used in common, providing for oneself could only be achieved by using a more rudimentary technology. Therefore, unless socialist man is truly altruistic, a technology short of full automation will necessarily be compromised. A decrease in technology would be equivalent to relatively fewer avenues available for man's development and, hence, a move to socialism may not guarantee a greater fulfillment of species potentials.

#### Modern-Day Relevance of the Theory

To this point Marx's theory of alienation has been discussed solely in theoretical terms. In light of the queries surrounding the applicability of Marx's theory on a theoretical level, what modern-day relevance does it have? As a theory of the development of species man, Marx's writings on alienation provide insight into the merits of self-unification. By offering a dialectical approach to living man can continually better himself as a human being. This contradicts a modern conservative approach to life whereby man's desire for change is matched by an equal desire for conserving what already exists. What this in fact advocates is status quo out of fear and ignorance of something different. An example of this is offered by capitalist man's perception of freedom. By revealing history to be a succession of human antagonism whereby the potentials of the many have been sacrificed for the gain of the few, Marx's theory of alienation condemns the atomistic, individualistic approach to liberty. Modern liberalism, though advocating

liberty for the nation, appeals to the individual's sense of personal freedom. People are to believe that their personal freedom can only be guaranteed when the freedom of those whose ideologies contradict their own is limited. Technological advancements in the ensurance of personal freedom, however, not only threaten our "enemies" but also ourselves. In the theory of alienation, Marx offers an alternative interpretation of freedom. He suggests that increased personal freedom is not achieved through further alienating oneself from the needs of others. Because man must live in community, be it national or global, enhancing the freedom of the group will serve to increase the freedom of the individual, and not vice versa. Thus, Marx's theory of alienation fuels man's awareness not only of the desirability of self-unification which is attained in community, but also of the possibility that ultimate personal freedom within the community may only be ensured through solidarity of the global community.

For Marx, truth or the underlying essence of life, was manifested in the infrastructure. Proclaimed ideologies generated in the superstructure were to be viewed as superficial misleading manners by which to assert truth. The ideology of atomistic freedom which is given life in the political system serves, according to Marx, the interest of a particular class while claiming to represent the interests of an entire society. Today, people have begun to question the validity of an ideology of freedom that is detrimental to mankind. Such an ideology distorts reality so as to legitimize the principles of action of a dominant group of people. Consensus, as a manifestation of the misinformed and the apathetic, is used as a political weapon to discredit the opinions presented by other groups. Obedience to the masses is

inevitably secured due to resignation, despondency, and apathy. Recently, however, various governments have suffered a legitimacy crisis of sorts, legitimacy being a quality of government or the status accorded to a government by civil society on the basis of whether governmental actions are conceived to be legitimate, legal and representative of the rational consensus of the majority of the population. Marx's theory of alienation suggests to modern man that because the state is a creation of man's, it has no material existence and thus must attain legitimacy.

Finally, Marx's writings, and in particular his theory of alienation, promote continuing dialogue on the issue of the "correct" way that life is to be conducted on a national as well as individual level. In the universities Marx continues to be read, analyzed and discussed. In the political arena, orthodox Marxists and Neo-Marxists battle for recognition as the group advocating the most viable interpretation. On a global scale, the debate continues with unwavering intensity between the East and the West. Over one hundred years after his death, Marx remains a dominant figure in philosophic, economic and political circles, and he will continue to be remembered for his dedication to the emancipation of man.

## Chapter Four

Notes

<sup>1</sup> A worker engages in transactions that take the form of C-M-C, and while he can invest his money in such a way that for a time his transactions are of the form M-C-M', any money made is for the purpose of consumption when the worker's labour no longer provides him with employment.

<sup>2</sup> For further reference see K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. with a Foreward by M. Nicolaus (Great Britain: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973).

<sup>3</sup> K. Marx, *Capital Volume I*, trans. from 3rd German edition by S. Moore and E. Aveling, ed. F. Engels (New York: Random House, Inc., 1906), p. 680. Also see Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 747, and K. Marx, *Capital Volume 3* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), pp. 42, 49.

<sup>4</sup> Recall that  $s' = s/v$  and  $q = c/(c+v)$  and  $p = s/(c+v)$ . It follows by simple manipulation that  $p = s'(1-q)$ . See P. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Modern Readers Paperbacks, 1970), p. 175. Also see Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, pp. 211-213.

<sup>5</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, p. 216.

<sup>6</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 389.

<sup>7</sup> This may be no more than a tendency as changes in  $s'$  may outweigh the effects of changes in  $q$ .

<sup>8</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, p. 216.

<sup>9</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 749.

<sup>10</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, p. 250.

<sup>11</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 750.

<sup>12</sup> Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*, p. 175.

<sup>13</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 408.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 424.

<sup>15</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, with an Introduction by A.J.P. Taylor (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*, p. 160.

<sup>17</sup> Marx briefly mentions other possible causes of crises in capitalism but pays little attention to them. One was the competition of capital whereby a faulty distribution of social labour among

individual spheres of production existed. Another was the profit rate decreasing due to increases in wages. The third was crises arising from a limited amount of currency circulating in an expanded market of consumption goods.

<sup>18</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 749-750.

<sup>19</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 89.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 303, 304.

<sup>22</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 505-506.

<sup>23</sup> R. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> M. Nicolaus, Foreward to *Grundrisse* by Marx, p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>28</sup> K. Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 87.

<sup>29</sup> Marx preferred to use the word communism in reference to the process of the revolution rather than the final phase of history which he called socialism.

<sup>30</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>33</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, p. 820.

<sup>34</sup> R. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 157.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal, p. 69.



- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 24.
- <sup>39</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 91.
- <sup>40</sup> K. Marx, *The Possibility of Non-Violent Revolution*. As taken from R. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), p. 523.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 104.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 88-91.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-99.
- <sup>45</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal, p. 22.
- <sup>46</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 97.
- <sup>47</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 88.
- <sup>48</sup> K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*. As taken from Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 530.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 531.
- <sup>50</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 104.
- <sup>51</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 84.
- <sup>52</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p. 69.
- <sup>53</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works II*, p. 30. As taken from Tucker, *Revolutionary Idea*, p. 73.
- <sup>54</sup> F. Engels, Introduction to *The Civil War in France*, by Karl Marx. As taken from Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 629.
- <sup>55</sup> K. Marx, *Civil War in France*. As taken from Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 628-640.
- <sup>56</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 69.
- <sup>57</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Preface to the German edition of 1872, p. 54.
- <sup>58</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 104-105.
- <sup>59</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works II*, p. 151. As taken from R. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, p. 104.

<sup>60</sup> W. Schulz, *Bewegung der Production*, p. 74. As taken from Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 30.

<sup>61</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 98.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>63</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 105.

<sup>64</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 90.

<sup>65</sup> B. Ollman, *Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 247.

<sup>66</sup> Therefore, the following often-used approaches to the question of alienation must necessarily lie outside the scope of this particular work: i) to adopt the attitude that man is inherently alienated regardless of the system; ii) to deal with alienation in light of past performance of existing communist societies; iii) to devolve into religious arguments about de-alienation possible only in a "here-after."

<sup>67</sup> Marx, *Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 72.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal, pp. 9-16.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 160.

<sup>76</sup> A. Schaff, *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon* (Great Britain: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp. 203-204.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>78</sup> S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 118.

<sup>79</sup> C. J. Arthur, Introduction to *The German Ideology*, by K. Marx and F. Engels, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 18.

<sup>80</sup> F. Engels, Preface to *Capital Volume 3* by Marx, pp. 13-14.

<sup>81</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 68.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>83</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, p. 56.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 253.

<sup>86</sup> Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. with an Introduction by R. Pascal, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Given this interpretation to be the intended one, why did Marx choose to prescribe the abolition of private property over the abolition of the division of labour? A possibility is that he believed it would provide a better platform upon which the proletarian could base a revolution.

<sup>88</sup> F. Engels, *On Social Relations in Russia*. As taken from Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 666.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis attempted to show that the theory of alienation in Marx's intellectual corpus was the construct which integrated his philosophy, economics, and politics. The method of researching this subject centered around the question of whether abolishing private property would guarantee the de-alienation of species man. Given the fact that Marx's ideas on the question of alienation were reflected first in his philosophical work and then in his economic analysis of capitalism, the question becomes one of whether his political prescription for alienation is consistent with his philosophical theorizing. The reason for this method of investigation is to determine whether there existed a single, logical and consistent theme in the writings of young and mature Marx. By showing that Marx as a philosopher, economist and political analyst was dedicated to the understanding and improving of the human condition, the significance of the theory of alienation in his writings becomes obvious. Without this theory the internal coherence and structure of Marx's intellectual edifice would suffer tremendously.

Marx's theory of alienation has been shown to be based on his perception of man as a duality of natural and species beings. In his natural form, man's needs and powers manifest themselves in energy expended to maintain physical existence. As such, natural man is not conscious of the difference between what he is and what he does.

He is a social animal that has not developed a consciousness of being separate from nature. Man is naturally endowed with certain characteristics and faculties which distinguish him as a species; such inherent traits are exemplified in the manner by which he performs labour activity, mental and physical. It is through labour that he becomes conscious of himself as separate from what he does. Marx's theory of alienation is based on the premise that if barriers exist that will not allow species man to cultivate these potentials through his labour activity, he will be alienated from his species essence. Though endowed with species potentials, man will continue to exist in his natural form. The importance of this is that Marx's concern was to link the freedom of man with the full development of species potentials. If man is kept from realizing all that his species is capable of, he will not be free.

Since the life activity of species man is labour, the alienation of man manifests itself in labour activity. The phenomenon of alienation, in other words, is fully grounded in man's labouring activity. Chapters one and three dealt with four different forms of alienation. The first two forms, the alienation of man from his product and from the process of production, are direct results of barriers to species man's labour activity. The latter two forms, the alienation of man from his species and from other men, are found to be implications of the first two forms.

Nineteenth-century Europe was a socially degrading period of industrialization. The impending civil war in France at the time brought to Marx's attention the plight of the working class. During the same period, Germany experienced an extremely fertile intellectual movement. Marx attempted to integrate the realities of the time with

prevailing intellectual conceptualizations of alienation. Hegel's idealist philosophy was a dominant force in German universities in particular, and Germany's cultural and intellectual life in general. Marx's concern with the freedom of man and man's ability to realize his potentials was not consistent with a philosophy such as Hegel's that had God at its center. Another philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach, had already argued before Marx that man, not God, must be made the subject of philosophy. Marx thus synthesized the philosophies of Feuerbach and Hegel. Hegel's view of history as the dialectical process of the development of the Absolute Spirit's (God's) self-consciousness became, for Marx, a history of the dialectical process of the development of species man's self-consciousness.

The historical development of man's self-consciousness entailed a logical and dialectical necessity that would guarantee a final stage in history where man would become fully conscious of himself as species man. This historical process is predicated on man's ensuring first natural survival before pursuing species capabilities. The level of man's awareness, therefore, would be dictated by the relation man had with nature which conditions man's relation with man. Together the two relations constitute a mode of production. The cumulative improvement in the forces of production and how these forces of production reveal themselves in social relationships condition and define the level of the cultural, political, and intellectual superstructure. The succession of one economic system by another increases self-consciousness of the species. Such self-consciousness is the result of contradictions between the method of production and production relations which, in short, reflect the peculiar class consciousness and class contradictions

prevailing at the time. Based on this, Marx distinguished four phases in the history of man. He focused primarily on the fourth phase, the capitalist mode of production, because he believed it to be the foundation to a fifth stage in human history that would guarantee the freedom of man to fully develop himself as species man.

The relationship of man with nature in the capitalist mode of production is characterized by a high level of technology. The relationship of man with man in the capitalist stage is determined by private ownership of the means of production, a high degree in the division of labour, and wage labour. Dialectical necessity dictates that contradictions arise between these relations, and a struggle ensues between the two main groups: the labourers and the owners of the means of labouring or the capitalists. The proletariat, who have no means to exercise their life activity, sell their unrealized labour to those who own the means, the capitalists. The workers' labour, which is extremely specialized, is remunerated so as to allow for subsistence survival. Advanced capitalist technology offers tremendous opportunities for self-realization, but the social relations and the legal framework within which they operate conspire to prevent species development. The proletariat's increasing awareness of this exploitation inevitably results in a class struggle which takes the form of a revolution.

The dialectical process of man's history thereby precipitates a new historical phase based on revised relations between man and nature and man and man. This new mode of production would be characterized by abolition of the division of labour and private property. The catalyst for further class antagonism would be eliminated. Therefore,

no class distinctions would exist. Hence, the dialectical process of man's history, based on succeeding modes of production, ends and renders this new phase, socialism, the final phase in man's history of the development of species consciousness. Man would at last be able to fulfill his species essence through unalienated labour activity. The realm of freedom commences at the moment when the realm of necessity is overcome.

Marx was adamant regarding the need to couple theory and practise. His major critique of Hegel's and Feuerbach's philosophies was that they did not provide a platform for man's activities. Therefore, honoring Marx's methods, his writings too were subjected to a test of applicability and validity. Marx stated a problem, alienation, and provided a resolution, socialism. The means of achieving this resolution was a revolution based on abolishing private property. In order to determine the applicability of this prescription, it was necessary to understand what Marx meant by private property. This was imperative in light of the fact that the cause of alienation is the division of labour. If, by private property, Marx meant individuated objects, then clearly abolishing private property will not eliminate alienation. If, by private property, he meant the social relation whereby the division of labour was implicit, then abolishing private property would result in the abolition of alienation. The applicability of Marx's resolution on a theoretical level, therefore, was found to depend on the interpretation of the language he used.

The applicability of Marx's theory of alienation in terms of modern-day relevancy was then posed. Except for a higher level of technology, the capitalism of mid-nineteenth-century Europe is



characteristically synonymous with the capitalism of late-twentieth-century North America. Therefore, Marx's concern with freedom is today a concern paramount in the minds of men, be it personal, national or global freedom. Thus, the relevancy of Marx's writings cited in the fourth chapter discussed the modern-day perception and attainment of freedom.

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