

**Marx, Nietzsche and the Becoming World: towards a  
materialist theory of the imagination**

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## Abstract:

The following thesis is an exploration of a similarity in the works of Marx and Nietzsche: that for both, the ‘objective’ is not that which is unmolested by human beings, but rather the reverse is true, in that the ‘objective’ is that which human beings make, though *not* consciously and *not* according to any (human or inhuman) plan. This thesis first studies how the ‘objective’ is made for Marx, and the role of the human imagination in this making. It will then do the same with Nietzsche. Finally, this thesis attempts to develop a materialist theory of the imagination beyond Marx and Nietzsche, with and against the conception of the imagination of Cornelius Castoriadis, which it argues is ‘idealist’, and limited by this idealism.

## Declaration

This is to certify that:

- i: the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD, except where indicated
- ii: due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used
- iii: the thesis (including the footnotes) is less than 100 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, indented quotes, bibliographies and appendices

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**Introduction:.....pp. 8–78**

*Outline of the elements of the thesis*

*Relevance of the thesis and of the primary figures of the thesis*

*The role of each of the two primary figures within the thesis*

*The position of the thesis in the extant literature and the original contribution of the thesis*

**Section 1: Exploring a similarity in Marx and Nietzsche: the ‘objective’ is always already the product of human activity .....pp. 79–248**

**Chapter 1: On objectivity and the imagination in the works of Marx .....pp. 79–168**

*On the problem of ‘the gap’*

*A brief genealogy of the interpretation of Marx of this thesis: on the idea that reality is a human product, specifically, past/objectified human activity*

The constitution of the world in the works of Marx ..... (pp. 97–110)

The creation of the world in the works of Marx ..... (pp. 111–131)

The question of access to the world in the works of Marx ..... (pp. 132–150)

The role of the imagination (in the works of Marx) in creation:

labour and world creation..... (pp. 151–163)

*The role of the imagination in human labour*

*The imagination, freedom and determinism*

The role of the imagination (in the works of Marx) in autonomy..... (pp. 164–168)

**Chapter 2: A backwards glance before going forward:**

the thing in itself from Kant to Nietzsche ..... (pp. 169–197)

**Chapter 3: On objectivity and the imagination in the works of Nietzsche. (pp. 198–241)**

The constitution of the world in the works of Nietzsche ..... (pp. 198–208)

The creation of the world in the works of Nietzsche..... (pp. 209–214)

The question of access to the world in the works of Nietzsche ..... (pp. 215–223)

The role of the imagination (in the works of Nietzsche) in creation:

error and world creation..... (pp. 224–241)

The role of the imagination (in the works of Nietzsche) in autonomy ..... (pp. 242–248)

**Section 2: Towards a materialist theory of the imagination .....pp. 249–281**

Introduction to section two.....(pp. 249–254)

Chapter 4: On Castoriadis’ conception of the radical imagination.....(pp. 255–273)

*On the hidden idealism in the works of Castoriadis*

Chapter 5: The materialist imagination:

on the causal and the mythological imaginations.....(pp. 274–281)

**Conclusion: .....pp. 282–289**

**Bibliography: .....pp. 290–306**

Imagination produces reality; but there *is* no reality therein ...<sup>1</sup>

The worker has spun, and the product is a spinning.<sup>2</sup>

Being is imagined into everything—pushed under everything ...<sup>3</sup>

Instead of Hegel's 'nothing accidental,' the rubric now is: the innocence of Becoming.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Johann Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press: USA, 1993. p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital Volume I: A Critique of Political Economy*, B. Fowkes (trans.), Penguin Classics: UK, 1990. p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, Cambridge University Press: UK, 2007. p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> David Krell, 'The Mole: Philosophic Burrowings in Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche', in *boundary 2*, 9/10, Vol. 9, No. 3, Vol. 10, No. 1, Why Nietzsche Now? A Boundary 2 Symposium (Spring–Autumn, 1981). p. 178.

## ***Introduction:***

### *Outline of the elements of the thesis:*

The following first section of the introduction has seven parts. The first outlines the most fundamental element of this thesis: its primary argument that for both Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, the objective—defined here as that which ‘has being’,<sup>5</sup> as that which can be ‘observed’ or ‘experienced’, something that is ‘not merely an ideal notion, but is actually presented to the mind in an objective mode’<sup>6</sup>—is a *product*. The second outlines the second fundamental element of this thesis: that this product is *made* very differently for Marx and for Nietzsche respectively. The third outlines Marx’s theory of the creation of the objective, emphasising the role of human *labour*—i.e., we are the value bestowing beings, but in bestowing value we create not just objects, but *objectivity*. The fourth will outline Nietzsche’s theory of the ‘creation’ of the objective, emphasising the role of human *error*—i.e., we are the beings that can give life to errors and false/groundless perspectives, and in this way bestow objectivity upon them, and this is the only kind of objectivity that is possible. The fifth part briefly introduces the concept of autonomy as it appears in the works of Marx and Nietzsche, and the sixth part introduces the role of the imagination, including the ‘materialist conception of the imagination’, in this thesis. Finally, the seventh part discusses why this thesis—though it puts forward an

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<sup>5</sup> In this thesis, that which ‘has being’ is the ‘becoming world’. The ‘becoming world’ is the ‘objective world’ understood as an unfolding product of human beings. There is a convention that states that ‘becoming’ and ‘unfolding’ are opposed terms, with becoming referring to something that unfolds ‘teleologically’ in the strong sense, becoming what it must become by *necessity*, and unfolding or unfurling referring to that which develops in a chance—or at least a contingent—manner. The author does not follow this convention, and becoming exists between chance and necessity, being directed by human beings, but unbeknownst to them, and not, in the famous Marxian formulation, ‘under conditions of their own choosing’. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Progress Publishers: Moscow; Lawrence & Wishart: London, 1984. p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, M. Nicolaus (trans.), Pelican Marx Library: UK, 1973. p. 154.



interpretation of Marx and Nietzsche in which the nature of reality is to some extent Hegelian—identifies itself as being post-Hegelian.

The first element of this thesis is constituted by an exploration of a similarity in the works of Marx and Nietzsche: that both figures reject the notion that any attempt at ‘experience’ inexorably leads to a process of *metaphysical duplication*, the creation of a realm of *subjective* experience *over* the ‘objective’ impetus/cause of the said experience. The main question of philosophy after Descartes became: how can the subject know the object?<sup>7</sup> But this is a question for thinkers who see ‘the world’ as being ‘naturally occurring’—or created by God—something that ‘is as it is’ before the human animal begins to think—or work, or make errors. Marx and Nietzsche both *begin* with the idea that the world that we live in is a product: and from this beginning, one does not ask ‘how can the subject possibly know the object?’ Instead, one asks: how, contrary to false semblance, can we teach ‘man’ that the world is tied to him? Marx says: ‘man’ creates himself *only* via the creation of objects. The ‘object’ that the philosopher faces is not a mystery to be deciphered, it is simply matter soaked with congealed *human* activity, a close relative of his, and under conditions of capitalism it is in fact more ‘man’—more social, at least<sup>8</sup>—than he is. Nietzsche says, more radically, there are only ‘things’ at all because our ancestors began, in pain, panic, and error, to speak, and have continued speaking—and this desperate speech preceded not just things, but ‘people’ too.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> William Barrett, *Irrational man: a study in existential philosophy*, Anchor Books: USA, 1990. p. 249.

<sup>8</sup> Marx, *Capital*, pp. 165–166. ‘To the producers, therefore, the social relations between their private labours appear as what they are, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material [*dinglich*] relations between persons and social relations between things.’

<sup>9</sup> Depending on one’s reading of Nietzsche, they—people and things—either a) *became* true later, after not being true for a long time, b) *still* remain illusions, and must forever, or c) as this thesis believes, have both attained a level of truth/being that is growing/becoming, but is still somewhat below our general estimation.

This is certainly *not* to say that there is no such thing as *false* experience for each of the thinkers—for Marx, *all* there has been thus far is false experience—but it is to say that both figures reject the idea that there are two realms, the ‘real’ and the ‘apparent’, the ‘how things are’ and the ‘how things appear’.<sup>10</sup> In the estimation of this thesis, there are for both Marx and Nietzsche two problems with this manner of thinking: 1) what the old way of thinking calls ‘apparent’ is, for Marx and for Nietzsche, very real; and 2) what the old way of thinking calls ‘real’, for both thinkers, is *anything* but that.<sup>11</sup> This thesis argues that what Nietzsche states very clearly: ‘[t]he grounds upon which “this” world has been designated as apparent establish rather its reality—*another* kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable ...’,<sup>12</sup> is in fact true for both figures. In short, both reject the idea that an ‘encounter’ with the ‘real’ (the ‘real’ *qua* the ‘objective’, the thing in itself as it ‘is’ when nobody is looking at it) generates a ‘subjective’ or ‘phenomenal’ world that is *less* than real. For both, the real—reality, the objective—is created by human beings and is a real, unfolding product. What we make has no model: its *reality* has nothing to do with how well it resembles (or does not resemble) something external to itself. Rather, the worlds we make are self-referential creations, *and* they are real and solid, *vis*, objective. Post-structuralism can only go so far as to say that our symbolic worlds do not make any significant contact with ‘the real’. This is a very pale imitation of what Marx and Nietzsche were saying: that the real has no contact with anything metaphysical *and* it is the world that we make.

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<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, P. Guyer & E. Matthews (trans.), Cambridge University Press: USA, 2007. p. 110. For Kant, as for Marx and Nietzsche, human beings make the world that they live in—the rupture is not in this idea. But as chapter two will discuss in great detail, Marx and Nietzsche both reject the idea of our world being a ‘copy’ of something ‘real’, being an ‘appearance’. They both reject the existence of the ‘transcendental real’ and demand that the ‘immanent real’—which has no model/measure external to itself—be taken seriously.

<sup>11</sup> This thesis understands that Jacques Lacan has a theory of the real in which ‘the Real’ is not ‘real’. There will be a small exegesis in a moment that will explain how Marx and Nietzsche’s (and especially Nietzsche’s) rejection of the ‘real’ bears no resemblance to post-structuralist reformulations of the real.

<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, Penguin Books: UK, 1990. p. 49.

The one realm—which, in the reading of this thesis, Marx and Nietzsche both subscribe to—is *real*, but it is not ‘real’ in the Kantian sense, for this species of reality is not beyond us, it is not unexperienceable *because* it is real, as in Kant, and as in the new forms of dark idealism that follow Kant insofar as for them too ‘real’ and unknowable/unexperienceable are made to be synonymous.<sup>13</sup> In the interpretation of both Marx and of Nietzsche put forward in this thesis, we do not by and large know reality: we *know it* and we *experience it* falsely. Yet what is important is that for Marx and for Nietzsche, that which is unknown is very much all around us. We do not see the real, but we do not see it *from within it*. This may seem a trivial distinction, yet it is anything but that: it is the difference between not knowing an always already unknowable ‘reality’ that has nothing to do with us and not knowing a ‘reality’ that we create and are, unbeknownst to ourselves, embedded in. In short, for Marx and for Nietzsche, there is *one world only*, a real, mutable and unfolding world that is a(n objective) human product. In a manner full of rich contradiction, it is a(n objective) product of ‘man’, but at the same time an obstinate, material reality that determines much of the content of the daily activity that human beings only falsely believe themselves to be responsible for as ‘willing agents’.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The difference of course is that for Kant, the unknowability of the real, of the object in itself, does not free us from the obligation to respect and gesture towards it, and the faculty of pure Reason gives us some hope of at least *approximating* something real. In the new forms of dark idealism—i.e., ‘postmodernism’—*experiencing* and *knowing* are always already the opposite of what they are thought to be, in that every pound of exertion expended in approaching ‘the real’ distances one at least as much as one imagines one has approached it, and the horizon is *still* just as far, or even farther, though one has walked all day.

<sup>14</sup> This thesis will not, however, deny free will altogether. That we are mostly tossed around by forces other than the ‘I will’ does not for this thesis mean that willing is always already impossible. Rather, this thesis argues that for both Marx and for Nietzsche, the human will is a *late* fruit of human development, something that emerged only with great difficulty and that *grows* with even greater difficulty. For example, see Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Cambridge University Press: UK, 2006. pp. 37–38: ‘To be answerable to oneself, and proudly, too, and therefore *to have the prerogative to say “yes”* to oneself—is, as I said, a ripe fruit, but also a *late* fruit:—how long must this fruit have hung, bitter and sour, on the tree!’ That the conscious ego *thinks* that it has had its way in many instances where it has been (unknowingly) bested—where there are deeds but no

This objective product reality has no ‘cause’ external to itself: for Marx and for Nietzsche, reality *unfolds*, but it unfolds *only out of itself*, out of its immanent, objective, material possibilities.<sup>15</sup> For both Marx and Nietzsche, reality a) unfolds according to its own immanent laws, and b) its direction/laws can be radically changed by human influence, though the amount of influence that human beings can wield is circumscribed by the laws of (created) reality. A human imagination that can consciously ‘change the world’ is only possible after a great deal of ‘human history’ has already been unconsciously generated, is only possible when the becoming

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formal/unified doer that is the conscious source of them, where the action-directing ego exists only as a sad fiction—does not mean that the human will does not exist, as a germ, as a force that, while weaker than it thinks that it is, is still a force nonetheless, as a growing potential for humankind, as a weak/new organ that can be made strong, if we create conditions suitable for this becoming.

<sup>15</sup> This becoming sounds, no doubt, *Hegelian*, but the possibilities being written about here do not always already pre-exist themselves: neither Marx nor Nietzsche would ask ‘*what is the ultimate design of the World?*’ (Georg Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, Prometheus Books: USA, 1991. p. 16.). This thesis rejects Hegel’s ‘Universal History’ with its tropes of ‘just as the seed bears within it the whole nature or the tree and the taste and form of its fruits, so also do the first glimmerings of spirit contain virtually the whole of history ...’ (Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, Cambridge University Press: Great Britain, 1975. p. 53) and ‘To comprehend *what is* is the task of philosophy, for *what is* is reason.’ (Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Cambridge University Press: UK. 1991. p. 21.) For this thesis, the task of philosophy is precisely what Hegel has forbidden, to think about what *ought* to be. Hegel’s resignation to the actual is a limitation that this thesis will not accept: in it is hidden (though at times explicit) a belief in providence, in accidents being impossible, in the end of history being present in the beginning of history, in human beings being the secret aim of a sentient cosmos. In this thesis, which emphasises the imagination over reason, *change* is possible—change that cannot be appropriated into a grand plan. This thesis rejects ‘Universal History’, which falsifies the past, glorifies the present, and closes the future. Thinking about how we might like the world to be is not ‘a random assertion’ or ‘subjective postscript’ (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*. p. 23). Philosophy does not ‘come too late’ to influence events. What can be is limited by what is. But because history is *not* universal, and is not even really history, we can imagine new directions—directions that *appear*, that are *produced*, that *do not* have a telos that stretches back across all of a falsely unified history—and make them actual. The creative imagination can change the taste and the form of the fruit, without retroactively or proactively interfering with the seed. This is what *change* means. To accept it means departing from Hegel’s universe, which both Marx and Nietzsche, in the estimation of this thesis, did as well as they could.

world can support imaginative human beings. In Marx, there is a ‘hidden imaginary’<sup>16</sup> that introduces both chaos and volition into the ‘materialist conception of history’; in Nietzsche, there is a more visible imaginary through which any ‘course of history’ (any world) can be turned into its contrary, with enough art, time, determination, and luck.<sup>17</sup> Human beings, in the works of Marx and Nietzsche, create reality and are, in turn, created by it. But this is no idealism. Reality *qua* objective product is not: a) the external appearance of something thought;<sup>18</sup> b) the phenomenal appearance of something noumenal (an appearance that conceals),<sup>19</sup> or c) a

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<sup>16</sup> This idea was developed by John Rundell in *Origins of Modernity: The Origins of Modern Social Theory from Kant to Hegel to Marx*, Polity Press: UK, 1987. *passim*. See especially p. 169. This idea was further developed in Rundell, ‘Marx and the Postmodern Image of Society’ in *Postmodern Conditions*, Berg: Great Britain, 1990. pp. 157–186. The interpretation of Rundell’s ‘hidden imaginary’ in this thesis is indebted to Lorriane Landry’s, in *Marx and the Postmodernism Debates: An Agenda for Critical Theory*, Prager: USA, 2000. pp. 141–168.

<sup>17</sup> This is not possible within a deterministic/fatalistic reading of these thinkers. For if the course of the world is to change, human beings must be capable of generating psychic content that does not simply flow into them from outside—content not utterly determined by blind drives, automatic/natural laws of history, by the shape of extant reality, the level of development of the means of production, or by ‘the cunning of reason’ *qua* the cosmic policeman, who does not tell us what to do, but who makes sure *indirectly*—in a true power relation that gives us freedom and annuls that freedom in the giving—that we do/think/create what he wants, *eventually*. The human imagination is the source of all such content (undetermined/new content), and all such content is the source of changes in the direction of the unfolding actual, of all accidents and ruptures—not ‘events’, for this thesis means something considerably different from what Alain Badiou means here—it is the reason that *change* is possible. With this imagination, a basic level of ego and ability to will (*vis*, humanity) is presupposed—a basic level that it is argued here is present in the works of Marx and of Nietzsche alongside (mainly without contradiction) the strong deterministic/fatalistic current in both thinkers. The presupposition of (some extent of) humanity does not make this thesis ‘humanist’, as this term has come to be understood, for the humanity that this thesis believes exists today is not an ontological constant, but something that has become, that varies in quality over time and space, and is still becoming. Nor is this thesis anti-humanist. The overall aims of this thesis—freedom (from alienation, soon to be defined), autonomy, and gaining the ability to change the world—are not compatible with anti-humanism in which there is no imagination as this thesis ‘imagines’ it: i.e., as a part of (some) human beings which, while made possible by an external world, is at the same time radically undetermined by the world ‘outside’.

<sup>18</sup> As in Hegel. See Marx, *Capital*. p. 102.

<sup>19</sup> As in Kant. See: *The Critique of Pure Reason*. p. 178.

motivated creation of the human imagination that is not ‘really real’.<sup>20</sup> The world, for Marx and Nietzsche, the created, material world, is not understood according to any of these idealist tropes, for they are both *staunchly materialist*. Both, each in their own manner, are highly suspicious of idealism.<sup>21</sup> And yet, as this thesis will explore, the materialism of Marx and of

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<sup>20</sup> As in Fichte. See *The Science of Knowledge*. p. 207.

<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, Cambridge University Press: UK, 2007. p. 140. ‘Germans are idealists. Twice already, just when an honest, unequivocal, perfectly scientific way of thinking had been achieved, and with incredible courage and self-overcoming, the Germans knew how to find a secret path back to the old “ideal”, ways of reconciling truth and the “ideal”, basically formulas for a right to reject science, a right to lie.’ At times, Nietzsche sounds very much like an idealist himself. For example, Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human: A Book for Free Spirits, Including Assorted Opinions and Maxims and The Wanderer and his Shadow*, R. Hollingdale (trans.), Cambridge University Press: UK, 1999. p. 27: ‘Anyone who unveiled to us the nature of the world would produce for all of us the most unpleasant disappointment. It is not the world as thing in itself, it is the world as idea (as error) that is so full of significance, profound, marvellous, and bearing in its womb all happiness and unhappiness.’ Ibid. p. 16. ‘To the extent that man has for long ages believed in the concepts and names of things as in *aeternae veritates* he has appropriated to himself that pride by which he raised himself above the animal: he really thought that in language he possessed knowledge of the world. The sculptor of language was not so modest as to believe that he was only giving things designations, he conceived rather that with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things; language is, in fact, the first stage of the occupation with science.’ In both of these quotes, it seems as if the real world is one thing—untouched and untouchable—and the human world quite another. But in the wider context of each of these quotes from *Human, all too Human*—and in Nietzsche’s *oeuvre* on balance—it is clear that Nietzsche believes that nothing in the ‘material world’ itself would be as it is, would have the quality of being even, without human influence/interference. With regard to Marx not being an idealist, he rejects this idea explicitly in *Capital*. p. 100. In addition to this explicit refutation, one can consider two Marx quotes collated by Erich Fromm on this matter: ‘“In direct contrast to German philosophy,” Marx wrote [in *The German Ideology*], “which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, or imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. *We set out from real, active men and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process.*” Or, as he puts it in a slightly different way [in the *Holy Family*]: “Hegel’s philosophy of history is nothing but the philosophical expression of the Christian-Germanic dogma concerning the contradiction between spirit and matter, God and the world ... Hegel’s philosophy of history presupposes an abstract or absolute spirit, which develops in such a way that mankind is only a mass which carries this spirit, consciously or unconsciously. Hegel assumes that a speculative, esoterical history precedes and underlies empirical history. The history of mankind is transformed

Nietzsche in the end has more in common with idealism than with the materialism of the positivists.<sup>22</sup> For Marx and Nietzsche, there is no such thing as ‘Being in itself’<sup>23</sup> *qua* something that is fully realised on its own, in the character of pure materialistic ‘objectivity’,<sup>24</sup> or ‘naive realism’, as Cornelius Castoriadis calls it.<sup>25</sup> One will not hear Marx and Nietzsche crying out for a return to the thing in itself. For Marx, as will be later argued, there simply is no thing in itself, anything is a thing only *qua* product, only *qua essential relations*. For Nietzsche, the matter is a little more complex (as is also to be argued), in that he laughs at Kant’s thing in itself, but himself posits a thing in itself of a different species, something that is now a thing, but once was an error—that is, a real thing that has no real cause, no external impetus, but that has become, has *accrued* its reality, despite being grounded in nothing but error. For now, we may say that if we extricate all that is human, all so-called ‘bias’—which one can do, Marx’s case, and which one cannot, in Nietzsche’s<sup>26</sup>—there is no being left, there are no ‘things’ left. If we eat the apple of

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into the history of the abstract spirit of mankind, which transcends the real man.”’ Erich Fromm, *Marx’s Concept of Man*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.: New York, 1972. pp. 9–10.

<sup>22</sup> See for example the theory of Henri de Saint-Simon, or Auguste Comte.

<sup>23</sup> However, the Hegelian meaning of ‘Being in itself’, *to some extent*, does hold. This will be discussed later in the introduction.

<sup>24</sup> When Marx is being critical of materialism, for not conceiving of the social elements of things, and the sensuous elements of activity, he writes of ‘pure’ or ‘abstract’ materialism. This thesis will also use the term ‘pure materialism’ as a criticism. Lorraine Daston & Peter Galison define objectivity in the pure materialist sense in the book, *Objectivity*, Zone Books, New York, 2007. p. 17. ‘To be objective is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower—knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgement, wishing or striving. Objectivity is blind sight, seeing without inference, interpretation or intelligence.’ Both Marx and Nietzsche reject this modality of objectivity for another, which this thesis will define at length.

<sup>25</sup> Cornelius Castoriadis, ‘Merleau-Ponty and the Weight of the Ontological Tradition’, in *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, Stanford University Press: USA, 1993. p. 278

<sup>26</sup> In Marx’s works, what is human in objects never becomes intrinsic to them: the social and the material substance mix without unifying, in that the material is a ‘bearer’ of objectified activity that does not itself become ‘material’. The essence of a thing is twofold, and requires the correct context in order to endure in time. See, for example, Marx’s ambivalence in the following: ‘The price or money-form of commodities is, like their form of value generally, quite distinct from their palpable and real bodily form; it is therefore a purely ideal or notional form. Although invisible, the value of iron, linen and corn exists in these very articles: it is

positivism, curious as to what reality ‘really’ looks like (as if something could ‘look’ like anything with nobody *looking*) we do not create in this instance a condition of ‘objectivity found’, but rather, we precipitate a situation of *objectivity lost*, in which a) what we see is not what is, and b)

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signified through their equality with gold, even though this relation with gold exists only in their heads, so to speak.’ *Capital*. p. 189. In Nietzsche’s works, what is human in things does become intrinsic, it becomes their essence. See: Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press: UK, 2007. pp. 69–70. ‘Only as Creators’. However, in several notes and fragments in and around 1881 Nietzsche expresses a strong desire to deanthropomorphise or dehumanise nature, which could be seen to upset what is being written here. See Okochi Ryogi, ‘Nietzsche’s Conception of Nature from an East-Asian Point of View’, in *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, G. Parkes (ed.), University of Chicago Press: USA, 1991. pp. 200–201. Ryogi quotes Nietzsche, KSA 9, 11. In the reading of this thesis, Nietzsche is not denying in these notes that human error/influence plays a large role in the creation of things: he is just complaining about the science of his day not being scientific. Loc. cit. ‘The modern scientific counterpart to belief in God is belief in the universe as an *organism*: this disgusts me. This is to make what is quite rare and extremely derivative, the organic, which we perceive only on the surface of the earth, into something essential, universal, and eternal! This is still an anthropomorphising of nature!’ This is thus more a comment along the lines of the aphorism ‘Let us beware’ from *The Gay Science* which this thesis will later use to support its arguments. Nietzsche speaks in this 1881 period of his task as being: Op. cit. Loc. cit. ‘The dehumanization of nature and then the naturalisation of humanity ...’ But one must take this in the broader context, where for Nietzsche, ‘Whatever has *value* in the present world has it not in itself according to its nature—nature is always value-less—but has rather been given, granted value, and *we* were the givers and granters!’. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. p. 171. Ultimately, for Nietzsche, nature in itself is nothing: a valuable nature—one that has things, lines, time, extension, contradictions, forms, meanings, in short, *reality*—is a product. It is not an *apparent* product made possible by *a priori* cognitive processes, but a real, objective, material, historically unfolding product. And yet, though we have added so much to nature in order that we can live, so much colour and being, it is nonetheless false to *ascribe the properties of human beings to nature*, especially to see it as being unified and coherent, an organism, or worse, as being cold, uncaring, or as having ‘motives’. Thus, Nietzsche can: a) recognise that nature is a(n objective) product, and b) still desire the dehumanisation of nature and the naturalisation (also, of course, an un-moralisation—which is not a demoralisation but the opposite) of ‘man’. One could object here that in Nietzsche there is no either/or on this point, that one need not choose between reality being an error that has become real and solid or being an error that is not and can never become real/objective. Yet for this thesis, one *must* choose, for if one chooses the latter, one keeps in play the idea of the real and the apparent that Nietzsche desires to overcome. That is, if our errors can never be(come) real, this must only be because the real is *out there*, the real is outside the world that we live in, and one must stay with Plato, Kant, Lacan, and many forms of Christianity, and *devalue* the world that we live in against an ideal standard/realm that for Nietzsche does not exist. There are, however, problems in ascribing the former position to Nietzsche, problems beyond the ones treated above. They too will be introduced and addressed in later sections.



there is no hope of this changing, as the word objectivity comes to signify *its own opposite* among scientists of all kinds who are irremediably seduced by everyday semblance into thinking that being has nothing to do with us, a mistake that precedes all individual acts of science and contaminates every result before any experiment can even *begin*. The thing that science is looking for, how things are in relation to themselves and not in relation to us:<sup>27</sup> i.e., ‘objectivity’, is nothing. There are only things, there is only objectivity, in relation to us: nothing can have objectivity that is not a product: objectivity always already contains the ‘bias’ that the scientist dutifully tries to efface in her hunt for objectivity. The nature of the objective as the *produced* for both Marx and Nietzsche will be a major theme of this thesis. Finally, for both thinkers, we are not ourselves the thing in itself—material things and human willing are not one and the same.<sup>28</sup> This thesis will argue at great length that the real (the real world) is not *over there*, is not autonomous and independent, but rather is profoundly connected to us.<sup>29</sup> An interesting minor theme in the Marx chapter will be that we only see the world as being apart, even in the realm of science, because of the capitalist mode of production that must deny that value is objectified human activity. However, there is a real world outside of us—and it is ‘outside’, as a product it

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<sup>27</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, Penguin Books: USA, 2011. pp. 57–58.

<sup>28</sup> As in Schopenhauer. See *On the World as Will and Representation/Idea*. ‘[W]e ourselves are the thing in itself ... We shall judge of all objects which are not our bodies . . . according to the analogy of our own bodies, and shall therefore assume that as in one aspect they are idea ... so in another aspect, what remains of objects when we set aside their existence as idea of the subject, must in its inner nature be the same as that in us which we call will. For what other kind of existence or reality would we attribute to the rest of the material world?’. Sourced from David Allison, ‘Nietzsche Knows no Noumenon’, in *boundary 2*, Why Nietzsche Now Symposium. pp. 300–309. As Allison also notes, Schopenhauer later denies that we can come to know ‘das ding an-sich’ through self knowledge—something that Hegel never gives up on—in that (for Schopenhauer) as an idea or representation it cannot at the same time be the cause of the representation, it cannot be identical to it.

<sup>29</sup> This is of course complex, as Marx spends a great deal of time writing *explicitly* that the world is ‘alien and autonomous’. N.b.: when Marx writes this he is writing about how *human activity* and *relations* have developed a life of their own *apart* from us. Activity only becomes objective when we can encounter it, when it is erected opposite us. But nevertheless, it is and remains our objectified activity: the point is that ‘the world’ is not a rock that we live on, it is only objective, it is only real, it is only ‘a world’ that has being because of us.

could not become real, could not gain the semblance of pure materialistic objectivity, unless it was genuinely estranged—we could not dwell *within it* unless it was outside of us. The world is *semi-autonomous* in that it *is*, it has being, but this being would not *be* without us.

Materialists (to generalise) understand that the world is real and distinct—but do not see that it is our product. Idealists (again, to generalise) understand that the world is our product, but do not understand that it is real: with the materialists they too believe that what is made up is not real. Marx and Nietzsche both, in their own ways, tried to create a materialism that did not shy away from the idea that reality is a product. They did not blanch in the face of the simple truth that there is no real apart from the made up, nothing objective that is not a product of activity.<sup>30</sup> This is not post-structuralism or ‘postmodernism’ which (in full recognition of the extreme heterogeneity of the kinds of thinking that have been labelled thus) either: a) recreates the Kantian *noumenal* in a cynical manner—instead of abolishing it, as Nietzsche desired,<sup>31</sup> or b) labels ‘symbolic reality’ a simulacrum, a pessimistic take on Fichte’s idealism.<sup>32</sup> ‘Postmodernism’,

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<sup>30</sup> See the following Marx quote from his early writings, in Albrecht Wellmer, ‘Communications and Emancipation: Reflections on the Linguistic Turn in Critical Theory’, in *On Critical Theory*, Heinmann: London, 1977. p. 231. ‘We see here ... how consistent naturalism or humanism is distinguished from both idealism and materialism, and at the same time constitutes their unifying truth. We also see that only naturalism is able to comprehend world history.’

<sup>31</sup> The Lacanian ‘real’ is the paradigm of this.

<sup>32</sup> See Foucault: ‘... if the interpretation can never be finished, then it is plain that there is nothing to be interpreted—there is nothing absolutely primary that is to be interpreted because everything is fundamentally already interpretation; every sign is ... an interpretation of other signs.’ Sourced from András Gedő, ‘Why Marx and Nietzsche’, in *Nature, Society, and Thought*, 1998, 11, 3. p. 339. Foucault supposes that because there was no primary ‘thing’ in the beginning (denying either: a) the primordial existence of the thing in itself—denying the possibly of the *existence* of something outside of the world of texts/significance/experience—or, b) denying the *relation* of any possible thing in itself to the world of significance/experience—either way, denying that the things in *our* world have ultimately unknowable noumenal causes) then one must give up on the idea of primary things. Nietzsche *does* deny that there is some primary thing at the beginning, the idea that anything in the world is a copy of some original thing in itself is for Nietzsche false, antithetical to his idea of becoming. Yet that does not mean that for Nietzsche all there is today is ‘texts’ or interpretations of interpretations. Rather, for Nietzsche, real things exist, because the primary thing exists at the *end* of the process. An objective

like the idealism it recreates on a darker register, cannot escape depression in the face of the false idea that reality is not real, because it is not 'real'.<sup>33</sup> But both Marx and Nietzsche had to some

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reality exists, after a long time, because it has been produced. In other words, metaphors become solid/objective over time, they become real/the truth, because first we forget that they are metaphors, and then, via that forgetting, what was a metaphor becomes a thing, becomes the solid essence of that thing. On this theme, see especially 'Only as Creators' in *The Gay Science* and 'Appearance and the thing in itself' in *Human, all too Human*. Any given thing began as an error, it has no ground, no foundation, but now it is real, primary, obstinate and, if we have done well, beautiful. Nietzsche is a perspectivist, *and* believes that reality is real. These positions are in the writings of Nietzsche (most of the time, at least) not mutually exclusive, though there are of course exceptions, times (noted above, as *exceptions*) when Nietzsche does elucidate his perspectivism in an idealist manner. Alison writes on the postmodern reading of 'reality' *qua* text that here: '... language is restricted *ab initio* to metaphorical expression, and that in turn is said to "represent" what is itself only an illusory order, a fictive "reality", so called ...' ('Nietzsche Knows no Noumenon'. p. 297.) and states that this position is widely but *falsely* ascribed to Nietzsche, in a tradition of interpretation begun by Paul De Man. Nietzsche, to be clear, does not believe that reality pre-existed the first erroneous belief in reality—it *was* fictive: '... the original intuitive metaphors were in fact metaphors and ... [not] the things themselves.' Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', in *Writings From the Early Notebooks*, Cambridge University Press: UK, 2009. p. 259. But that in no way means that all that there is *now* is 'texts'. What was fictive is now real, it exists, and has an existence that is a) tied to us (we can change it) and b) semi-autonomous (it is almost impossible to change it). In short, in Nietzsche, as will be argued in this thesis, there is a reality, and we can experience it. One can also flee reality and, over time, reality is changeable. The idea that the world is 'texts' would sicken Nietzsche: he would see it as a secret path to nothingness, another idealist/cowardly flight from the reality that *bon sens*—which need not be abandoned by philosophers—tells us is right there before us. This idea will be fleshed out in chapters two and three.

<sup>33</sup> In depression, Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 'Structure, Sign, and Play', *Writing and Difference*, Unwin Brothers Ltd.: Great Britain, 1981. p. 292.) nods to Nietzsche, and says that reality is not real, and nothing has an origin, but Nietzsche found something to celebrate in that—a possibility of forming the dream from within the dream—and we must follow him. However, this thought has nothing to do with Nietzsche. 'Postmodern' thinkers can think anything *except* the thought 'reality is real' (just as in Hebrew one cannot think 'God is unjust/unGod') and thus, as worthy as the work is, the shape of it means that it can never reach Nietzsche and his message, which is Marx's message also, that reality is real *and* made. Hegel, of course, thought this first, but in a *very limited* manner. This will be addressed at length in the thesis, but for now we can say on this limitation in Hegel that *Geist* means that the conditions under which reality can unfold are very narrowly circumscribed *from without*. Marx and Nietzsche created the first materialist/naturalistic theory of a reality that is real and made, without an external, quasi natural/automatic or divine guiding hand. This insight has been lost in a great deal of Marx and Nietzsche scholarship, in a) the false ascription of an idea of divine/natural/automatic historical guidance to the works of Marx, and b) in the false ascription of the idea that there is no reality to the

extent already paved the way for a different idea, that reality is real *because* it is *not* ‘real’. Marx and Nietzsche both celebrated this same idea, though this has been missed in the widespread casting of Marx as a positivist—though his entire project (as will be argued in chapter one) can be read as a refutation of positivism—and the casting of Nietzsche as a nihilist (in the false signification of nihilism as ‘believing in nothing’)—though his entire project can be read as a defence of a) reality (Nietzsche goes to war on all philosophies that flee reality) and b) healthy life that is firmly embedded in reality, and that thrives there, a piece of reality *gone right*—to invert his critique of Plato—revelling in itself and its strength.

For both Marx and Nietzsche, in different ways, human beings are responsible for the existence of reality, which—once more—is *not* an ‘apparent world’—not a world ‘for us’, not a world of appearances, symbols, signs, ideas or representations. Equally, it is *not* a ‘real world’—neither an unknowable *das ding an-sich*, as in the idealist idea of the ‘real world’, nor some solid thing that exists, basically as we see it, on its own and with no help from us, as in the conception of the ‘real world’ of ‘pure materialism’, which includes most forms of positivism. Rather, it is *reality*: a simultaneously objective and created reality—a world that is real and objective *because* it is a product, as reality and objectivity can only be the *result of a process*, in the absence of (human) interference they cannot be.<sup>34</sup> For both figures, as this thesis will argue, there is one world only, a world that is real, that ‘leans on’ nothing external to it, but is an unfolding human product.

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works of Nietzsche. For Marx and for Nietzsche, there is a real world that we have made with no supernatural *or* natural help: a real, objective world that we can change. This thesis considers this 19<sup>th</sup> century thinking in all respects superior to 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking.

<sup>34</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 167: ‘The belated scientific discovery that the products of labour, in so far as they are values, are merely the material expressions of the human labour expended to produce them, marks an epoch in the history of mankind’s development, but by no means banishes the semblance of objectivity possessed by the social characteristics of labour.’ For Marx here, things are simultaneously actually objective and have a false semblance of objectivity. They are *actually objective* because, though they are not *merely material* things, no one individual can change what a thing is with his mind. The supra-material elements of any given thing are *social*,

We have now outlined the primary argument of this thesis: that for Marx and for Nietzsche, the objective is a product. Being ‘made’ does not make the world corrupt or inferior; Marx and Nietzsche both emphasise the reverse—that it is the quality of being made that makes the world everything that it is, that makes it real, objective, value-saturated, capable of sustaining *human* life, even that it *is* at all. The *second* basic element of this thesis consists of a disagreement with each figure, in turn, as to *how* reality is a human product. The crux of this disagreement is that a) neither figure recognises the other: Marx does not see the role of error in reality creation and Nietzsche does not see the role of labour, and b) neither figure recognises how important the human imagination is in their own categories of labour and error, with Nietzsche in particular making concerted efforts to avoid this association.<sup>35</sup>

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calculable (here and there he writes ‘mental’, but cautiously, see Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 161) and thoroughly non-arbitrary. They have a *false semblance of objectivity* because most of us are what Marx calls ‘pure materialists’ who, thinking that the royal road to the truth is through the physical senses (a manner of thought that is to some extent colonising philosophy *qua* analytic philosophy), also believe that things are merely material, which for Marx, *in truth*, they are not. Almost any page of the first third of *Capital* can be found to contain statements to the effect that the things of reality (real, objective things) are not material only. For example, Marx, *Capital*. pp. 138–139: ‘Not an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of commodities as values; in this it is the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of commodities as physical objects. We may twist and turn a single commodity as we wish; it remains impossible to grasp it as a thing possessing value. However, let us remember that commodities possess an objective character as values only in so far as they are all expressions of an identical social substance, human labour, that their objective character as values is therefore value ... In fact we started from exchange-value, or the exchange relation of commodities, in order to track down the value that lay hidden within it.’ Knowing things in their truth means knowing the matter and what the coarse shell of matter veils from everyday (alienated) experience: *immaterial crystals of expended human activity*. Nietzsche expressed it more straightforwardly: ‘... the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity,” be.’ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Eco Homo*, W. Kaufman and R. Hollingdale (trans.), Vintage Books: USA, 1989. Essay three, paragraph 12. p. 119.

<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche only recognises the imagination in the context of the transformation of extant worlds: he does not count the *foundational errors* that made any kind of world possible as being imaginative. It is tempting for this thesis to make too much of a line such as: ‘Being is imagined into everything—pushed under everything ...’ (Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*. Cambridge Edition. p. 169.), or ‘... only the congealment and solidification of

The third part, as follows, will outline how the objective is for Marx produced by human activity. For Marx, material reality is a living matrix of matter and expended human activity; it is past human activity in a solid form, activity embedded in ‘things’ that have *become* ‘things’ (have become real and objective) through the process in which activity (concrete activity of a given quality and quantity) has become entwined in them.<sup>36</sup> And just as these ‘things’ have only become ‘things’ through a labour process, they only *remain* in this state of becoming (i.e., a

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what was originally a hot and liquid mass of images pouring out of the primal force of human imagination, only the invincible belief that this sun, this window, this table is a truth in itself ... enables man to live with a degree of peace, certainty and consistency ...’ (Nietzsche, ‘On truth and lie’. p. 259.). However, it will resist doing so because it is clear, on balance, that the being who precipitates being, the being who begins forcing being onto ‘things’, is not human, and has no ‘faculty’ lofty enough to be called an imagination, as will be discussed in detail later on. To begin, we can say that Nietzsche is cautious even in ascribing an imagination to a poet, a caution that makes the ascription of an ‘imagination’ to a troglodyte dangerous. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Cambridge University Press: USA, 1999. p. 41: ‘The sphere of poetry does not lie outside the world, like some fantastical impossibility contrived in a poet's head.’ Nietzsche writes only once of the world as being created out of nothing, and only does so for poetic symmetry in the context of the quote: ‘... indeed, one does encounter those inverted sorcerers who, instead of creating the world out of nothing, create nothingness out of the world.’ Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 198. Usually in Nietzsche’s works, the idea of the creation of anything out of nothing is seen as idealist nonsense. If something comes out of nothing, this can only be the result of a blind error—the blind error of a primate, not a creative/imaginative genius. For Marx, this is not an issue, for ‘matter’ is a fact, not an error: the earth *qua* matter is ‘... available independently of any human action ...’ as Marx writes in *Capital*. p. 290. Nietzsche’s stance is thus more radical, and in a sense is a modified Democriteanism (by error sweet or bitter, by error hot or cold, by error colour, etc.) except that for Nietzsche, the atoms and void take on the essence of the error, given enough time. Wherever there is objectivity, this has occurred. However, as will also be discussed, Nietzsche is also Heraclitean, and thus all produced objectivity has a quality of *flowing*. We force being onto things, but it is ultimately alien to them, and thus our world is always becoming. To return explicitly to the point: imagination comes for Nietzsche *after* the first great errors, later in the development of human beings and the world, and thus Nietzsche is wary about making it the force responsible for its own preconditions.

<sup>36</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 296; 287: ‘During the labour process, the worker’s labour constantly undergoes a transformation, from the form of unrest [*Unruhe*] into that of being [*Sein*], from the form of motion [*Bewegung*] into that of objectivity [*Gegenständlichkeit*] ... Labour has become bound up in its object: labour has been objectified, the object has been worked on. What on the side of the worker appeared in the form of unrest [*Unruhe*] now appears, on the side of the product, in the form of being [*Sein*], as a fixed, immobile characteristic. The worker has spun, and the product is a spinning.’

specific reality and objectivity only endure in time) for as long as these ‘things’ remain entwined in the real social life process of a community of concrete human beings.<sup>37</sup> As we have seen, a strike does not cause the reality around a given factory to collapse, but nevertheless, reality (as we understand this term today, as the material conditions that prevail outside of human consciousness<sup>38</sup>) is an ‘artificial’ quality of things. It is not purely material or purely social, but always remains both at the same time: reality is a process, it is relations. If we stopped working

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<sup>37</sup> Marx’s materialism is thus complex. See Russell Jacoby, ‘Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism: The Politics of Philosophy from Lukács to the Frankfurt School’, in *Telos*, No 10, Winter, 1971. p. 127. ‘Marxism is not, as the vulgar Marxists would have it, the mere substitution of materialism for idealism, but rather is the “deepening” of the Hegelian system.’ However, the term ‘deepening’ is not accurate. Marx notes very well his debt to the ‘mighty thinker’ Hegel, but also states clearly that his project lies in overcoming the obscurantism, mysticism, and glorification of the actual/extant in Hegel and finding the solid kernel of insight concealed in the centre. That is, he notes, that reality is a product and the nature of ‘man’ is a(n indirect) self-creation via the (direct) human production of reality. Marx, *Capital*. p. 103. As he writes earlier: ‘The outstanding achievement of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*—the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle—is, first, that Hegel grasps the self-creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and transcendence of this alienation, and that he, therefore, grasps the nature of labour, and conceives objective man (true, because real man) as the result of his own labour’. Sourced from Wellmer, ‘Communications and Emancipation’. p. 231. Marx admits (in *Capital*) to *flipping* Hegel, to *correcting* this idea, in that for Marx, ‘real man’ is the product of the daily sensuous activity of ‘real man’, she is not the product of *thought*, the labour of ‘man’, as she thinks and *Geist* thinks through her. Yet the change that Marx induces is more profound than a flipping. Marx brings clarity, light and much needed brevity to Hegel, and attempts to strip him of his latent religiosity. Marx writes that: ‘*History* does *nothing*; it possesses *no* “colossal riches”, it “fights *no* battles”! Rather it is *man*, actual and living man, who does all this, who possesses and fights; “history” does not use man as a means for *its* purpose as though it were a person apart; it is *nothing* but the activity of man pursuing his ends ...’ (Marx cited from the *Holy Family* in György Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology: the concept of ‘human essence’ in the philosophy of Marx*, Dialectic and Society Volume IV, Van Gorkum: Netherlands, 1978. p. 84.) In noting this, Marx is saying to Hegel—as he should have said to Engels—*Geist*, God, automatic laws of history/nature, etc., do not ‘work through’ (in)human beings. For Marx, even when we are not free (which according to the materialist conception of history, we primarily are not), we are only ever enslaved to past human activity, to human products. The only force that masters living human beings is *dead* human beings, dead human activity disguised as something else.

<sup>38</sup> Chiara Bottici writes that Kant was pivotal in bringing about this idea, and that even as late as Spinoza, the word reality could still be used as a synonym for perfection. *Imaginal Politics: Images beyond imagination and the imaginary*, Columbia University Press: New York, 2014. pp. 3–4.

for long enough, it would according to Marx be the end of ‘man’ *qua* ‘man’ and the end of reality, in so far as reality is a real, objective, continuing product of much industry. Today’s reality is not the same non-world (non-objective non-reality) that ‘animal man’ occupied in the style of an animal, as chapter one will discuss in detail in the context of the human imagination.

With regard to the subject of the end of ‘man’ and ‘reality’, if we were all to drop tools and go on permanent strike (an idea that may appear a little extreme to sober minds) Marx suggests that:

So much is this activity, this unceasing sensuous labour and creation, this production, the basis of the whole sensuous world as it now exists, that, were it interrupted only for a year, Feuerbach would not only find an enormous change in the natural world, but would very soon find that the whole world of men and his own perceptive faculty, nay his own existence, were missing.<sup>39</sup>

Of course many would die of hunger, and lose existence in that way: but that is not the point. The point is that labour is the objectification of human activity, and that *reality* is objectified human activity, human activity bound up and congealed in matter. If we stop working, the sensuous world that we know today, and the senses that we mobilise in order to know it, will all in time—in only a year, as Marx wrote—pass away. Matter will remain: that is not being disputed here. But ‘human beings’ and ‘the world’ will cease to be.

Human beings at the beginning of time, in the famous *generatio aequivoca*,<sup>40</sup> did not act upon already extant things and transform them—except in so far as the ‘things’ were already ‘there’ *as a product of earlier labour*. Material things, in so far as they are real and objective, are always already hybrid things: to be a thing is to be a hybrid. They were not ‘material things’, they

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<sup>39</sup> Marx & Engels, *The German Ideology*, Prometheus Books: USA, 1998. p. 46.

<sup>40</sup> Loc. cit.



were not ‘real’ or ‘objective’ until they came to absorb a quantum of sensuous human activity in some labour process. Thus, it can be said that for Marx—for Marx at any time of his life post 1844—reality is made by human beings acting, it is a human product. This sensuous activity *congeals* and outlives the action that begets it, obtaining the ability to endure, to stand alone—for a time, at least—by being embodied in ‘matter’. After a certain amount of activity has occurred, there is a world, a solid, meaningful, value-saturated world in which human beings can live—until they are free, in Marx’s anthropology, they have to live to some extent according to the dictates of the world they make, humans *qua* lord and vassal, humans *qua* capitalist and worker, until capitalism performs its dual parts of a) ‘ripping up’ and exploding all hitherto existing ‘roles’, and b) creating productive powers massive enough to materially support real human emancipation, so that we can finally be human *qua* human: the real content of our humanity no longer tied to our position in the productive process. Communism for Marx is thus the world that we make in which we can be human according to our *self-directed* needs and wants, where our identity is cut free of the exigencies of the labour process that in its sensuous, extended being, *is* the world.

Marx believes that labour produces the (objective) world, which is why he believes that the manner in which we labour or the tools that we use determines the shape of reality—which is why he tells us to change the world by changing the way that we work. But if labour produces the world, then it must follow that the world—any world—cannot pre-exist human labour, and thus, reality was formless/did not exist before there was ‘labour’ and, just as a new form of labour would end our world by bringing about a new world, the cessation of labour would end our world and replace it with no-world. That the first ‘labour’ thus took place in a non-world is not a problem logically or ontologically as all animals ‘act’ in non-worlds, except in so far as they can be incorporated into ours. It can be hypothesised that ‘animal man’ acted in a non-world in such a way—i.e., she began to ‘labour’—that both the world and ‘supra-animal man’ both came

into being. '*Sensuous external matter*', *matter with no activity crystallised in it, is not real, and is not objective*. Marx, bowing to Barbon, admits that this sensuous matter has 'intrinsic virtue'.<sup>41</sup> It is not a blank slate—the qualities, for instance, that become 'magnetism', or 'hardness' in things as they become things are not wholly invented or created. The 'work of history' consists in creating things in a manner most harmonious with—and, to the least extent limited by—their 'intrinsic virtue'. However, this 'virtue' does not mean that things are things before we make them so, that they are real and objective, that they have being.

It is clear in certain works of Marx that 'sensuous external matter' that has absorbed no quantum of labour is *valueless*. As he writes, '[t]he material of nature alone, in so far as *no* human labour is embodied in it, in so far as it is mere material and exists independently of human labour, has no value, since value is only embodied labour ...'.<sup>42</sup> Yet it is somewhat less clear that it *does not exist* in the manner of a thing, that it is 'no thing' *until it is made into a thing*, until it becomes a part of the *process* reality—that '... nature, taken abstractly, for itself, *rigidly* separated from man, is *nothing* for man'.<sup>43</sup> And likewise, it is not clear that we are not humans, but are mere 'animal man', until we make and encounter these things, these things that are only things in so far as they are *also* estranged humanity. The creation of a world is, as stated above, the indirect creation of a self. The idea that 'man' could appear on 'a world' that that he did not create is a fallacy: such a place is not a world, and no form of life could 'relate' to such a place. 'Man' and world either both exist, or neither exists. They are thus each in relation to the other co-creators. For Marx, Hegel saw this in principle, but did not understand *in actuality* how it worked, making of it something ludicrously complex and mystical. Marx's project was instead to understand this

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<sup>41</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 125.

<sup>42</sup> Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, NLB: Bristol, 1971. p. 30. Marx is cited from the *Grundrisse*.

<sup>43</sup> Loc. cit. Marx is this time cited from the *1844 Manuscripts*. The 'for man' on the end of this quote is disingenuous. In it there is an echo of Fichte's idealism that has no place in Marx. In *The German Ideology*, especially, it is clearer that '... nature, taken abstractly, for itself, *rigidly* separated from man, is *nothing* ...'

process, to teach us that we are one and all involved in it in our daily, mundane lives, and to help us to master it accordingly.

Thus, the thing *qua* thing simply cannot be said to have ‘been there’, to have ‘existed’, prior to human influence, waiting or enduring, as these are qualities of things and things are always products of activity.<sup>44</sup> Living labour is the fount of this world—the world we create that in turn creates us and that is composed primarily of dead labour, of congealed activity. This world is not merely a world but is a ‘real social life process’<sup>45</sup> and without new labour, it cannot continue to live, as the old activity ‘dies’ if it is not appended by new activity.<sup>46</sup>

The problem is that so far, in human history (to varying degrees) the *dead labour* has been in charge of the co-creation of ‘man’ and ‘world’. It has been the actor—and as *capital* this is especially true—it has unhomed us, it has shattered old bonds of community and recombined us into new patterns of isolated cooperation on the factory floor.<sup>47</sup> It has determined what we should be and do, it has directed our history, it sucks our strength so cunningly that we do not even realise that we have any,<sup>48</sup> and *living labour* has been slave and subject. This, Marx calls

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<sup>44</sup> It can also not not be said that it ‘was there’. But the quality of its thereness was not the real, objective quality of the things that make up reality, of things *qua* product/process, things *qua* relations.

<sup>45</sup> In German: ‘*der wirkliche gesellschaftliche Lebensprozess*’. Marx also writes of ‘the productive life process of society ... *der produktive Lebensprozess der Gesellschaft*’. See Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 62

<sup>46</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 289–290: ‘Living labour must seize on these things, awaken them from the dead, change them from merely possible into real and effective use-values. Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as part of its organism, and infused with vital energy for the performance of the functions appropriate to their concept and to their vocation in the process, they are indeed consumed, but to some purpose, as elements in the formation of new use-values, new products, which are capable of entering into individual consumption as means of subsistence or into a new use-values, new products, which are capable of entering into individual consumption as means of subsistence or into a new labour process as means of production’.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. pp. 449–450.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. pp. 755–756. ‘This natural power of labour appears as a power incorporated into capital for the latter’s own self-preservation, just as the productive forces of social labour appear as inherent characteristics of

alienation, and it is *not* a concern of the young Marx only.<sup>49</sup> This is how reality is made, for Marx—and us too, as components of reality—it is born of our sensuous activity, and that in turn the stuff it is made of—when it is bonded with matter within a living society. Marx writes

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capital, and just as the constant appropriation of surplus labour by the capitalists appears as the constant self-valorization of capital. All the powers of labour project themselves as powers of capital, just as all the value-forms of the commodity do as forms of money.’

<sup>49</sup> Marx writes in *Capital*. p. 91: ‘*Le mort saisit le vif!* ... The dead man clutches onto the living’. Also in *Capital*. pp. 174–175, ‘These formulas, which bear the unmistakable stamp of belonging to a social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the opposite, appear to the “political economists” bourgeois consciousness to be as much a self-evident and nature-imposed necessity as productive labour itself.’ cf. pp. 342; 424–426, 548; 998; & 1017. Márkus notes (Márkus, ‘Alienation and Reification in Marx and Lukács’, in *Thesis Eleven*, Nos. 5/6 1982. p. 140) that the lost ‘sixth chapter’ of *Capital*, written in the 1860s (known as ‘Results of the Immediate Process of Production’), is among Marx’s most comprehensive explorations of alienation. An example from this ‘lost chapter’, p. 990, is: ‘Hence the rule of the capitalist over the worker is the rule of things over man, of dead labour over the living, of the product over the producer.’ Also in *Capital*. p. 165: ‘There [in religion] the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race.’ This quote appears in the context of Marx accusing the bourgeoisie of alienation just as stark, in looking at products of labour and imagining that the traits of these things (especially value) are ‘natural’, and are not the result of a human labour process. That Marx writes ‘human brain’ here is an idealist lapse (one that he repeats later on, *Ibid.* p. 772.), not entirely consistent with his thinking. It might have been better had he written ‘human labour’, though, as this thesis will discuss, Marx does grant human *cognition* the power to change extant reality (if this thinking is an impetus to *praxis*)—that is, when he is not trapped in a fully determinist mood, in which extant reality entirely determines the content and possibilities of human consciousness. Also, regarding the stance of this thesis that one can overcome alienation using a (materialist) theory of the imagination, those conversant with Lacan and Žižek may object here that ‘alienation’ and ‘the imaginary’ go hand in hand, and that therefore my project is wrongheaded. However, the basic premise of this thesis is that there is no ‘real’ as Lacan sees the Real. The real in Lacan is always *outside*, always escaping and evading, never a *thing*, for things are imaginary or symbolic, mutilations of the real that cut but do not touch ‘the Real’. For this thesis, following Marx, the real is our product, and only escapes our control when we cannot see this—which is Marx’s *exact* definition of alienation in *The German Ideology*. p. 56. As Bottici very recently proposed in *Imaginal Politics*. p. 9: ‘the imaginary is itself constitutive of the real’. To make such a statement is to put oneself in a different theoretical universe than that occupied by Lacan and Žižek. In that universe, a real thing is an absurdity. A thing that has become real via the human imagination is a double absurdity. Lacan’s Real is considered in this thesis the pre-real: that which *becomes* real with the application of the human imagination, that which is transformed into the real, though never permanently, and in a manifold of possible (all true) ways.

that: '[m]y standpoint, from which the development of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains ...'<sup>50</sup> This statement may appear to disprove the above arguments, suggesting that the world and its laws have nothing to do with acting and willing human beings (with acting, willing, and humanity all being *mere means* for the iron laws of history to achieve their own ponderous aims) and thus, that they are in each instance *mere semblances* of acting, willing, and humanity. However, here what we have is instead a) something of a lapse into strong metaphysical Hegelianism,<sup>51</sup> and b) something that is still *completely* within the sphere of

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<sup>50</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 92.

<sup>51</sup> If one compares the preface of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, International Publishers, Inc.: USA, 1972, with an 1820 text of Hegel (<<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/hegel-summary.asp>>, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.: UK, 1894. pp. i–xxv) one can see that in Marx's moments of strong metaphysical determinism—and this thesis will not deny that they are there, though it will consistently label them idiosyncratic—he is lapsing into a Hegelian manner of thinking. Compare for example: 'In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production ...' with: 'Universal history is the exhibition of *Geist* in the process of working out the knowledge of what it potentially is. Just as the seed bears in itself the whole nature of the tree, including the taste and form of its fruit, so do the first traces of *Geist* virtually contain the whole of its own history. What is rational is actual, and what is actual is rational. Thus what is rational has the potential of actualizing itself, and thus history, far from being an undifferentiated aggregate of incomprehensible accidents and chance events, has a rational structure. Thus, the march of reason through history is a complex dialectical process, in which both individuals and nations are mere tools, unaware of the import and significance of their own deeds. Changes might be introduced by world-historical individuals such as Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon, but their roles derive not from their conscious intentions or political ideas, for they are motivated, like all other men, by base desires such as ambition, greed, and glory. It is the objective consciousness of their deeds, and not their subjective intentions, that makes them historically significant. They are thus unconscious tools in the hand of the *Geist*.' This comparison shows that in Marx's lapses he reverts to a Hegelian manner of thinking. But even in Marx's lapses into strong metaphysical determinism, however, he is very careful not to speak of any determining forces that have a source external to

Marx's own specific (and complex) *Weltanschauung*. For this thesis, despite some Hegelian deterministic undertones, what Marx is really writing about are species of what Heidegger (who reproduces much of Marx's best work in his own) will much later call *thrownness* and *falling*.<sup>52</sup> Marx makes the above comments in the context of not holding *individuals* of the bourgeoisie class *personally* responsible for the oppression of workers. The bourgeoisie class, having become ossified agents of dead labour, of capital, are not *free* enough to be held responsible for their thoughts and actions, which are not their own.<sup>53</sup> What looks like the freedom of the bourgeoisie is primarily the freedom of capital, and thus, Marx predicts that there most likely can be no

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the sensuous activity of concrete human beings. The exact role and position of Marx's strong determinist lapses within his broader theory—in which there is still a version of determinism, but one that is not antithetical to his preoccupation with freedom, i.e., that is 'compatibilist'—will be considered at great length later in the thesis. In short, we can say that for this thesis, these strong deterministic lapses are ultimately peripheral to the broader project in which 'historical materialism' and 'class struggle' are both complementary elements of a mainly unified theory.

<sup>52</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, J. Stambaugh (trans.), State University of New York Press: USA, 1996. pp. 127–131. In the reading of this thesis, thrownness, in Heidegger's works, is tied to the idea that the world exists at the moment that I am born—what and how it is have nothing to do with me—and falling is tied to accepting all of the pre-existing conditions that one finds. This constitutes an active acceptance that a) means that everybody is the other and nobody is himself, i.e., precipitates an inauthentic life; and b) is not conducive to disclosure of the world. For Heidegger, the busier one becomes, the more one becomes entangled in the world (the German word *Verfallen* means falling and entanglement, depending on context) and the less clear its true nature becomes, so that everything becomes so banal and taken for granted that the meaning of the question of being is lost. The question subsequently becomes distorted into something that 'everybody' knows the answer to, making the asking of this question redundant. For this thesis, the way that alienated beings operate in Marx's works is a definite prototype for some of Heidegger's ideas. See Marx, *Capital*. p. 1054: 'In fact collective unity in cooperation, combination in the division of labour, the use of the forces of nature and the sciences, of the products of labour, as *machinery* [cf: Heidegger's concept *Zeug*]*—all these confront the individual workers as something alien, objective, ready-made, existing without their intervention, and frequently even hostile to them.*'

<sup>53</sup> Blaming and responsibilising the bourgeoisie distracts us from the real Marxian project: unmasking reality as human activity and unmasking apparent relations of domination between human beings as being the universal subjection of living human beings to the congealed activity of dead ones—i.e., overcoming alienation.

bloodless political *coup* that will precipitate the transformation into a communist society.<sup>54</sup>

Capitalists cannot but resist the fall of capitalism—not because they are ‘bad men’, but because, for Marx, they are not men at all. They *are* capital. They resist not social change, but *annihilation*.

In short, the bosses cannot be *reasoned with* because they are not human, and they are not free: they are the walking dead. One will not find any traces of hatred or bloodlust in Marx in his pro-revolution polemics.<sup>55</sup> The bourgeoisie are to be killed—they are walking embodiments of the world that one seeks to destroy—but not hated. There can be no *conversation* with them, because in them there is no reason, no freedom, no ‘I will’. Thus, there will instead be only proletarian revolution and a renewed and revitalised ‘pro-slavery rebellion’<sup>56</sup> on the behalf of the bourgeoisie class (fought on the behalf of a world not ready to die) who won the war against the earlier, more direct/primitive form of slavery when they fought for the right for this present world to live against the old one, against the defenders of feudalism, serfdom and the guilds. The revolutionary bourgeoisie have become conservative, and now the proletariat is the revolutionary

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<sup>54</sup> Marx in *La Liberté*. ‘We know of the allowances we must make for the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries; and we do not deny that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland if I knew your institutions better, where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means. If that is true, we must also recognise that in most of the continental countries it is force that will have to be the lever of our revolutions.’ Cited in Michael Evans, *Karl Marx*, Routledge: USA & Canada, 2004. p. 137. McLellan (ed.), *Chicago Tribune* Interview, in *Karl Marx, Interviews and Recollections*. p. 138: ‘“No great movement,” Karl answered, “has ever been inaugurated Without Bloodshed. The independence of America was won by bloodshed, Napoleon captured France through a bloody process, and he was overthrown by the same means. Italy, England, Germany, and every other country gives proof of this, and as for assassination,” he went on to say, “it is not a new thing, I need scarcely say. Orsini tried to kill Napoleon; kings have killed more than anybody else; the Jesuits have killed; the Puritans killed at the time of Cromwell.” ’ Marx, ‘Class Struggle in France’, in *Marx, Engels, Lenin*. ‘Revolutions are the locomotives of history ...’ p. 109. Marx, ‘The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna’, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* No. 136, November 1848. Cited in Evans, *Karl Marx*. p. 137. ‘There is only one way in which the murderous death agonies of the old society and the bloody birth throes of the new society can be shortened, simplified and concentrated, and that way is revolutionary terror.’

<sup>55</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>56</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 401.

class. However, for Marx, this final class conflict will end differently to all of those that have come before—he predicted, of course, that it would precipitate the end of *class itself*. The proletariat is for Marx unique in that the position that it is thrown into is one of having and being nothing. As a being reduced to the ability to perform simple labour, its social ‘role’ is devoid of specific/social content, which is why Marx calls it a universal class. It is thus a) the first class capable of *becoming human*—i.e. the bourgeoisie won their war, but did not become human, and b) highly motivated to do so.

For Marx, the proletariat is denied the world—which is for it a hostile, life-sucking thing, taking as much and giving back as little as it can. However, this also means that, while the dead are busy feasting on the workers, *they are not speaking through them*, and thus, the proletariat is potentially able to will and have a will. Thus, it is *not* inconsistent that Marx a) did not bother to speak with the bosses to try and *convince* them of anything, and b) he did speak with the workers, and cared not just about what they *did*, but also about what they *thought*.<sup>57</sup> Marx does at times write about the proletarian movement as an unconscious, automatic movement—a dumb, mass wave motived by impulses and contradictions that one feels but does not understand, as in the quote above, or in the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Yet he also writes in the *Communist Manifesto* (not a work of the young Marx by any means) that: ‘[t]he proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest

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<sup>57</sup> To be clear, in Marx, ‘forces’ are at times ‘working through’ us, though he clearly denies (most of time) that such ‘forces’ are the sole driving force of history. As cited earlier from the *Holy Family*: ‘History does *nothing* ...’ And on this note, the principal difference between Marx and Hegel can be observed here. For Marx, human freedom is annulled when forces ‘work through’ us—even though great and necessary changes are wrought by unconscious actors—and Enlightenment/communism means overcoming this circumstance. For Hegel, our freedom is *realised* when forces work through us, as in religion, when we *yield*, when we voluntarily do what is demanded of us—that is, freedom is voluntary servitude to God/*Geist*. In Hegel, Enlightenment means becoming one with *Geist*, and is thus the opposite of what it means for Marx.



of the immense majority'.<sup>58</sup> Marx was trying his best to help build and strengthen that self-consciousness.

An interpretation of Marx that states that the extent of human agency varies according to class position may be troubling to some, who will insist that we, being all the same, either *all* have agency or do not. However, this thesis adopts the position that Marx has a 'relativity' approach to agency, in that the extent of one's agency differs according to one's position and velocity in natural historical space-time. As will be argued here, history for Marx is about human beings wrestling with their own past activity: making history, but in the context of the past history already made.<sup>59</sup> When our ideas exclusively have external sources and pass through us without reflexivity, we are not agents, but *subjects*. When our ideas are not all 'off the rack', 'ready made'—the ideas of *das man*, as Heidegger would say<sup>60</sup>—we have some agency. In the current example, the bourgeoisie is now (now being the 19<sup>th</sup> Century) conservative, worshipping the world as it is, and having no needs foreign or antagonist to it. It does not struggle against the world but serves it, even though its time has passed. This is opposed to the much earlier situation in which the bourgeoisie was radical, and hated the stifling rules of the guilds and the bondage of the serfs. Concurrently, the proletariat—radical, hating the world as it is, having manifold needs foreign to the world and antagonistic to it—now forms ideas and positions that are not 'off the rack', and are therefore agents. But again, it is complex, for this agency is informed by the structure, and the position that the structure forced the proletariat into independently of his will: 'work' *qua* 'free' wage labourer or starve. In other words, have no life or die—clearly an impossible position to occupy. One misses the nuances of Marx if one demands that we are always already either free or not free. To be free, one needs to live in a world—a real social life

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<sup>58</sup> Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Haymarket Books: USA, 2005. p. 55.

<sup>59</sup> Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*. pp. 118–122.

process—where freedom is possible, a world that has already absorbed several generations of labour, where one can become free by internalising elements of it. However, one also needs to be an alien in that world: as one ‘at home’ in that world where freedom is possible—but not actualised—one will feel at home because one is some element of the structure personified as, for example, capitalists are capital personified, and thus they feel that anything that is good for capital—for its growth—is good in itself.<sup>61</sup> In this way, today, capitalists can, without contradiction, feel that burning coal and drilling oil are good practices. They have sided with dead labour over living labour, and it is false to say that they are selfish. The true capitalist is *utterly selfless*—in every possible sense—and only wastes money on fine food and clothing for the sake of appearances.<sup>62</sup>

This thesis will not deny that for Marx, human beings are determined by environment, as to do so would be folly. What this thesis *does deny* is that the natural history of which Marx speaks is some automatic, autonomous, free-standing nature. There was such a thing, before reality and humanity began to become, but it no longer exists.<sup>63</sup> Natural history is instead for Marx the outcome of human activity. Nature, history, humanity and reality are unfolding human products/processes. That we get trapped in these webs does not mean that we are not the spiders spinning them. A signification portion of this thesis will be devoted to supporting this interpretation textually: chapter one contains a dozen or more quotations to substantiate this reading. In short, for Marx, there is no reality that is not a human product, and thus both ‘human

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<sup>61</sup> Ideology means that everybody feels this way, not just the capitalist who at least has a semblance of human life in his inhuman service of capital.

<sup>62</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 739. ‘But, in so far as he is capital personified, his motivating force is not the acquisition and enjoyment of use values, but the acquisition and augmentation of exchange-values.’

<sup>63</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 46: ‘For that matter, nature, the nature that preceded human history, is not by any means the nature in which Feuerbach lives, it is nature which today no longer exists anywhere ...’

nature’ and so-called *nature per se* are us. We humanise externality and externality naturalises us: the world and all things in the world are our real, objective, products.

Since for socialist man ... the entire *so-called world history* is only the creation of man through human labour and the emergence of nature for man, he has evident and incontrovertible proof of his self-creation, his own formation process.<sup>64</sup>

This is the basic argument of this thesis in relation to Marx’s ‘objective reality’, which is not just technically different from that of a ‘pure materialist’—it is exactly the opposite. Nietzsche wrote, on objectivity that: ‘... the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity,” be.’<sup>65</sup> For Marx too, objectivity is built-up, but not by speaking and looking. Rather, objective reality is the sum of the sensuous activity of a given community. Reality is the human essence objectified—a force that is depicted in Marx sometimes as a dark cloud, thwarting us, ‘bringing to naught our calculations’,<sup>66</sup> enslaving us, and sometimes as an awe inspiring realm of enormous powers, accumulated lore, beauty, colour, and *need satisfiers of all kinds*. It is the work of billions, awaiting human appropriation—or embracing ‘the entire wealth of previous development’ in an appropriation of *human life*<sup>67</sup>—by individuals lucky enough to be

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<sup>64</sup> Marx quoted in: Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 28.

<sup>65</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. p. 119.

<sup>66</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 53: ‘... therefore, as long as man remains in natural society ... as long ... as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally, divided, mans’ own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him ... This fixation of social activity, the consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectation, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now.’

<sup>67</sup> Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977. p. 95.

born late. They will be lucky, that is, if they can learn to control the genie<sup>68</sup> who becomes harder to master in step with what he has to offer, and can only be bridled if one knows his only vulnerable place: the part that is material, that one can lay hands on, the lamp, the base.

The argument of this thesis is that the above is not an either/or, and that it is for Marx both, until communism, when the negative side is for the most part overcome. Human activity looms above and over us, masking itself in the semblance of autonomy, and we are therefore alienated. This is the curse of the human being and the secret of its greatness. Enlightenment, for Marx, means being the first among humans to look at the world and understand that it is a) not natural, and b) natural. We have altered and created nature, and populated the world with things. It is an act of bad faith to attribute responsibility for the world (our objectified activity/life) to something other than ourselves, to sentient super-beings or to brute, automatic forces. It is an act of bad faith that has sunk even to the depth of our organs—in that we experience things as if they are sensuous material only. The secret of freedom is to cease exploring the world, mastering the world, pleading with the world or trying to figure out the world from the mistaken premise that its objectivity is not a human product. The world is not a puzzle that we happen upon. The world is us. We have made it, and have made ourselves in the process: this is the riddle solved. And thus, as Jacoby earlier asserted, Marx's materialism is still Hegelian<sup>69</sup> (and Marx admits this until the end, though *always* with the caveat that one *must not simply reproduce Hegel*, but must first *at least* invert him<sup>70</sup>) and its roots are idealist and materialist, *and highly critical of both traditions*. We will return to this.

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<sup>68</sup> To alter the metaphor that Marx used in the *Communist Manifesto* of the sorcerer who called upon powers from the netherworld with spells, and who now cannot control them (p. 47).

<sup>69</sup> And to a limited extent, Schopenhauerian, as this thesis is interpreting Marx, in that the world is a second body of 'man'.

<sup>70</sup> Marx writes critically of Bruno Bauer: 'Such expressions do not even show any verbal divergence from the Hegelian approach, but on the contrary repeat it word for word.' Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 133. This thesis

We have now reached the fourth section of this outline of the core elements of the thesis. For Nietzsche, reality is not so much composed of sensuous human activity, but is largely—particularly around the emergence of any thing—made out of human error.<sup>71</sup> The only reason that reality came into being was that before it existed, a group of strange animals erroneously supposed that it already existed (the development of language, for Nietzsche, fosters the dual errors that are a) speakers and b) things spoken of<sup>72</sup>), at first tentatively, and then with growing confidence.<sup>73</sup> As for Marx, for Nietzsche, the human being is the animal who can make its own activity solid and encounterable to itself. For Nietzsche, the human being is the obstinate animal who can hold onto its own errors in such a way that they eventually become true/real. That there are things was once an error,<sup>74</sup> and that human beings were qualitatively different to the other animals was once an error.<sup>75</sup> We held onto both until they became true. After the initial errors—which for Nietzsche, as far as one can infer from his language, are not ‘imaginative’—human beings become capable of proper creation, of imaginative, transformative, value-creating activity.

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will argue throughout that although Marx himself writes that Hegel only really needed putting the right way up, only needed an inversion, what Marx did with Hegel’s theory most of the time was more radical than that, it was an overcoming and departure from Hegel.

<sup>71</sup> Nietzsche, of course, was as interested as Marx in how daily sensuous practice is *primary*, the key to any kind of world- or self-transformation. But the origins of things are, regardless, firmly tied to error in the mind of Nietzsche and firmly tied to labour in the mind of Marx.

<sup>72</sup> David Owen, *Maturity and Modernity, Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the ambivalence of reason*, Routledge: USA & Canada, 1998. p. 19.

<sup>73</sup> Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, Cambridge University Press: UK, 2007. p. 55: ‘Every conviction has its history, its pre-formations, its ventures and its mistakes: it becomes a conviction after not being one for a long time, after barely being one for even longer.’

<sup>74</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, ‘Let us Beware’ and ‘The Origin of Knowledge’. pp. 109–112.

<sup>75</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 35: ‘The beast in us wants to be lied to; morality is an official lie told so that it shall not tear us to pieces. Without the errors that repose in the assumptions of morality man would have remained animal. As it is, he has taken himself for something higher and imposed sterner laws upon himself. That is why he feels a hatred for the grades that have remained closer to animality: which is the explanation of the contempt formerly felt for the slave as a non-man, as a thing.’ Ibid. p. 182: ‘Error has transformed animals into men; is truth perhaps capable of changing man back into an animal?’

In the classic example, ‘slaves’ created and held onto the idea that what had been in the usual estimation of things common and contemptible—to be weak, to hate harm, pain and suffering—was, contrary to convention, *actually* rare and admirable. ‘Slaves’ rebranded everything weak and worthless about themselves into heroic traits so well that today, these (once) false, marginal ideas of the old slave-cult of pity are imagined to be ‘universal truths’, the only things we can know for sure—the things, for Kant, that any rational being—‘all rational beings generally’—will ‘discover’ as the categorical imperative if she abstracts from all experience and looks at morality objectively/rationally.<sup>76</sup> Those who used to be the good, those who dealt in revenge and beneficence, the happy, the truthful, the noble, these shining people, these were the causalities of the ‘slave’ revolt in values. As the common people became the good, the great and powerful became *evil*.

In short, for Marx, sensuous activity begets reality. Inversely stated, reality *is* activity that has become solid and encounterable. For Nietzsche, holding onto an error (or a created value) with your teeth until it becomes true begets reality. Yet here, the inverse is not strictly speaking true: reality is not exactly an error that has become solid and encounterable—though it is—for in becoming so, it has become true and is *no longer* an error. This thesis sees both theories as being invaluable, but finds that in both ideas regarding the genesis of reality and objectivity, the role of

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<sup>76</sup> Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. p. 20. As Nietzsche endlessly repeats, particularly in *The Genealogy of Morals*, the values that for us are becoming apodictic began as the (strength-hating) values of (weak) slaves. There is nothing objective or universal about them. Kant ‘found’ these values because he was a product of the victorious slave culture, as were all the tools of metaphysical exploration he found around himself. The idea that nothing should ever suffer harm (pacifistic love of peace) could only be dreamed by people who suffered harm but could not return it. It is, as Nietzsche notes, a masterstroke—if I cannot return this harm, I will re-signify *harming* (strength) as evil. But being a masterstroke does not make it supra-cultural/objective. Nietzsche does not even situate his own findings as being *forever valid*, though they have (for the purposes of this thesis) a decent claim to such a thing. He resists the temptation to say: that which serves life is good, and that which stultifies it is evil. But it would also sicken him to say—he who is so wise—in *my opinion* ... Instead, he wills for the *Übermensch* to become the meaning of the earth, and tries to teach this will to others.

the imagination is present but underdeveloped. The aim of this thesis is therefore to study the role of the imagination in each theory (section one), and then to create a theory based on both figures in which the role of the imagination is extended (section two).

Against all theses that situate the human imagination as being the force that allows human beings to flee from or escape from immutable reality, this thesis will argue that the human imagination begets material reality. This means that both Marx and Nietzsche's insights (with a certain degree of adjustment) can be retained and brought together. It is the rational imagination that makes human labour unique, and sets the human architect apart from the humble bee.<sup>77</sup> It is the perverse or dissimulating imagination—which for Nietzsche, begins as blind error and only becomes properly 'imaginative' in time—that makes human error so fecund.<sup>78</sup> But either way (in the regard of this thesis, at least) it is the human imagination that is responsible for the reality in which we live, one of many possible realities.

*In sum, there are the two fundamental facets of this thesis. Firstly, it will demonstrate that for both Marx and Nietzsche, human activity is the wellspring of reality: for the one, sensuous generative activity, and for the other, creative cognitive activity.<sup>79</sup> Secondly, it will insist that, although both labour and error are important things to emphasise as being generative of reality, it is more important to emphasise the imagination (which can, anyway, be regarded as *behind* human labour and in a more complicated way, behind human*

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<sup>77</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 284.

<sup>78</sup> There is no single quote that can verify this interpretation. Each part of this proposal will, however, be verified in the Nietzsche chapter.

<sup>79</sup> It will be a minor theme of this thesis that in Marx, cognitive activity has a larger role in world creation than is usually recognised, and that in Nietzsche, daily sensuous practice is hugely important. But in full recognition of this, this thesis will still state that for Marx, sensuous activity is in the final analysis the fount of objective reality, as in Nietzsche, in the final analysis, error is a process of cognition and thus, creative cognitive activity: *unconscious*, creative cognitive activity is the fount of objective reality.

error), *especially if one's goal is human autonomy*. And on this note, we will now move on to the fifth part of this outline.

This thesis will be careful in defining freedom and autonomy in the works of Marx and in Nietzsche. It is considered here that Marx and Nietzsche share (to some extent) a definition of autonomy, and that both see human autonomy as being a positive goal very near to our grasp. As Nietzsche wrote, human beings can make of themselves whatever they want: 'henceforth mankind can do with itself whatever it wishes.'<sup>80</sup> They can become sovereign, self-defining subjects. As Nietzsche noted in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

To teach man that the future of mankind is his *will*, dependent on a human will, and to prepare him for great deeds of daring and comprehensive attempts at discipline and breeding, in order to put an end to that terrible domination of folly and accident hitherto known as 'history'—the folly of the 'greatest number' is just its final form—: for this, some time or other, a new type of philosopher and commander will be necessary, in comparison to whose image everything we have seen on earth by way of hidden, terrible and benevolent spirits will seem pale and dwarfed.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 257.

<sup>81</sup> Nietzsche, 'Supplementary Material', in *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 152. This definition of autonomy is shared by Marx and Nietzsche. If this thesis becomes tedious in its refutations of Hegel, it is because Hegel is the great annihilator of autonomy as defined above, in: 1) sneaking order into everything (thus denying that there is a reign of accident to end); and 2) denying the possibility of any human action that is *genuinely* self-directed. Autonomy simply is not possible if everything is connected to everything else and every move that I (apparently) make under my own steam is (in reality) a cunning, covert move of *Geist*.



Marx and Nietzsche both believed, in different ways, that the bourgeois-Christian belief that we all were *already* human and *already* autonomous was false.<sup>82</sup> Rather, autonomy—*qua* being self-responsible, self-governing, self-defining and self-directing—was a desired goal to be (self-positing and) achieved. Freedom, on the other hand, is very different for each figure. For Marx, freedom is about not being determined by biological need (mundane considerations<sup>83</sup>), by tradition or by the exigencies of the world as we have made it. We need to make the world in order to exist, but it is not necessary that the manner in which we make the world (physically speaking, the manner in which we build the world with sensuous activity) *must* determine our thoughts and identities, or *reduce* us to our role in the creation of objectivity. Freedom is the more negative or empty expression of not being determined (and does not yet really exist); autonomy is the more positive or active moment of not being determined, or, what one *does* with freedom once one achieves it. For Nietzsche, freedom is quite different. Firstly, Marx considers that freedom does not yet exist because we are largely determined by our environment—because it masters us—but even so, there is a coherent I, a latent will, that is mastered. For Nietzsche, freedom as the ability of a coherent subject to freely do or not do certain things has always been a myth or an error, including both the existence of the subject (as an I that thinks), and its ability to control and direct itself (for the I to know what it wants, and to be the force that animates itself into purposeful activity towards the realisation of what it wants). In the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche writes of freedom as a myth of the weak who are squeamish about doling out punishment (as rulers without strength and without self-belief), and who like to tell themselves, ‘this man was free *not to* transgress (was free to be weak like me) and thus my act of retaliation is

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<sup>82</sup> Today, this thought is very deeply entrenched, so that ‘recognising’ the humanity of everybody is everything, and *establishing* the humanity of everybody (which is, in the most un-Nietzschean thought possible, posited to be ‘a gift of nature’) is nothing.

<sup>83</sup> Marx, *Capital, Volume III: A Critique of Political Economy*, D. Fernbach (trans.), Penguin Classics: 1991. pp. 958–959.

not *revenge*, but only *justice*, only mere necessary and unavoidable *punishment*.<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil* that it would be better to speak about strong and weak will than about free and unfree will, *neither* of which exist as we generally imagine them to.<sup>85</sup> (Brian Leiter refutes this reading, writing that Nietzsche on the whole *denies free will but does not deny unfree will*, apart from in a few idiosyncratic passages (such as the one in *Beyond Good and Evil*) that it is spurious to over-emphasise.<sup>86</sup>) We have always been more impulsive, fragmented, and divided than we realise. On the other hand, for Nietzsche, we are also *becoming* more free, in that under the myth of freedom, bound in the shackles of Christian morality, we are actually beginning to become less impulsive,

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<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. pp. 25–26: ‘The scientists do no better when they say “force moves, force causes” and such like,—all our science, in spite of its coolness and freedom from emotion, still stands exposed to the seduction of language and has not rid itself of the changelings foisted upon it, the “subjects” (the atom is, for example, just such a changeling, likewise the Kantian “thing-in-itself”): no wonder, then, if the entrenched, secretly smouldering emotions of revenge and hatred put this belief to their own use and, in fact, do not defend any belief more passionately than that *the strong are free* to be weak, and the birds of prey are free to be lambs:—in this way, they gain the right to make the birds of prey *responsible* for being birds of prey . . . When the oppressed, the downtrodden, the violated say to each other with the vindictive cunning of powerlessness: “Let us be different from evil people, let us be good! And a good person is anyone who does not rape, does not harm anyone, who does not attack, does not retaliate, who leaves the taking of revenge to God, who keeps hidden as we do, avoids all evil and asks little from life in general, like us who are patient, humble and upright”—this means, if heard coolly and impartially, nothing more than: “We weak people are just weak; it is good to do nothing *for which we are not strong enough*”—but this grim state of affairs, this cleverness of the lowest rank which even insects possess (which play dead, in order not to “do too much” when in great danger), has, thanks to the counterfeiting and self-deception of powerlessness, clothed itself in the finery of self-denying, quiet, patient virtue, as though the weakness of the weak were itself—I mean its *essence*, its effect, its whole unique, unavoidable, irredeemable reality—a voluntary achievement, something wanted, chosen, a *deed*, an *accomplishment* ...’ p. 48: ‘And just as like always gives rise to like, it will come as no surprise to find attempts coming once more from these circles, as so often before ... to sanctify *revenge* with the term *justice*—as though justice were fundamentally simply a further development of the feeling of having been wronged—and belatedly to legitimize with revenge emotional *reactions* in general, one and all.’

<sup>85</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Cambridge University Press: UK. 2009. p. 21.

<sup>86</sup> See Brian Leiter, ‘Nietzsche’s Theory of the Will’, in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, K. Gemes & S. May (eds.), Oxford University Press: 2009. pp. 107–126. This position is frequently commented on by other authors in this volume.

and more controlled and calculating. Nietzsche finds this becoming true of freedom: a) positive, in that it is an ‘immense process’ at the end of which (if we can free ourselves from ‘the morality of custom’ at *the right time*, which is to say, *after* the stifling slave morality has granted us a soul and a will, but *before* the same has gone too far, and made yapping ‘house-pets’ of us all) a ‘sovereign individual’ is possible<sup>87</sup>; and b) troubling, in that he associates to some extent our becoming free with diminution, ‘prob[ing] along a thread with cowardly hands,’ or always deducing (‘thinking, inferring, reckoning’) and never *guessing*, with the ‘bold searchers, researchers, and whoever put to terrible seas with cunning sails’.<sup>88</sup> (Again, Leiter would say that there is no will, freedom or ‘I’ being formed in this process, just a different type of animal that has been bred to more reliably make promises, an animal that has not chosen this path—the strange path of becoming an animal that is forbidden to use its greatest resources, its drives—and that has no will to change this path.) The main difference on freedom in Marx and Nietzsche is perhaps associated with the link between civilisation and freedom.

As a part of the civilising process, one is responsibilised, one becomes (morally) accountable for all of one’s actions, and one is expected to think prior to conducting every action—as a juridical exercise, the fiction of the doer (as the target of punishment) is added to the deed.<sup>89</sup> The reason is that some acts are illegal, and some acts are immoral (and generally they overlap). Thus, one is supposed to consider these things *before* conducting an action if one wants to guarantee good favour with the King and with God, and to keep one’s promises to them: in the beginning, a handful of ‘though shalt not’s’. One can of course have a totalitarian system in

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<sup>87</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. pp. 36–41.

<sup>88</sup> *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge University Press: 2006. p. 124. Nietzsche repeats this quote in *Ecce Homo*, in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, W. Kaufman and R. Hollingdale (trans.), Vintage Books: USA, 1989. p. 264.

<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 26: ‘But there is no such substratum; there is no “being” behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; “the doer” is invented as an afterthought,—the doing is everything.’

which a leader crushes transgressors in revenge, out of outrage, but one cannot have a civilisation in which rules of a legal-rational authority are followed unless human beings are free, or think that they are free. That people accept a pronouncement of *guilt* means that they themselves believe that they are free, that they had the power of volition to not perform the guilty act that they performed. Marx believes that the civilising process is *ultimately* a good one, in that as we become civilised, freedom (*qua* voluntarism) begins to bloom (though the civilising *force* is, to begin with, largely automatic—a product of human unfreedom and alienation), and that to become civilised, responsible, free, calculating and self-controlled is fundamentally to become greater. (In his dialectal model, human beings are not in the beginning self-motivated towards becoming civilised, free, and industrious, and are frog-marched towards freedom until they begin to take up the idea consciously, by their own unfreedom.<sup>90</sup> It is a major contention in this thesis that as the dialectic unfolds, what people want becomes a directing force of history, though this is not and cannot be the case from the beginning, for in the beginning, *people are not yet people*, and what will later become possible does not yet exist as a possibility). Nietzsche, on the other hand, does not believe that the growing volition of ‘man’ under the strange tutelage of civilisation is unambiguously a good thing. It is only *positive* in so far as it makes something far greater than itself possible. In itself, it is a stultifying and sickening force. Though again, this is complex, as civilisation *qua* the internalisation of cruelty and the brutal drive to master/enslave

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<sup>90</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 51: ‘Moreover, the co-operation of wage-labourers is entirely brought about by the capital that employs them. Their unification into one single productive body, and the establishment of a connection between their individual functions, lies outside their competence. These things are not their own act, but the act of the capital that brings them together and maintains them in that situation. Hence the interconnection between their various labours confronts them, in the realm of ideas, as a plan drawn up by the capitalist, and, in practice, as his authority, as the powerful will of a being outside them, who subjects their activity to his purpose.’ pp. 449–450. cf. Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. ‘This beginning is as animal as social life itself at this stage. It is mere herd-consciousness, and at this point man is distinguished from sheep only by the fact that with him consciousness takes the place of instinct or that his instinct is a conscious one. This sheep-like or tribal consciousness receives its further development and extension through increased productivity, the increase of needs, and, what is fundamental to both of these, the increase of population.’

gives us something for everything that it takes away: as we become smaller, our internality grows, as we one and all become weak, no matter what our ‘natural’ constitution, a ‘human soul’ blooms.<sup>91</sup>

We must therefore be cautious, and avoid reading Nietzsche as a man nostalgic for the *return* of the ‘blonde beast’—a beast that has been harmed *as well as* bettered. Keeping in mind that human beings only developed a soul once put in a cage, we can very carefully say that *on the whole*, Nietzsche sees this process of civilising ‘man’ (*qua* increasing his volition) as being a *harmful* process through which everything that makes ‘man’ dangerous is removed. The method is to teach human beings to hate all natural drives. Instead of following them, one is encouraged to use the weak (and infant) organ ‘consciousness’ to direct one’s actions (this is volition). And because this organ is weak, and new, it: a) discombobulates ‘man’ and cuts him off from his habitual means of living via his drives; and b) is in no way a match for the drives it only thinks it is displacing, having *at best* limited control of the organism.<sup>92</sup> The result is that ‘man’ becomes sick, lost, and weary of itself.<sup>93</sup> This kind of freedom, and its growth—‘deserts free will’, as Ken Gemes calls it (he calls what this thesis defines as autonomy ‘agency free will’)<sup>94</sup>—Nietzsche despises.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*. p. 57.

<sup>92</sup> This is at least the view expressed in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. The civilisation of the human animal is viewed from a different aspect in *Beyond Good and Evil*, as more of a natural or automatic process and less of a revolution of values promoted by human beings.

<sup>93</sup> This is not the case in ‘culture’, which is different to ‘civilisation’. ‘Culture’ sublimates where ‘civilisation’ suppresses.

<sup>94</sup> Ken Gemes, ‘Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual’, in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. pp. 33–49.

<sup>95</sup> The ‘telos of man’ in Marx and Nietzsche is complex. Neither figure thinks that ‘man’ is the secret goal of the universe, as in Hegel (and Engels), and neither figure thinks that history is the process of ‘man’ making manifest his eternal essence, for ‘man’ only comes into being once the process is already long underway. And yet, both figures want to make some kind of higher form of ‘man’ the meaning of the earth. Both want to see a

For Marx, freedom and autonomy, though not identical, still go together, whereas for Nietzsche, they are strongly opposed. This does not mean that Nietzsche hates autonomy. Nietzsche champions autonomy, at times calling it freedom, and ‘freedom as I mean it’ or ‘my conception of freedom’.<sup>96</sup> There is also a difference in the autonomy of Marx and Nietzsche, following on from the difference in how freedom is understood. For Nietzsche, one should build oneself with an eye to ‘what one is’, self-creation *qua* cultivation. For Marx, one should build oneself with no eye on what one is, throwing away all previous yardsticks—including moral ones, which Nietzsche would approve of—self creation *qua* unbounded *auto-poiesis*—this is autonomy (made possible by freedom), it is freedom as Marx means it. Marx wants freedom from nature (nature as it was). For Nietzsche, complete freedom from nature (which is not in this thesis a pre-existing causal order, but rather that which ‘speaks’ *unconsciously* in human beings: the voice of the body, which is not the voice of the ‘I’) is a horrifying prospect. Autonomy for Nietzsche means free self-creation, freedom from what is written on the old law tables (‘for “autonomous” and “ethical” are mutually exclusive’<sup>97</sup>) in order that one can create oneself as one is, as one is becoming. To play with the phrase ‘becoming what one is’ (which is identical with self-overcoming), one can suppose that autonomy means becoming an ‘I’ that is its body and is not opposed to it, and is thus overcome and realised in a movement—close to Hegel despite himself—of *Selbstaufhebung*. To quote:

The freest act is that in which our own most strongest most finely practiced nature springs forth, and in such a way that at the same time our intellect shows its directing hand.<sup>98</sup> The dramatic element in

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humankind come to completion—a completion that is of course dynamic, as ‘completed man’ is primarily the man who gives his own form to himself, a form that unfolds. Both figures want ‘man’ to master a (human) process that human beings did not consciously initiate, and make/will this process that produced a version of ‘man’ into a process that can produce a Superman.

<sup>96</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*. Cambridge Edition. p. 213–214.

<sup>97</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 37.

<sup>98</sup> Nietzsche cited in Gemes, ‘Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual’. p. 45.

Wagner's development is quite unmistakable from the moment when his ruling passion became aware of itself and took his nature in charge ...<sup>99</sup> What severity and uniformity of purpose he [again, Wagner] imposed upon his will, what self-overcoming the artist had need of in the years of his development so as at last in his maturity to do with joyful freedom what was necessary at every moment of creation, no one will ever be able to calculate: it is enough if we sense in individual cases how, with a certain cruelty of decision, his music subordinates itself to the course of the drama, which is as inexorable as fate, while the firefly soul of this art thirsts to roam about for once unchecked in the freedom of the wilderness.<sup>100</sup> To 'give style' to one's character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weakness that their nature has to offer and then fit into an artistic plan until each appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a great mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of first nature removed ...<sup>101</sup>

Autonomous beings are for Nietzsche responsible for what they are and for what they do. But this self-responsibility is tied to training in oneself a master drive, *not* tied to endlessly calculating in order that one never cause any kind of harm or offence.<sup>102</sup> Marx thus has a greater faith in consciousness and the human ability to choose the best paths consciously, which can inversely be seen as what Nietzsche calls the 'slavish desire' to be free from constraint, which is not a

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p. 42.

<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche cited in Robert Pippin, 'How to Overcome Oneself: Nietzsche on Freedom', in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. p. 82.

<sup>101</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. p. 163.

<sup>102</sup> This does not mean the end of 'conscience', but rather it means decoupling the discharge of one's drives and 'bad conscience'. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 66. 'For too long, man has viewed his natural inclinations with an "evil eye", so that they finally came to be intertwined with "bad conscience" in him. A reverse experiment should be possible in principle—but who has sufficient strength?—by this, I mean an intertwining of bad conscience with perverse inclinations, all those other-worldly aspirations, alien to the senses, the instincts, to nature, to animals, in short all the ideals which up to now have been hostile to life and have defamed the world.' One would still require a conscience to keep oneself in check, but a conscience beyond good and evil, beyond guilt and morality.

‘noble’ predilection.<sup>103</sup> For Nietzsche, the best path is chosen when we do not think it through too much. A ‘free spirit’ has *made of themselves* something great, and a part of this greatness means acting well and confidently through *yielding* to deep inner promptings—the *right* deep inner promptings, having long ago been cultivated, at the same time starving (or overpowering) the wrong ones with discipline and strength of will. And of course there are no universals here. Nietzsche writes in several places that one man will be destroyed by the very same abstinence and temperance that makes another strong and focused.<sup>104</sup>

Again, Leiter would object to all of this and insist that it be noted that even if one became self-responsible, and cultivated a master drive, it would not be the result an ego willing. Rather, it would result from a blind drive becoming victorious<sup>105</sup>—as Nietzsche writes in *Daybreak*, comparing our psyches to a polyp (and *not* mischievously): ‘[a]nd as a consequence of this chance nourishment of the parts ... some of the polyp-arms of our being grow and others wither ... the whole, fully grown polyp will be something just as accidental as its growth has been.’<sup>106</sup> This thesis certainly agrees that not all people are people for Nietzsche. So too, it agrees

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<sup>103</sup> Pippin, ‘How to Overcome Oneself: Nietzsche on Freedom’. p. 70.

<sup>104</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*. p. 237. ‘If your fathers took to women and strong wine and boar swine, what would be the use of demanding chastity of yourself?’

<sup>105</sup> Leiter, ‘Nietzsche’s Theory of the Will’. p. 125.

<sup>106</sup> Brian Domino, ‘Polyp Man’, in *A Nietzschean Bestiary: Becoming Animal Beyond Docile and Brutal*, C. Acampora & R. Acampora (eds.), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.: USA, 2004. p. 43. Nietzsche is cited, as noted above. cf: Gemes, ‘Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual’. Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human* is cited, p. 35: ‘The fable of intelligible freedom ... Now one finally discovers that this nature, too, cannot be accountable, inasmuch as it is altogether a necessary consequence and assembled from the elements and influence of things past and present: that is to say, that man can be made accountable for nothing, not for his nature, nor for his motives, nor for his actions, nor for the effects he produces. One has thereby attained to the knowledge that the history of the moral sensations is the history of an error, the error of accountability, which rests on the error of freedom of will.’



that of course not every human being could choose to become a sovereign individual<sup>107</sup>—and, inversely, that surely some could not not choose it. There are two issues here: 1) that most of us do not choose very much of anything, and are formed as passively as the polyp is, whether that form be great or weak; and that 2) some of us have the audacity to try to become *more* than what we are, but not sufficient strength of will (or perhaps quality of material) to carry it off, having disregarded Nietzsche’s advice: ‘will nothing of yourselves that is contrary to probability!’.<sup>108</sup> But neither of these caveats are sufficient to deny on the whole that some degree of willing is *becoming* possible, and that some element of our personal telos—and the broader telos of the species—is (now) in our own hands.

In a discussion of these themes using different animals, Nietzsche writes that Christian punishment is based on the premise that to be a lamb is to be good/moral, and that it is sinful not to ‘choose’ to be lamb, even if one was *born* an eagle.<sup>109</sup> Nietzsche suggests that this punishment is thus *unjust*, in that the weak dress up their weakness, which they did not choose, into virtue—saying not ‘I cannot take revenge, and thus I hate it’, but rather, ‘it is unjust to take revenge, and thus, all should *choose* to abstain from it’—and blame the great, who did not choose to be great, for their qualities—saying (when nothing has been chosen) that the great have chosen to be sinful/evil when they were just being what they were, *as were* the weak. The embodiment of innate weakness is seen as a voluntary accomplishment; the embodiment of innate strength is seen as a failure of will. This thesis understands that for Nietzsche, most of us have limited or no control over what we are or what we do. Yet simultaneously, for this thesis,

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<sup>107</sup> Christine Swanton, *The Virtue Ethics of Hume and Nietzsche*, John Wiley & Sons: UK, 2015. p. 174. ‘Few are made for independence—it is a privilege of the strong. And who attempts it, having the completest right to it but without being compelled to, thereby proves that he is probably not only strong but also daring to the point of recklessness.’ Nietzsche is cited from *Beyond Good and Evil*.

<sup>108</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*. p. 237.

<sup>109</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 48.

Leiter overplays Nietzsche's fatalism, which is ultimately a prejudice, as is the prejudice of this thesis towards believing that *both* free and unfree will do not exist for Nietzsche. Nor does Leiter seem to recognise that for Nietzsche, the slave morality transvaluation of values is a disaster. Ancient Rome, for Nietzsche, would have produced magnificent descendants (who will now never be born) had it not been covertly assassinated,<sup>110</sup> but it is a disaster that has wrought profound changes on 'humanity'. It has not made human beings into the freely willing entities that they have come to believe that they already are, but it has wrought *actual* internality in 'man'.<sup>111</sup> It has made him more interesting, more evil, and bestowed upon him a *mortal* soul—an internality that is a sickness.<sup>112</sup> But this internality is also real, and makes us (some more than others) something more than bundles of drives, more than polyps, that, if it is not 'true humanity'—and it is not, in most cases, if one thinks that true humanity is something above the level of a sick, promise keeping animal—it is at least something that can be turned into real humanity, real sovereign individuality. It is 'the ripest fruit', for a few, some of whom will

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<sup>110</sup> Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*. Cambridge Edition. pp. 60–61: 'We just learned about a form of religious legislation whose goal was to "eternalize" the supreme condition for a thriving life, a great organization of society; Christianity, by contrast, saw its mission as bringing this sort of an organization to an end *because it led to a thriving life*. In this society, the returns of reason from the long ages of experiment and uncertainty should have been invested for the greatest long-term advantage, and the greatest, richest, most perfect crop possible should have been harvested: but quite the opposite happened here, the harvest was poisoned overnight . . . What stood as *aere perennius*, the *imperium Romanum*, the most magnificent form of organization ever to be achieved under difficult conditions, compared to which everything before or after has just been patched together, botched and dilettantish, those holy anarchists made a "piety" out of destroying "the world", which is to say the *imperium Romanum*, until every stone was overturned,—until even the Germans and other thugs could rule over it . . . Christianity was the vampire of the *imperium Romanum*,—overnight, it obliterated the Romans' tremendous deed of laying the ground for a great culture that had time.'

<sup>111</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 56–59.

<sup>112</sup> As pregnancy is a sickness. Ibid. p. 60. Nietzsche often emphasises that our times are preparatory/incubatory, a phase of development after which 'the tree actually bears fruit'. Ibid. p. 36. Marx and Nietzsche are again alike on this point, that among the most despicable traits of modern society is the fact that we stop, and congratulate ourselves on our autonomy before we have achieved it. It has become possible, but it is far from actual.

become this with no willing being involved, and some of whom will become this out of strength of will—the highest autonomy, for this thesis, simply *must* be chosen. This thesis would not deny that for Nietzsche the ego is a phantasm<sup>113</sup> and the free will is a joke.<sup>114</sup> He argues endlessly against the idea of the doer, but this does not mean that this phantom is not to some extent (be)coming true. If we can achieve the ‘falsification of the world through numbers’<sup>115</sup>—thinking, with Descartes, that we are making a ‘discovery’, and not *inventing/imagining something*—why can it not be accepted that a long and brutal process of *mnemonics* of punishment<sup>116</sup> can grant an animal some kind of power of ‘I will’? Nietzsche admits the future possibility of the sovereign individual—a being who can correctly say/has the right to say ‘I will’<sup>117</sup>—and it is strange to suggest that it would come completely out of nowhere, that *some increment* of ‘I will’ in lesser mortals like us is not a necessary preparatory step.<sup>118</sup> Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil*

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<sup>113</sup> Ryogi, ‘Nietzsche’s Conception of Nature from an East-Asian Point of View’, p. 201.

<sup>114</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 18: ‘That a theory is refutable is, frankly, not the least of its charms: this is precisely how it attracts the more refined intellects. The theory of “free will,” which has been refuted a hundred times, appears to owe its endurance to this charm alone—: somebody will always come along and feel strong enough to refute it.’

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>116</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 38.

<sup>117</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 91: ‘To teach humanity its future as its *will*, as dependent on a human will, to prepare for the great risk and wholesale attempt at breeding and cultivation and so to put an end to the gruesome rule of chance and nonsense that has passed for “history” so far (the nonsense of the “greatest number” is only its latest form): a new type of philosopher and commander will be needed for this some day, and whatever hidden, dreadful, or benevolent spirits have existed on earth will pale into insignificance beside the image of this type.’ Ibid. p. 107: ‘Greatest of all is the one who can be the most solitary, the most hidden, the most different, the person beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, the one with an abundance of will. Only this should be called *greatness*: the ability to be just as multiple as whole, just as wide as full.’

<sup>118</sup> There is a parallel in certain vulgar strains of Marxism, called ‘the extreme wing of the materialist conception’ which believe that no freedom *qua* volition can exist before completely blind and automatic forces dredge it into existence, though, as Engels and Kautsky both note, this manner of thinking was less common among ‘Marxists’ in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century than was often imagined. See: Engels, ‘Engels on Historical Materialism’, in *New International*, Vol. 1 No. 3, September–October 1934. p. 82: ‘If Barth imagines that we deny all and every retroaction of the political, etc., reflexes of the economic movement upon that movement itself, he is

very clearly that positive change will not happen, except sparsely and accidentally, unless we end ‘the gruesome rule of chance and nonsense’ and *will it*.<sup>119</sup> It is clear, on balance, that: a) the sovereign individual can say (and has the right to honestly say) ‘I will’; b) this ability cannot come out of nowhere, and thus more basic forms of partial ability to say ‘I will’ must prepare for its coming; and c) the sovereign individual—unless as a rare accident—cannot be the result of dice

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*simply contending against windmills*. He ought at least take a glance at Marx’s *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which almost restricts itself to the treatment of the special role that political struggles and events play, naturally within the sphere of their general dependence upon economic conditions; or in *Capital*, e.g., the section on the working day, where legislation, which certainly is a political act, operates so decisively; or the section on the history of the bourgeoisie (Chap.24). Or else, why are we struggling for the political dictatorship of the proletariat, if political power has no economic effects? Force (i.e., the state power) is also an economic power! cf: Karl Kautsky, ‘The Aims and Limitations of the Materialist Conception of History’, in *Social Democrat*, Vol. 6 No. 8, August 1902. pp. 242–248. <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1902/08/aims-limitations.htm>>. However, though both of these men *strenuously* object to any suggestion that the superstructure is *entirely* determined by the base, they just as *strenuously* argue that ‘in the final analysis’, economic concerns are what come first, and these economic concerns are basically forces of nature, so that Kautsky is happy to say: ‘let the great mass actions occur passively like a natural event’ (Sourced from Jacoby, ‘Critique of Automatic Marxism’ p. 125.), a sentiment that turns Marx into Hegel. But to return to this matter of autonomy being the result of anything but human *choice* in Nietzsche, we know from his works that one thing can beget its opposite. But we also know from Nietzsche that it is folly to believe that free human beings are the secret aim of the divine cosmos, that we can sit back and wait for clockworks to unwind and take us there. This thesis cannot accept—and this too is a prejudice—that freedom (except in a very rare instance) can be thrust upon human beings by random, automatic, arbitrary or pseudo-divine forces. That partial freedom can be an accident this thesis will accept, and this makes sense as in this partial accidental freedom (if we like it), we push against the prevailing unfreedom and try to make our freedom complete. That full unfreedom could exist right up until the moment that absolute freedom explodes into being this thesis cannot accept. One cannot accept this without accepting that the cosmos is sentient, a (Hegelian) sentiment that ‘negates’ any real understanding of Marx and Nietzsche. This is why Leiter has to see Nietzsche’s idea of the ‘sovereign individual’ as being an idiosyncratic slip in the *Genealogy of Morals* (though this ideal is mentioned often without being explicitly named in *Beyond Good and Evil* too), for if one accepts it, one must accept that partial freedom of will could/must be extant today, that partially achieved versions of sovereign individuality are paving the way for its later, full actualisation. The only way to thoughtfully believe in unfree will is to believe in it as Leiter does, as being an enteral constant, a position far superior to the automatic Marxists who believe that fully fledged freedom will be a gift of the (inhuman) forces of history—a spark in a fennel stalk, an idea cathected to by both Engels and Kautsky—despite both ostensibly rejecting ‘the extreme wing of the materialist conception of history’.

<sup>119</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 91

being thrown: it must be willed.<sup>120</sup> One could propose that Nietzsche wrote so much about the myth of the ego to some extent because all around him people were so sure that there was already an ego, and that it was master of its own house. Despite all of Nietzsche's polemics on this topic, it was *still* a shock when Freud repeated this sentiment from within a different field.

Autonomy for both Marx and Nietzsche is free self-creation. In Marx, autonomy is a voluntarist concept, in that the autonomous being *consciously* wills everything: it prefers deducing to guessing. For Nietzsche it is not, as the autonomous being trusts what rises up from within: it is happiest guessing (but it is not for that reason *determined*, and it can after much *hard work* in which 'intellect shows its directing hand', be called an 'I'). Aaron Ridley says of this state that in it, the cultural has become natural<sup>121</sup>—which is another way of saying that we have wrought for ourselves a higher nature. Ridley also discusses a different notion of modern freedom in Nietzsche, that of *lassier alter* or letting go, which is a modern fear of being *bound*.<sup>122</sup> With constant calculation and reckoning goes constant revaluation of one's circumstances, and one demands not to be tied to anything—to a partner, vocation, faith, tradition, sexual preference, gender increasingly, and soon, 'race' too will be tied to how one 'identifies'.<sup>123</sup> This, Nietzsche *refuses* to recognise as freedom. Rather, it is evidence that we are still slaves, and as slaves, we see freedom as being the absence of ostensible chains. To avoid abuses of language—Nietzsche

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<sup>120</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>121</sup> Aaron Ridley, 'Nietzsche's Intentions: What the Sovereign Individual Promises', in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. p. 194.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. pp. 187–189.

<sup>123</sup> From a Marxian perspective, one can look at how these traits, which we think we desire as ends in themselves, make us better worker/consumers. Under conditions of capitalism, we must equate freedom with being an atom, unbound to community, unbound to land, anomic: recognising only *contracts*, the contracts that a being who can only survive by working enters into. Marx, unlike Nietzsche, wants freedom *qua* *lassier alter*, but without the anomie—a big ask, at which Nietzsche scoffs and says, good luck with your wooden iron. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. pp. 216–217. It is not an accident that Marx called his theory communism. If he was not such a no-nonsense person, he might have called it individualist communism.

supports and does not support freedom—this thesis has said that Nietzsche advocates autonomy and eschews freedom. But we must remember that this is an artifice, and that Nietzsche calls freedom the opposite of *lassier alter*. Freedom as Nietzsche means it is yielding, to cultivated drives and to laws that can be felt but not conceptualised.<sup>124</sup> The autonomous being, as in Marx, is the master even of fate and nature.<sup>125</sup> He will keep his promises even if this means the destruction of himself or some extant law of nature. But he did not become autonomous, for Nietzsche, by ‘letting go’, by refusing all bonds and making every move into an isolated, calculated decision (as far as this is possible for creatures such as we are). She became so by yielding to the laws of her own nature, after perfecting the same. And this is thus different to autonomy in Marx, which has no fear of *hubris*, and demands that the *entirety* of one’s own nature is in one’s own hands. The theme of autonomy will be left here, to be taken up again in full at the end of chapters one and three. The sixth, penultimate part of this outline follows, introducing the role of the imagination in this thesis.

In this thesis the imagination will play the role that reason often plays in philosophical thinking: as the faculty that allows human beings to break networks of automatic, habitual, or otherwise determined behaviour and thinking.<sup>126</sup> The imagination *creates*, it is what makes *change* possible. This thesis will stress that the human imagination in Marx has a role to play (larger than one expects at the outset) in making human labour unique, i.e., *productive of objectivity*, and that the human imagination is needful as a weapon in the fight of living labour against dead labour: ‘... just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something

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<sup>124</sup> Op. cit. pp. 188–189.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p. 185.

<sup>126</sup> Reason, as Weber well knew, can play this role. But after it replaces affectual or traditional forms of social action, it is not long before we are ‘caged’ again. In Hegel, as will be discussed below, Reason cannot be freely used by human beings, and it is *anything* but creative.

that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past ...'<sup>127</sup> And this thesis will stress that in Nietzsche the human imagination *can* have a role in generating error—this time *smaller* than one would expect, in that Nietzsche nowhere writes that the original generation of the errors that are among ‘the conditions of our life’ are imaginative acts (Nietzsche is after all determined to destroy the idea that a proto-humanity with transcendental faculties stands at the beginning of history, saying no, it was just a *very poor* kind of ape<sup>128</sup>). Thus, the stress on the imagination in this thesis can be seen more as a shift of emphases than as a *major* departure from the two thinkers.<sup>129</sup> This thesis is not writing about the ‘idealist imagination’—a heterogeneous thing, boiled down for just a moment to its ‘family resemblances’—which creates or facilitates in the creation of a symbolic or apparent reality that is not *really real* (a reality of symbols, representations, appearances etc. that does not and cannot touch or reach the autonomous thing in itself, and is either based on imperfect intuition, via the imagination, or is purely self-referential). Nor is it writing of the old ‘materialist imagination’—again, an abuse of language, allowable only in the context of introducing some major ideas of the thesis—that gets in the way of seeing ‘the thing in itself’ exactly as it is, the trickster that good scientists know how to harness. Rather, it proposes a new materialist imagination, one that creates material reality itself, one that creates not images, but things—any

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<sup>127</sup> Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. p. 10.

<sup>128</sup> Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*. Cambridge Edition. p. 12.

<sup>129</sup> It is constructive that Nietzsche reminds us of our humble beginnings. This thesis cannot abide any kind of social contract theory where human beings exist prior to society, and create society for rational reasons (the desire to hold onto property, etc.) or with the innate faculty of reason, a faculty only made possible by the society that it is imagined to be the cause of. (All human traits, including consciousness, are in the beginning *social* for Marx and for Nietzsche: in both figures, society precedes humanity and all traits of humanity, language, consciousness, reason, etc.) It would be a mistake to ascribe an innate faculty of the Imagination to the beings who began—in the very beginning—to create reality. The imagination too is a part of becoming, it unfolds, it is social. Castoriadis of course would refute this: for him we are always already *born* mad, and with an imagination that is the source of everything, and which thus must be posited at/as the beginning of (being and) time.

and all possible real, objective things. In short, this thesis will argue that for Marx, labour creates objectivity, with *labour* being defined as purposive activity that *begins* in the imagination, and thus, the *work* of a bee is not *labour* and does not produce what this thesis is calling objectivity.<sup>130</sup> It will argue that for Nietzsche, *error* creates objectivity, though the imagination has a *highly complex relationship* with error (already alluded to above) that will be discussed at length. In the end, this thesis will conclude that there are problems in making the new materialist imagination responsible for the *originary existence* of reality, despite the strong relationship of the imagination with a) labour and b) error. Yet it will also conclude that it can unproblematically be made responsible for the world that we now live in—which in the course of becoming has become something other than whatever was at first crudely made. So too, it can be made responsible for creating a new world or worlds: that is, for directing the course of becoming in such a way that new meanings, forms and things will come into being, a new (material) world in which new modes of being human become possible.

The final part of this outline, to follow, is a note on Hegel, on the debt of this thesis to Hegel, and of the decision of this thesis to identify itself as post-Hegelian. For Marx and for Nietzsche, as stated earlier, the Hegelian meaning of ‘Being in itself’ *qua* ‘undetermined’ potentiality, strictly speaking, no-thing-ness, to some extent does hold—the materialist idea of ‘Being in itself’ *qua* extended, enduring, objective and autonomous substance, does not—for Marx in so far as the true or essential form or essence of ‘things’ is their ‘essential relations’; for Nietzsche in so far as things cannot become things without human influence.<sup>131</sup> For both, things cannot become things

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<sup>130</sup> György Lukács, ‘The Dialectic of Labour: Beyond Causality and Teleology’, in *Telos*, Fall, No. 6, 1970. p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, ‘Let us Beware’ and ‘The Origin of Knowledge’. pp. 109–112.



without their no-thing-ness being ‘negated’.<sup>132</sup> Despite this, following Karl Löwith, this thesis will situate Marx and Nietzsche as being definitively *post-Hegelian*<sup>133</sup>—*pace* Lenin’s often repeated 1914 argument that Marx had not ‘made Hegel revolutionary’, because Hegel was *already* so (Lenin had of course to justify spending so much of his time during the first world war reading *the* bourgeois, idealist philosopher).<sup>134</sup> Against Lenin, with Löwith,<sup>135</sup> this thesis will argue that firstly, for Hegel, only that which is rational can be actualised, which is why there are no accidents, only faster or slower progress towards a *covertly* predetermined goal. Much of Marxism has been infected with this same idea—the idea of automatic history is of course Hegelian, and that the mystic nuances of Hegel’s voluminous works are stripped away makes this *more so*, not less—but this thesis will argue that Marx and Nietzsche—Nietzsche especially—are not bound to this idea. For both, because of Marx’s ‘hidden imaginary’ and Nietzsche’s more visible imaginary, the terminus of the telos is ultimately up to us, the sea is open, and options can be generated. Secondly—and this is causally related to the first point—Hegel was content to let the times he found himself in unfold—and if not content, he believed that we could not do otherwise—he was, as Löwith noted, ‘settled in’—what *is* cannot be a mistake—it must be rational—*because* it is—a concept entirely different to Nietzsche’s *amor fati*, an exercise in avoiding *ressentiment* by

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<sup>132</sup> Though for Nietzsche and Marx, unlike in Hegel, the human influence that is behind any negation of no-thing-ness *is* human, and is not underlaid by the cunning of reason, which works through us, but cunningly, with the loosest reigns, letting people follow their own bent, but always, in the long game, ‘working out its own aims’ thorough our undirected activity.

<sup>133</sup> Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: the revolution in nineteenth-century thought*, Constable and Co.: USA, 1965. pp. 137–162; 175–231. For Löwith, Marx and Kierkegaard represent *one* complete break with Hegel, while Nietzsche represents another.

<sup>134</sup> Raya Dunayevskaya, ‘The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin’ in *Telos*, Spring, No. 5, 1970. p. 45.

<sup>135</sup> And Wellmer, who states that *only Engels* and the Marxian orthodoxy who follow Engels stay within the realm of Hegel via a simple inversion, the substitution of spirit for matter. Wellmer, ‘Communications and Emancipation’. p. 235. Wellmer states that in Marx’s own works Hegel’s core ideas are demystified and world history is reduced to being an emanation of concrete sensuous human activity. Engels *remystifies* the dialectic and reintroduces powers external to ‘man’ that rule ‘man’ *qua* natural forces. Ibid. pp. 231–237.

accepting that the past, and *especially* accidents in the past, cannot be changed. In opposition to Hegel's deterministic/fatalistic stance, Marx and Nietzsche both hated the 'bourgeois-Christian' times they were in, 'felt alien in them', and railed against them<sup>136</sup>—Marshall Berman reminds us that Marx loved capitalism, too, but as Nietzsche wrote, it is naive to think that love and hate are not intimately connected, and that great hate and great love are not the prime—perhaps only—preconditions for one another.<sup>137</sup> Finally, though this thesis will spend a great deal of time emphasising that for Marx, the world is our inorganic body, ultimately, for this thesis, neither Marx nor Nietzsche would imagine that the royal road to the world is through the self: the idea of self understanding being ultimately understanding of everything has an odour of mysticism for Marx and for Nietzsche. In Marx and Nietzsche there is no final coming together of self and world via some cognitive revelation that transforms and culminates everything: where we stop being the mass carrying *Geist* because we have become it. For Marx and Nietzsche, there is no Absolute. For both, *pace* Hegel, objective, created, reality, has achieved too much autonomy for us to ever 'come home' into an Absolute. And this is not a bad thing.

The culmination of these differences in Hegel on the one hand and Marx and Nietzsche on the other is that despite the fact that both Marx and Nietzsche strongly question the existence of human agency/the human subject—both write convincingly on the primarily determined nature of 'man' in a time very proud of human freedom, i.e., modernity—for both, the human telos is social/immanent (and thus, as already stated, the end of human history need not be in present in its beginning, the taste of the fruit present in the seed, etc., ), whereas, for Hegel, the

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<sup>136</sup> Gedö, 'Why Marx and Nietzsche'. p. 338.

<sup>137</sup> Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Verso: London & New York, 1983. pp. 87–129. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 18. 'But *that* is what happened: from the trunk of the tree of revenge and hatred, Jewish hatred—the deepest and most sublime, indeed a hatred which created ideals and changed values, the like of which has never been seen on earth—there grew something just as incomparable, a *new love*, the deepest and most sublime kind of love:—and what other trunk could it have grown out of? ...'

human telos is ultimately meta-social/transcendental<sup>138</sup>—as it is for Engels, too, but not for Marx, as this thesis will argue in full in time. It is *unequivocally* not for Nietzsche, and this is Nietzsche’s key criticism of Hegel, that his *Geist* was ultimately a last longing to recreate God in a more scientifically palatable form—another anthropomorphising of nature—a last-ditch attempt to argue that we are not alone and unguided, and that truth and meaning without a human signature *can* exist.<sup>139</sup> ‘Hegel in particular was a delayer [of atheism] par excellence, in accordance with his grandiose attempt to persuade us of the divinity of existence, appealing as a last resort to our sixth sense, “the historical sense”.’<sup>140</sup>

For Hegel the end of the human telos is culminated in the moment of the *understanding* of the processes of ‘Universal History’, freedom is human self consciousness—which is

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<sup>138</sup> Rundell, ‘Imaginary Turns in Critical Theory: Imagining Subjects in Tension’, in *Critical Theory After Habermas: Encounters and Departures*, Brill: Netherlands, 2004. p. 322. ‘In this strong metaphysical version, humankind becomes only a subordinate moment of *Geist*, which mediates its own teleological impetus through a spiral of self-consciousness. As has been stated elsewhere [in *Origins of Modernity*] “the teleological logos of reason is actually metasocial—society and the human life which encapsulates it are but intermediary stages or stations on the way to reason’s self-knowledge”.

<sup>139</sup> Of course in the writings of Hegel, the human signature is on *everything*. But that is the point, in that Hegel took the radical Enlightenment idea of making ‘man’ responsible for his own form, world, and fate, and then obliterated the radical nature of the proposition by making humankind’s self creation into an automatic process guided by a figure that hides in the scenery. Engels did the same, as already mentioned, happily replacing *Geist* with material/dialectal laws of history. Marx and Nietzsche put the radicality back into the idea that ‘man’ creates himself, but because both figures denied the existence of the human will so frequently, it is rarely seen that both are ‘Enlightenment’ men, if Enlightenment is understood in a very narrow fashion, as the genuine acceptance *and celebration* of the idea that ‘man’ is alone and unguided, and that, although our evolution has been a matter of chance so far, we can now direct it toward the best possible outcomes, that we must first determine for ourselves. Nietzsche’s point on Hegel is that Hegel champions old ideas in the most cunning manner possible, by taking the most prominent philosophical idea of the *present* epoch and then of secreting God in it, just as science had already done by insisting on seeing the Universe as an organism, hiding the pill in the sweetmeats. As God becomes gauche, those who love him, but who are not strong enough to resist current ideas, i.e., fashion, scramble to keep God—*qua* protector and guarantor of meaning—without ever mentioning his name—so to speak, because of course Hegel speaks of God all the time.

<sup>140</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. p. 219.

consciousness *not simply of self* but rather of self *qua* the process, self as present in ‘things’—‘things’ and ‘self’ being reciprocal co-creators, ultimately identical—and thus changes in ‘the world’ are moments of the deepening of knowledge—and thus it is a modality of understanding that engenders the finished, rational, material world, inhabited by/dialectically linked to finished, rational beings, free because spirit is realised in them.<sup>141</sup> The telos of *everything* is thus the movement of the process towards the creation of beings that can understand the process (which is self-understanding)—beings that become in the end self-aware fragments of the (dialectical) process, embedded in the Absolute/God/Truth—which both was and was not there (but really it was) at the beginning of the process—that it was and was not there is a part of the mysticism that Marx had no time for, Hegel’s idea of ‘a speculative, esoteric history [that] precedes and underlies empirical history.’<sup>142</sup> All ‘human activity’ in Hegel serves what is ultimately an external end—all human beings, no matter how great they think they are, or what lofty ideals they stand for, are in the end the unconscious servants of *Geist* in the unfolding of ‘Universal History’. In this conception time is one line/telos, and accidents cannot occur. *Geist*, the force behind the progress of history, is us—and is not us—as we will understand in the end, when we *become* the

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<sup>141</sup> Dunayevskaya, ‘The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin’. p. 45.

<sup>142</sup> Fromm, *Marx’s Concept of Man*. p. 10. For more on Marx’s demystification of the dialectic, see: Marx, quoted from the 1859 preface of his ‘Critical Revision of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right’. Sourced from: Mike Roth, ‘With Marx Against Marx? Histomat1 and Histomat2: An Alternative to Jurgen Habermas’ Theses Towards the Reconstruction of Historical Materialism’, in *Thesis Eleven*, Volume 3, 1981. p. 135. ‘My investigation culminated in the result that relations of right, as well as forms of state, are neither to be conceptualised out of themselves, nor out of the so-called universal development of the human spirit, but rather are rooted in the material relations of life whose totality ... Hegel, following the precedent of the English and the French in the 18th century, summarised under the name of “bourgeois society” ... that, however, the anatomy of bourgeois society is to be sought in political economy.’ Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 42. ‘First Premises of Materialist Method’. ‘The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.’

process (which we already are, and are not) *in actuality* thinking itself.<sup>143</sup> Marx had no interest in this particular telos. Marx wanted for human beings to be able to master, command and change the process, the process that is for Marx the material world. This is what thesis eleven means according to the reading of this thesis. For Marx and Nietzsche, the (immanent) telos of human development—and there is telos in Nietzsche too, as in Marx, for both the human telos is nothing really but a great bow under terrific tension, and a mark in the future where the arrow could (or should) land, under the right circumstances—is about the creation of real human subjects—as opposed to us, primarily determined *subjects* who believe that we are free. These fully autonomous subjects, who—in contrast to Hegel’s finished humankind—can do something *more than understand*, can be something more than backward-facing beings content to ‘get it’, content to be the process in its highest stage, the process fully and self-reflexively thought through, and now able to be ‘free’ (self-actualised) in a(n ethical) world (a State/Nation of Right

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<sup>143</sup> Charles Taylor shifts the emphasis, from human beings being products of *Geist* to *Geist* being a (retrospective/retroactive) human product or, as Rundell notes, for Taylor, ‘the ontological dialectic ... begins with no realised purpose, but finishes with one’. Rundell, ‘Imaginary Turns in Critical Theory: Imagining Subjects in Tension.’ p. 322. Perhaps (Taylor’s) position is better surmised as: *Geist* affects us profoundly but we in turn profoundly affect *Geist*—but where one puts the emphasis ultimately does not matter, as in Hegel, if one ever stands on him with both feet and asks for a straight answer, one will never get one, only the crooked answer of a mystic, that in the Absolute understanding of things, both and neither are always already true at the same time. Though the emphasis does not ultimately matter—being true to Hegel means to some extent never ‘making sense’, refusing to ever commit to one side of either/or, a stance that is infuriating, but that one must respect—this thesis will follow Marx and Nietzsche, in reading Hegel as a figure for whom *ultimately*, in this particular chicken and egg question, *Geist* comes first, as it does explicitly in his lectures on ‘Universal History’ and ‘Universal World History’. For this thesis rendering Hegel a determinist is a move that both falsifies Hegel and lays him bare: determinism is the truth under his screen ‘truth’ of always already both and neither, made by us *and* not made by us, there from the beginning *and* an artifice added retroactively, from his truth that is literally nonsense, except for those who wish to sit with it for so long that it becomes sense—something that the author has no wish to do: not because it is incorrect to do so, but because of a prejudice toward less unwieldy sense.

and Law) not too far from our own/Prussia. And if they are not content—in the Hegelian version—well, no matter, for this is where they are going, whether they like it or not.

In Hegel's theory of self-actualisation, we must think—or, as a tool, be thought—our way to freedom. Marx and Nietzsche both privilege practice over theory as a means to effect change, and understood that how we act in daily life is more transformative than anything we think—they both understood that material conditions determine what we think more than what we think determines the material—that ultimately deeds come first, and that what happens in the narrow confines of conscious human thought comes *after*, not before.<sup>144</sup> Though this will all be disputed within the body of the thesis, we can say it clearly here: for Marx, only revolutionary *praxis* can change anything—*after material change*, everything that is thought and can be thought is altered; for Nietzsche, if you want to become great, what you *think* means *nothing*, and what you *do* every day (and what you do not do) means everything—it is one of the few Nietzschean facts that the self is determined by what we do and do not do, *not*, as was hitherto thought, that what we do and do not do is determined by the self.

Both Marx and Nietzsche are also forward looking, not backward looking. Hegel too, of course, desired a great future, but as Marx complained, it was not the result of the '*dissolution of the hereto existing world order*.'<sup>145</sup> One might rebut that Marx's communism is naught but the culmination of capitalism, that Marx too knocks down 'the house but not the pillars'—an accusation he levelled at Hegel/Hegelians—that Marx too was 'settled in'. But for Marx, and this

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<sup>144</sup> This is the point of greatest tension in Nietzsche, that a) what we call things determines, in the end, what they are, and that b) forces of the world—which include the forces of the body—provide the blows that make all animals dance, and we are false to ourselves when we fashion a 'conscious motivation' for the dance after the fact, and then surreptitiously reverse the order. It is almost as great as the tension in Marx between history as being the sum of all human activity as they strive toward what they want, and all human activity as being motivated by the obstinate materiality of the base, what people do, think, and are.

<sup>145</sup> Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction', in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, Penguin: UK, 1992. p. 256.

is a subtle but vital difference, it is not the case that philosophy—the ‘thinking of the world’, the kind of thought that concrete human beings can partake in, as opposed to the depersonalised ‘thinking’ of *Geist*, which comes first and is the slow fount of everything—appears only after reality has cut and dried, after ‘... actuality has gone through its formative process and attained its completed state ...’.<sup>146</sup> One cannot possibly get further from the spirit of Marx than to state that philosophy comes too late, with a weary look, a slow step, and a bucket of grey paint.<sup>147</sup>

This thesis will argue that for Marx—though he has frequent partial Hegelian lapses<sup>148</sup>—as for Nietzsche, ‘[o]ur ships can embark again, and go forth to every danger. Every hazard is again permitted the enquirer. Perhaps there never was so open a sea.’<sup>149</sup> Radically changing the world (a world that wants to unfold on its own terms, despite it being a human ‘creation’, a world that has a great determining influence on us) is not easy—but that is the point of philosophy.

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<sup>146</sup> Hegel, ‘Preface’, in *Philosophy of Right*, p. 23.

<sup>147</sup> Hegel’s position is a strange precursor to analytic philosophy—strange because no analytic philosopher would gladly call the prime obscurantist Hegel a grandfather—in that it too forbids anything but the exploration of the actual (the rational) and has severe contempt for any theory of the beyond that uses the human imagination to think about what we might want—what *ought* to be—as opposed to what simply is, and what is simply, inexorably, coming. Paul Lorenzen saw dialects as being the opposite of science (*The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Harper Torchbooks: USA, 1976. p. xxix.), but they are one in their shared contempt for the imagination.

<sup>148</sup> The preface of a *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* is the most significant one, though the rest of the text recovers, the *Communist Manifesto* is peppered with them, as is the *German Ideology*, the *Grundrisse*, and anywhere where he writes about phases of development. Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*, p. 21. ‘Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.’

<sup>149</sup> Cohen, S., ‘Preface’, in *Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge and Critical Theory: Nietzsche and the Sciences I*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, B. Babich, & R. Cohen (eds.), Springer Science Business Media, B.V., UK: 1999. p. xviii.

That for Marx, what was coming ‘automatically’ was also ‘what we wanted’/what ought to be—in that we a) have radical needs—needs that can be thought in a given world but not actualised in it, that we b) make history and direct it towards the realisation of these needs, that we c) struggle against the history we have already made as it achieves autonomy in our alienation, and that we d) are often defeated and overridden by ‘external’ laws, and that, finally, e) sometimes in defeat we get what we wanted anyway—is a source of no small amount of tension. However, in the reading of this thesis, we are not, in Marx, without resources in the fight against our own ghosts, and what we want—as human beings and not as inhuman beings, as one element or another of the structure personified—does win out in the end: we can change the process we are embedded in, both what it is and where it is going. Even Engels admitted this, though to a small extent, very cautiously, and usually in response to claims made after Marx’s death that Marx himself believed that human activity could achieve zero real effect on our destiny.<sup>150</sup> For Nietzsche too, human beings can influence the course of history. Homer did, for Nietzsche, for the better, just as Socrates, Plato and Jesus did for the worse. This thesis too is post-Hegelian, for if one can only make actual the rational, the imagination can only be, as it was ultimately for Hegel, random opinion, a dark night, a rejection of the actual and the rational, ‘the errors of a one-sided and empty ratiocination’,<sup>151</sup> the anti-*Geist*, the foe of the cunning of reason (and the foe of freedom), an inevitable loser. There will be more on exactly what Hegel wrote on the imagination—it does vary considerably over his life—in chapter two of this thesis.

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<sup>150</sup> Engels, ‘Engels on Historical Materialism’. p. 82. Of course Hegel too admits that the laws of right, unlike the laws of nature, are ‘laid down’ by men. But as this thesis has already argued and will continue to argue, what we can do/make/create for Hegel is always circumscribed by the cunning of reason, which is more cunning than we are. The cunning of the imagination, on the other hand, can be our tool, and can free us from being the tools of the cunning of the reason.

<sup>151</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*. p. 20.



### *The relevance of the thesis and of the primary figures of the thesis*

The relevance of Marx and Nietzsche in the estimation of this thesis is tied to the interpretation of both figures being put forward here. As appraised here, both are more relevant today than they were in their own epochs, in particular, Marx's frequently neglected insistence that we will remain unfree until we see that the forces of history, fate, the world and nature, are all reified human activity with a mere semblance of being autonomous and 'above us'—until we overcome alienation, as Marx defined it<sup>152</sup>—and Nietzsche's ideas about the slave morality, especially the idea that the good of the many and the development of the species are two antithetical

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<sup>152</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. Marx is cited from *The German Ideology*. p. 43: 'The social power, i.e. the multiplied productive force, which arises through the cooperation ... of different individuals, as it is determined within the division of labour, appears to these individuals, *since their cooperation is not voluntary but naturally given* ... not as their own united power but as an alien force existing outside of them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a specific series of phases and stages independently of, nay even governing, the will and the action of men. This [is] "alienation"—to express ourselves in a manner comprehensible to the philosophers ... The producer is therefore controlled by the product, the subject by the object, labour which is being realized by the labour realized in an object ... The relationship of labour to the conditions of labour is turned upside down, so that it is not the worker who makes use of the conditions of labour, but the conditions of labour make use of the worker ...' cf: Marx, *Capital*. pp. 171–176. cf: Marx, *Capital III*. pp. 958–959. In all these quotes it is clear that the primary aim of rationalised production processes is to overcome alienation, to unmask fate, history and the 'natural world' itself as displaced human relations/activity, past human action with a false semblance of 'objective reality'. It *is* of course objective reality, but objective reality in a special sense: objective reality *qua* human product, reality *qua* 'relations', a product that is neither *thing*—in the vulgar sense of the world—nor *idea*, but rather an objective creation. Any 'invisible hands', be they laws of God, laws of fate, laws of history, laws of the market or the cunning of reason, are *foes of freedom* in Marx's mind. Castoriadis took from Marx the desire for human beings to stop being ruled by their own sensuous relations as if these relations were autonomous things, the desire, in short, for the dead (*qua* instituted social imaginary significations) to stop ruling us and for the living to finally have a turn (*qua* the creation of an autonomous democracy where the living speak, judge and choose, and institute the laws that they decide upon). That is, Castoriadis too despises invisible hands and demands that human beings consciously direct the course of history.

propositions<sup>153</sup>—reading Nietzsche, we see that utilitarian ideals on the whole reduce the quantity of pain and suffering in the (Western) world, at the cost that we are all crippled by petty pains and sufferings, reduced in quality, and bereft of every human trait and attribute that is capable of advancing the species—indeed, when the slave morality takes hold, we learn to hate the very idea of ‘advancement’, and learn to love its opposite, the ‘mission’ of the protection and worship of the worst specimens of humanity extant, of life not fit to live.<sup>154</sup> Both of these issues

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<sup>153</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*. p. 56: (‘*Genealogy of Morals*’ in a footnote here cites the Vintage Edition. ‘*Genealogy of Morality*’ refers to the Cambridge Edition, which translates the title thus.) ‘The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the few are opposite viewpoints of value: to consider the former *a priori* of higher value may be left to the naiveté of the English biologists.’ cf: Jonny Anomaly, ‘Nietzsche’s Critique of Utilitarianism’, in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Vol. 29, 2005. p. 8: ‘[H]ow can your life, the individual life, receive the highest value, the deepest significance? How can it be least squandered? Certainly only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable exemplars, and not for the good of the majority’. Nietzsche is quoted from *Schopenhauer as Educator*.

<sup>154</sup> Nietzsche has an idea of advancement but not one of improvement, and goes to great pains to differentiate himself from the ‘improvers of man’. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, Cambridge Edition. p. 71: ‘The last thing I would promise would be to “improve” humanity.’ For adherents of the slave morality, it is *advancement* that is suspect, linked to: a) a (high) culture that not everybody can partake in (reason enough for them to hate it); and b) eugenics and totalitarianism. But *improvement*, on the other hand, is necessary as a part of ‘progress’ toward a society in which human beings learn non-violence. Nietzsche despised the growing nationalist movement in Germany and was distraught by both his sister and Wagner’s involvement in that world. ‘Advancement’ in Nietzsche’s vocabulary is divorced from *both* Christian ‘improvement’ (for Nietzsche, a project of the domestication of man) *and* (proto-Nazi) eugenics (a project of ‘breeding’ a superman as one breeds fine bulls). The great ‘uncanny’ problem of the age, for Nietzsche, is the damage done by both of these species of ‘improvers of man’. *Twilight of the Idols*, Cambridge Edition. pp. 185–186. Nietzsche finds socialists to be ‘improvers of man’ in the same vein: ‘The total degeneration of humanity down to what today’s socialist fools and nitwits see as their “man of the future”—as their ideal—this degeneration and diminution of humanity into the perfect animal (or, as they say, into man in a “free society”) this brutalising process of turning humanity into stunted little animals with equal rights and equal claims is no doubt *possible*!’ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 92. The point here is that those who hate ideas of the *advancement* of humankind (again, in Nietzsche this has *nothing* to do with Nazism, as the Nazis are *improvers*, in the same basket as Christians, Democrats, and Socialists) believe in their own brand of progress, and do not believe it to be a regression, as Nietzsche does. They link *their* brand of improvement with progress: ‘“we want the day to come when there is *nothing more to fear*!” The day to come—the will and way *to that day* is now called “progress” everywhere in Europe.’ Ibid. p. 89. Nietzsche firmly believed that we can and must cling to the idea of humankind becoming

are especially timely today, and together constitute the greatest problem of our time, that our interests are *either* the interests of capital *or* the interests of the slave morality, so that all one hears today is one voice or the other, the voice of capital yelling ‘jobs and growth’, the voice of the slave morality yelling back ‘mercy and equality’, with neither aware that both are petrified voices of the dead, allowing no space for life itself—or voices advantageous to life—to speak, life in the character of the living imagination, which would provide its own solutions, if only the dead voices could be unveiled as such.<sup>155</sup> Rome is dead. Rome remains dead. We have killed it. The fight is now between capital and Judea,<sup>156</sup> though living human beings think they are fighting.<sup>157</sup>

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greater, and feared that we would not reach our ‘*highest potential and splendour*.’ Stepping away from ideas of *advancement* is an attribute of the last man, who is either: a) modest and timid, and dreams only of peace, rest and freedom from suffering; or b) immodest and dull of mind, and thinks that he is already the zenith. But the greatest mistake one can make in reading Nietzsche is to think that advancement has anything to do with breeding (though he uses this term very occasionally in connection with advancement) or domestication, which are for Nietzsche both forms of ‘improvement’—that is, of producing ‘an abased (more specifically a diminished) form of humanity, a mediocrization and depreciation of humanity.’ Ibid. p. 91. Just as Hegel keeps the word Enlightenment but turns it into its opposite, so do the ‘improvers’ of man. We will return to Nietzsche’s concept of advancement later in the thesis.

<sup>155</sup> And these dead voices are, Marx and Nietzsche remind us, drenched in blood, despite not being ‘alive’. Marx, *Capital*. pp. 925–926: ‘If money, according to Augier, “comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek,” capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt.’ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 41: ‘In *this* sphere of legal obligations, then, the moral conceptual world of “debt”, “conscience”, “duty”, “sacred duty”, has its breeding ground—all began with a thorough and prolonged bloodletting, like the beginning of all great things on earth. And may we not add that this world has really never quite lost a certain odour of blood and torture?’

<sup>156</sup> Judea does not refer to any actual place. What is being said here has as little to do with actual Jewish people as it does with Romans. This thesis is referring to Nietzschean symbolism, his idea that when Rome fell, this represented the victory of the slave morality. It would be a mistake to suppose that the slave morality means Jewish morality: in any work of Nietzsche’s or in this thesis. Any person who believes in mercy and equality is an adherent of the slave morality.

<sup>157</sup> This statement may appear to contradict the broadly non-structuralist/non-deterministic stance of this thesis, but it does not. This thesis will never deny the power of structure over us, especially today. What it does deny is that the structure *must* dominate us, that the only possible kind of humanity is humanity subject to structures. For Marx, human alienation is relative and shifting, and it is seen as a problem not a necessity—a lesson this thesis has learned from him.

A reading of Marx and Nietzsche together allows for an analysis of our times in this vein, though this thesis will only gesture towards such a politics. As worthy as such a politics could be, in this document, except as a minor theme, it would be a distraction from the main focus, which is to study a similarity in Marx and Nietzsche regarding the nature of reality, and then to examine—and extend—the role of the human imagination within—and beyond—this similarity.

### *The role of each of the two primary figures within the thesis*

Both Marx and Nietzsche have a clear role in section one of this thesis. It is, after all, an exploration *of a similarity in the works of Marx and Nietzsche*, in which we learn that all objectivity is produced, and create a base in which the second section can do its work: to propound a theory of the materialist imagination. Marx and Nietzsche each contributes something significant to the theory of the objective *qua* product, in that each has a different position on the manner of the creation of the objective and the ontological status of this product. Beyond this, the justification for having Nietzsche play so large a role in this thesis might not be clear. This thesis will now make explicit the reasons for including Nietzsche, despite being somewhat less adept with the related scholarship.

Firstly, Nietzsche can be argued to be central to this project, in that the theory of the materialist imagination is in one sense an experimental extrapolation of some thoughts explored in the aphorism: ‘on the origin of the religious cult’.<sup>158</sup> Secondly, unless one is trained by Nietzsche to understand the slave morality, one will assume that its values are simply correct/neutral and will assume that others share these values without really interrogating this closely. If one does not expect to see the slave morality in Marx’s works, one will not find it

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<sup>158</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 63–65. How this is so will be made clear in chapter five.

anywhere in the actual content—one will find, rather, active hatred of it, especially in its more formalised incarnations: egalitarianism and utilitarianism.<sup>159</sup> It is easy to miss that when Marx points out ‘unfairness’, this is not because his heart is bleeding, but because he wishes to make it clear that when the bourgeoisie claim that capitalism is ‘best for everybody’ (as today neo-liberals still do—tax breaks for the rich especially are said to benefit everybody), they are lying through their teeth. Marx wants *only* the annihilation of the wretched and the stupid, directly in the case of the *lumpenproletariat*, that form of life not fit even to be abused by capital, and a more complex destruction(/*aufhebung*) is desired in the case of the proletariat *qua* their own radical/revolutionary self overcoming—*qua* the partial overcoming of estrangement.<sup>160</sup> What is desired is *not* more

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<sup>159</sup> Marx’s early works in particular are marked by a fear of a theory of communism in which the aim of labour would be seen to be the production of that which the human body needs to *survive*, so that the success of communism would be measured by how well the bread and blankets had been distributed. That the banal needs of the body are met is not the goal of communism. Rather, Marx writes in several different ways in different places that the goals of communism are not possible until the needs of the body *do not need to be considered*. On the homogenisation of need, and Marx’s fear of the same, see Agnes Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*, Allison & Busby Ltd.: UK, 1978. pp. 56–58. One cannot produce freely until the production of necessities no longer takes up all of our time and energy. Thus, bread and blankets are the start, not the end. Marx said ‘I am not a Marxist’ in this context, against those who attached his name to what he himself called ‘crude communism’: *vis.*, egalitarian communism.

<sup>160</sup> Márkus uses the term ‘alienation’ to describe two phenomena: 1) describing a gap between human essence and human existence—objective and subjective development; and 2) the phenomena described above as human beings mistaking their own congealed activity for something autonomous and independent of them. This thesis finds it less complex to consistently label each phenomena with one term, calling a gap between essence and existence estrangement and calling losing control of one’s creations alienation. Márkus is following Marx in that Marx uses the terms *Entfremdung* (usually translated as estrangement) and *Entäusserung* (usually translated as alienation) fairly inconsistently and interchangeably. This thesis finds it better to apply one term to one concept, even if this means departing from Marx in his own usage. Both terms are tied to the moral general term *Vergegenständlichung* or objectification. *Verdinglichung*, or reification, will be tied (following Márkus) to situations in which the universal necessity of labour is confused with a socially specific form of labour, as in the case of the capitalist who assumes that having ‘jobs’ is the only possible way we can survive. This thesis will be especially conscientious to use the term alienation in one sense only in order to make sure that this phenomena is understood. As Márkus notes, many ‘Marxists’, in seeing ‘man’ as being subordinate and inferior to ‘the laws of history’ (laws radically independent of any and all human activity—even as being ‘radically

alms and comfort for those who are not surviving on their own, because they are either: a) ‘unemployed’: for some reason unfit for exploitation, and thus denied the use of the means of production *even on unfavourable terms*; or b) ‘under-employed’: taken in by an abusive labour process—in which life is made into the means of life—but not quite, so that the work that one finds does not cover the ‘cost of living’.<sup>161</sup> These people have *no place* in Marx’s plan: when the *workers* overcome their own class position they will overcome *all* class positions, and the non-working classes *both above and below* the workers will simply cease to be. Wretched people sicken Marx as much as they sicken Nietzsche, and keeping them alive in a broken system is of no interest to Marx. *Workers* interest Marx, and they *only* interest him because in his (dialectical) understanding, being *abused* by capital makes one eligible to become free and universal. Marx was no Christian who enjoyed washing dirty feet. There is not even a trace of altruism in Marx, for *in*

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dissolved’ by history) are thoroughly alienated, and Marx himself, and Marx’s goals (human autonomy, for one) are not *and cannot be* seen by them. As this thesis will later discuss, Marx did not: a) cross his fingers and hope that the laws of history were taking us somewhere good; b) imagine that the laws of history were enacting a transcendent goal *through us*; or c) forbid himself and others from thinking useless questions about what *ought* to be. Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. pp. 1–2. To return to the question of terminology, the idea of *loss* of humanity into the world will be tied to estrangement, in that this loss of humanity into an external world creates a gap between objective and subjective development, between what one is and what one could be. Estrangement will also be deemed *necessary* (as Marx fairly consistently accepts after 1844) as, in moderation, it is *beneficial* to ‘man’ and a part of all processes of growth, provided that every loss is later recouped. Alienation will be more tied to a *misrecognition* of the humanity in *seemingly autonomous* objects (a wilful blindness toward it) and to human slavery to human products—this is at certain times in history needful, but *today*, it is not necessary and it is ultimately pernicious. All of these concepts are interrelated, but as estrangement is necessary and helps us develop, and as alienation is unnecessary—today—and makes freedom impossible, it is important to make sure that the differences between each term is understood. Misrecognition (of reality) also leads to the loss of crystallised human energies, and thus this means of labelling is imperfect. Nonetheless, the above is the best demarcation this thesis could devise in order to facilitate to an understanding of some very difficult content in Marx’s *oeuvre*.

<sup>161</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 71. Marx and Nietzsche both despise charity. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. p. 68: ‘I, however, am a bestower. Gladly I bestow as friend to friends. But strangers and poor people may pluck the fruit from my tree themselves: that way there is less shame.’ Marx’s best polemic against the slave morality is in *The Communist Manifesto*. pp. 80–81. It will be quoted in the Marx chapter.

*his eyes, the proletarian revolution was going to free him as well.* Thirdly, Nietzsche is a better writer than Marx. Nietzsche, in explaining his own concepts of autonomy and the creation of the world by human beings, explains Marx's concepts of the same better than Marx ever does.<sup>162</sup> Of course, one has to make adjustments in order for Nietzsche's ideas to illuminate Marx's, but there is a definite affinity between the two figures in that both hated metaphysics, and both hated 'modern man'. Both worked tirelessly towards the overcoming of 'modern man', this being that is so small and yet who thinks itself so large, this being that thinks itself finished, but that is for both Marx and Nietzsche a mere *bridge* to something else: a new being that will *either* be a great leap forwards or a great slide backwards. Both thus took the idea of evolution very seriously, the evolution of 'man' as well as the evolution of reality under human influence.<sup>163</sup>

Thus, it can be said that the role of each of the primary figures in this thesis is well justified. Both contribute to an understanding of the world as being a real product; both are materialists, but still believe that imaginative creation is possible. And finally, though Marx is arguably the more relevant figure, given that he more explicitly and loquaciously speaks of the direct human creation of the real/objectivity, Nietzsche: a) as explored above, can aid one in the

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<sup>162</sup> The one inverse is that Marx describes the conditions of the death of God more clearly than Nietzsche. Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 110: 'What becomes of Fama alongside Printing House Square?'

<sup>163</sup> Reinhart Maurer described the whole history of the Frankfurt School as a self-contradictory attempt to use some perspectives of Nietzsche to update the 'old fashioned' elements in Marx. Anthony Stephens, 'Nietzsche: the Resurrection of Parts', in *Thesis Eleven*, No. 13, 1986. p. 106. Stephens quotes Maurer. 'The Neo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School tried to make old fashioned Marxism more appropriate to existing problems by taking over some of Nietzsche's perspectives—and thus it became self-contradictory.' For this thesis, although Adorno and Horkheimer do have a Nietzschean moment in Los Angeles in 1942 (see: Rolf Wiggershaus, 'The Frankfurt School's "Nietzschean Moment"', in *Constellations Volume 8*, No 1, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: UK & USA, 2001), it is incorrect to posit that Frankfurt School thinkers spent much more than a moment applying Nietzsche to Marx. *Freud* certainly was used in the manner that Maurer suggests, but not Nietzsche. A better discussion of the influence of Nietzsche on the Frankfurt School can be found in Martin Jay, 'The Genesis of Critical Theory', in *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950*, University of California Press: USA, 1996. pp. 41–85.

reading of Marx; and b) though Marx writes on the creation of objectivity, his created objectivity never attains the solidity that Nietzsche's—in the reading of this thesis—does. This will be a major theme henceforth. There is thus an argument to be made for Nietzsche being the more relevant of the two figures. On balance, it can be said that both are equally relevant to the arguments of this thesis, though the Marx chapter comes first as primarily an issue of chronology.

***The position of the thesis in the extant literature and the original contribution of the thesis***

This thesis should chiefly be seen as contributing to a growing body of literature on the imagination. The last two years in particular have seen an upsurge in this literature.<sup>164</sup> The original contribution of this thesis is in developing a new materialist theory of the imagination. This is a *prima facie* paradoxical idea, one that is defined largely by its respect for and objections to the idea of the radical/creative imagination that Castoriadis created through his public interpretations of Aristotle and Kant, his more private engagement with Fichte, and his strange disavowal and rejection of Marx which in the understanding of this thesis ends up being very close to Marx.

Secondarily, this thesis should be read as contributing to a certain school of 'Western Marxist' literature: specifically that of the so-called Budapest School. Everything interesting that this thesis writes about Marx comes from György Márkus and Agnes Heller, as well as from John Rundell who learned a great deal from both. That reality is for Marx hypostatised human

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<sup>164</sup> A few recent titles are: Bottici, *Imaginal politics*. Kathleen Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary*, Routledge: London & New York. 2015. Yasmin Solomonescu, *John Thebwall and the Materialist Imagination*, Palgrave Macmillan: UK, 2014.



activity is stated perhaps most comprehensively in Márkus' work *Marxism and Anthropology*. The best work in this thesis is a creative reproduction of Márkus' reading of Marx. The disagreement that this thesis will later have with Castoriadis regarding Marx—that Marx is composed of two antithetical ideas, each of which basically negates the other, an idea of freedom and an idea of determinism<sup>165</sup>—comes directly from Agnes Heller's book *The Theory of Need in Marx*. However, Márkus also strenuously resists the splitting of Marx into two in his *Marxism and Anthropology*, critiquing one-sided deterministic anti-humanism on the one hand, and one-sided humanist philosophical anthropology on the other.<sup>166</sup> Both Heller and Márkus recognise that Marx was interested in the strain between human beings and human interests—on the one side—and the structures that human beings largely unintentionally create in their daily metabolism with the world (the structures that *are* the world, in the reading of Marx of this thesis), and the interests that these seemingly autonomous entities develop—on the other. As Márkus writes, humanism becomes obsessed with a 'transcendental' human essence that is 'an abstraction inherent in each individual',<sup>167</sup> and thus is not the human essence as Marx theorised it—the ensemble of the social relations, external to any given human being but not for that reason abstract, as it is concrete, historical, tied to the activity of the individuals involved, and mutable<sup>168</sup>—and anti-humanism forgets that the laws of history are a part of the ensemble of the social relations, of the essence of 'man', *qua* the structures that she has created by labouring. This splitting on the one hand

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<sup>165</sup> This thesis will also be somewhat more sympathetic to Castoriadis' reading than Márkus or Heller would potentially be. It will reject Castoriadis' idea that Marx's determinism negates his voluntarism on the whole, following Márkus and Heller. However, unlike Márkus and Heller, this thesis will accept that there are what we will call Hegelian lapses of strong, metaphysical determinism in Marx that *do*, if taken seriously, negate all ideas of human freedom. Until later in this chapter, where it will become necessary to acknowledge Marx's lapses into strong determinism explicitly, we will work with Marx's other primary model of determinism, the one that, as Márkus and Heller see, works *with and not against* the idea of a self-determining humanity.

<sup>166</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. pp. 1–2.

<sup>167</sup> Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, William Collins Sons & Co: UK, 1969. p. 285.

<sup>168</sup> Loc. cit.

declares that the essence of ‘man’ is *not* the product of his own activity—as for example in Erich Fromm’s (otherwise excellent) reading of Marx—and on the other hand declares that the world and its laws are *not* products of human activity—as for example in Engels’, Plekhanov’s and Althusser’s interpretations of Marx.<sup>169</sup> Once this splitting is complete, three of Marx’s most important ideas are destroyed: 1) the world is a product of/is human activity, and therefore, any perceived problems with the world can be changed by radically changing the modality of human activity; 2) the human being is a product of the process whereby she makes the world, including the contents and quality of human consciousness, and her needs and character traits; and 3) the world and human beings are united.<sup>170</sup> As Márkus writes, one can only think of sensuous, acting

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<sup>169</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. pp. 1–2.

<sup>170</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology: the concept of ‘human essence’ in the philosophy of Marx*, modern-Verlag: Australia, 2014. p. 88. ‘The reality ... that communism creates is the actual basis for making it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals ... insofar as this reality is only a product of the preceding interaction of individuals themselves. Communists in practice treat the conditions created until now by production and interaction [i.e., the world] as inorganic conditions, without imagining, however, that it was the plan or the density of previous generations to provide them material and without believing that these conditions were inorganic for the individuals creating them.’ This is a new translation of a passage from *The German Ideology*, and for this thesis, it is a moment when Marx’s theory is laid bare. The world is a treasure trove, as it is for Nietzsche, but it was not built for us and the makers were not aware that they were creating it (they just thought that they were living). We are alone, there is nothing natural or supernatural—i.e. the conditions of our lives are neither independent of us *qua* ‘naturally occurring conditions’, nor independent of us *qua* the product of a god or divine ancestor—and the conditions around us are accidental. The world is an objective product, and becoming human/autonomous requires that we accept this and, as Nietzsche writes, end the reign of history as the ‘gruesome rule of chance and nonsense’. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 91. That is, our real social life conditions are accidental (because nobody understands the processes of their creation), but they do not need to remain so. Marx is saying above that those in the past made the world without being aware that they were doing so. If we are to stop being tools of the extant world, as all past peoples have been, we need to see the world as it is, and begin to understand our role in the creation of it, a role that this thesis studies in the light of the human imagination. The problem with modernity, for Marx, is that we, not having mastered our own products (most of which we refuse to accept as being human products, compounding the problem), must serve them. Thus, all ingenuity must backfire, as we create stronger and more elaborate products, and instantly fall prey to them. ‘How is it that their relations become independent of them, that the forces of their life become overly powerful ... against them?’ (Marx quoted in Márkus, *Marxism*

individuals and of the forces/laws studied in the materialist conception of history as distinct entities if one artificially abstracts one from the other. One may do so in order to study some feature of one or the other, but one must remember that this splitting is an artificial abstraction.<sup>171</sup>

Both Heller and Márkus understand that it is somewhat wrongheaded to split Marx in two in order to render him contradiction-free. These thesis agrees with Márkus and Heller that each half of Marx, attempting to stand alone, is in fact more full of contradiction than is the whole, if the whole is properly understood.<sup>172</sup> What is more, in the process of multiplying the contradictions in a spurious splitting, all of Marx's key insights are lost and buried, replaced on the one hand with a fictional Marx for whom the structure does not exist, and on the other, a fictional Marx for whom agentic human beings do not exist.<sup>173</sup> Clearly Márkus and Heller

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*and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 45.) There are more quotes substantiating this reading of Marx in chapter one, but we can note here briefly the difference between Marx and Adorno on this point, which is significant. Adorno says (roughly) that all attempts at world mastery must backfire on us. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso: London & New York, 2008. p. 36: 'The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression.' Marx says (again, roughly) that all attempts at world mastery must backfire if we do not understand what the world is. We are not dominated because we attempt to dominate, as in Adorno, but in Marx, we are dominated because we constantly mistake our own activity/relations for something objective in the pure materialist/naive realist sense—i.e. we are not aware of what can be changed and what cannot be changed, because we have no idea what is our product and what is not our product. Marx's labour theory of value is an attempt to educate us of a simple fact: anything that has value has value because it is a product.

<sup>171</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. modern-Verlag Edition. p. 82.

<sup>172</sup> This is not to say that Marx does not change at all. Heller and Márkus both understand that *profound* change occurs. But they both reject the idea of a *break* or *rupture*, and both stand by the position that Marx is not a being composed of two irreducible and antithetical moments that one must choose between. Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. pp. 1–2: 'In Marx himself, however, these two approaches to human history ['class struggle' and 'historical materialism'], which in standard interpretations appear as rigid contradictions, form a unity—and our task consists just in finding out and showing up the possibility and the sense of this unity.'

<sup>173</sup> As this thesis will later argue, this Marx is not *always* fictional, but does appear here and there. He is, however, rare and isolated enough that it is spurious to make this figure into a major character, and it is

disagree on points (as this thesis disagrees with both on points) but the essential shared idea, that history unfolds as ‘man’ wrestles with and is mainly overpowered by his own past activity—which in his alienation he *refuses* to accept as such—he would perhaps rather die than accept it as such,<sup>174</sup> naming it all kinds of things and claiming that it is external and autonomous, nothing to do with us: it is God, it is the ‘self regulating’ market, it is the automatic/mechanistic ‘natural’ laws of history, it is tradition/the mythic ancestors, it is the categorical imperative, it is a rock made of out of stardust, it is the big Other, etc.—is central to the understanding of Marx propounded in this thesis. This alienation is a very strong force, such that it is easy to read the entire works of Marx and not see what Marx is writing, to miss that which looms largest, the endlessly repeated statement *that the world is objectified human activity*. Alienation is a self-preserving force, which is why Márkus’ reading of Marx, in which he cuts through alienation to reveal the content of Marx’s texts, is so important. This thesis has based its reading of Marx on the above and thus, in as far as this is a text on Marx, it would hope to be seen as contributing to the works that have come out of or been inspired by the ‘Budapest School’.

Thirdly, as regards its place among the extant Nietzsche scholarship, this thesis does not have such a clear home. It has no pedigree and no claim to original interpretation or original emphasis in interpretation. The reasons for Nietzsche being included in this thesis were argued above, and none of them involved a mastery of the primary or secondary Nietzsche scholarship.

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*disastrous* to try and argue that these slips are the entirety or truth of Marx, or that they negate all else in his works.

<sup>174</sup> The problem that this thesis is attempting to overcome is the idea that what is made by us, what began as ‘untruth’, must remain untruth. That is, the biggest barrier to de-alienation is that we are not yet ready to accept the idea of a ‘man made’ truth, despite the fact that that is all there is and has ever been. As we will see in the later work on Castoriadis, attributing an extra-social origin to law/meaning makes us heteronomous. But the fear remains: would law and meaning still function as they do now if their human signature were made visible? As Nietzsche writes in *Human, all too Human*. p. 29: ‘A question seems to lie heavily on our tongue and yet refuses to be uttered: whether one *could* consciously reside in untruth? Or, if one were *obliged* to, whether death would not be preferable?’ cf: Nietzsche, ‘On truth and lie’. p. 259.

It is hoped that the reasons stated above sufficiently justify the presence of a large Nietzsche chapter. It can also be noted here that because the work on Nietzsche does not come out of any particular tradition or school of interpretation, this Nietzsche chapter is different from the Marx chapter on two counts: 1) it is shorter; and 2) the Nietzsche chapter *begins* with Nietzsche, unlike the Marx chapter, which defers its direct engagement with Marx until it has addressed its genealogy. The interpretation of Nietzsche put forward is of course deeply indebted to a host of authors, many of whom recently helped this author understand that the most important human creations were not ‘creations’ at all, and their authors were not human.<sup>175</sup> Nonetheless, this thesis’ reading of Nietzsche does not come from within one school or tradition as does the reading of Marx, which is why there is no corresponding work on the genealogy of the Nietzsche interpretation in the Nietzsche chapter, and why this thesis cannot now clearly situate itself among the extant Nietzsche scholarship, if it was permitted to reside there. As a final note on this topic, the author would like to note that significant elements of the secondary literature on Nietzsche have *not* been engaged with: for example, the critique of Ernst Bertram by Walter Kaufman<sup>176</sup>—and the critique of Gary Shapiro that goes further<sup>177</sup>—or Pierre Hadot’s work on Nietzsche and the ‘return to Greece’,<sup>178</sup> and the connected idea of Nietzsche’s philosophy being

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<sup>175</sup> The collection of essays, *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy* was especially illuminating on this point, though every Nietzsche secondary text cited in this thesis is significant.

<sup>176</sup> Walter Kaufman, *Nietzsche: philosopher, psychologist, antichrist*, Princeton University Press: USA, 1974. pp. 12–18.

<sup>177</sup> Robert Norton, ‘Translators Introduction’, in *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology* by Ernst Bertram, University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago, 2009. p. xxiii.

<sup>178</sup> Pierre Hadot, ‘Introduction to *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology*’, in *The Agonist: A Nietzsche Circle Journal*. March, 2010. p. 74.

<[http://www.nietzscherircle.com/AGONIST/2010\\_03/PDFs/AgonistMAR2010HadotEssay.pdf](http://www.nietzscherircle.com/AGONIST/2010_03/PDFs/AgonistMAR2010HadotEssay.pdf)>.

‘Nietzsche, following Jacob Burckhardt, reacted with vigour against this representation of Greek life [i.e., that it was tranquil or serene] insisting on the pessimistic, tragic, and tormented character of the Greek soul. Yet ... Nietzsche always remained faithful to the idea that the Germans have as their mission and hope to become “more Greek,” in mind and body ...’ cf. pp. 56–57.

a return to philosophy as ‘a concrete attitude, a way of life and of seeing the world.’<sup>179</sup> The scholarship that appears in this thesis is not the only scholarship the author has engaged with, but the secondary scholarship utilised here—as is also true for Marx—is the scholarship most relevant to the arguments and motifs of this thesis.

Finally, there is not really a ‘body’ of *Marx and Nietzsche* literature. However, there are many experiments, mainly on the question of Marx and Nietzsche or Marx or Nietzsche, prompted in part by Weber’s statement that nobody can make an earnest attempt to engage philosophically with the modern world without engaging with Marx and Nietzsche,<sup>180</sup> and in part by Foucault’s declaration that one has to choose between Hegel and Marx on the one side (dialectics and humanism) and Nietzsche on the other (anti-humanism and genealogy). As András Gedö notes, Foucault’s work is inscribed with this choice.<sup>181</sup> This thesis does not in the end choose. Rather, its work is to take a similarity in the works of Marx and Nietzsche,<sup>182</sup> to study it, and to make something out of it: a materialist theory of the imagination. It is thereby hoped that this thesis might be included among the experiments that have been written on Marx and Nietzsche.

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<sup>179</sup> Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell: Oxford; New York, 1995. p. 108.

<sup>180</sup> Wilhelm Hennis, *Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction*, Allen & Unwin: Great Britain, 1988. p. 146.

<sup>181</sup> Gedö, ‘Why Marx and Nietzsche’. p. 332. Althusser rejects this choice, and chooses Marx, anti-humanism and dialectics.

<sup>182</sup> Nietzsche would no doubt object to the project. ‘He who wants to mediate between two resolute thinkers shows that he is mediocre: he has no eye for what is unique; seeing things as similar and making things the same is the sign of weak eyes.’ *Gay Science*. p. 145.

## Section 1: Exploring a similarity in Marx and Nietzsche: the ‘objective’ is always already the product of human activity

### *Chapter 1: On objectivity and the imagination in the works of Marx*

This Marx-focused chapter is composed of five parts, titled: ‘The constitution of the world in the works of Marx’; ‘The creation of the world in the works of Marx’; ‘The question of access to the world in the works of Marx’; ‘The role of the imagination (in the works of Marx) in creation: labour and world creation’; and ‘The role of the imagination (in the works of Marx) in autonomy’. In chapter three, the Nietzsche chapter, the same five-part structure will be followed, with the slight variation that in part four we will study ‘error’ and world creation rather than ‘labour’ and world creation. Posing the same five questions to each thinker is considered to be an apposite structure for the primary aim of section one of this thesis—i.e., exploring a similarity in Marx and Nietzsche: that the ‘objective’ is always already a product of human activity. As noted in the introduction, the other difference between the main chapters of this section is twofold in that: 1) the present chapter will be longer, despite having the same number of parts—which does not necessarily make it more significant; and 2) the present chapter will *not* immediately begin with a direct engagement with Marx—as the Nietzsche chapter will, regarding its Nietzsche exegesis—but will prepare for the direct Marx exegesis with two brief discussions, as follows.

#### *On the problem of ‘the gap’*

The first stumbling block of many that this thesis has to face is an assumption that is held to be true in the majority of Marx scholarship, from that written under the banner of ‘democratic socialism’ right up to the ‘extreme wing of the materialist conception of history’: that for Marx,

there is an *inexorable* gap between reality and experience.<sup>183</sup> This assumption (Marx aside) has currency everywhere: in idealism (where the thing in itself is deemed unreachable because of the numerous *a priori* cognitive processes that enable ‘experience’ to occur or, to be more accurate, that *produce* experience) and materialism (where it is always assumed that human knowledge of the autonomous universe can never be complete, that tomorrow’s knowledge of a thing will be more complete than today’s, and that this process will never end). On the side of idealism, experience is privileged and we are encouraged, especially after Fichte, to forget about the thing in itself, to consider it to be a strange Kantian preoccupation.<sup>184</sup> On the side of materialism, reality is privileged, and we are encouraged to suppress and limit imagination, bias, and subjectivity in order that this privileged reality should yield its secrets. Either way, and no matter whether one privileges reality or experience, being or consciousness, it is assumed that there are two distinct realms—except in the various experiments in phenomenology and existentialism, where it is generally assumed that experience/appearance is the only valid sphere of study, and thus it is the science of phenomena. This thesis regards neither Marx nor Nietzsche as phenomenologists or existentialists: both thinkers would object to the idea that reality is an ‘apparent world’ with no ‘real world’ behind it—both are the staunchest believers possible in the *reality* of our reality—there is *nothing* apparent about it.<sup>185</sup> But despite this shared disagreement with the spirit of

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<sup>183</sup> As Paul Piccone notes (Piccone, ‘Phenomenological Marxism’, in *Telos*, No. 9, Fall 1971, p. 3.), to suggest otherwise is to engage in ‘phenomenological Marxism’, described by its detractors as: ‘an eclectic manoeuvre hiding a fundamentally anti-Marxist orientation’. That Marx himself might have thought that we could experience reality *as it is*, as ‘man-made’ objectivity—or that the being of ‘the world’ is tied to us in any way—is not up for debate in ‘orthodox Marxism’: it is apodictically false.

<sup>184</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, p. 250.

<sup>185</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, Penguin Edition, p. 49. If one began a project of existentialism based in the beliefs of Marx and Nietzsche, one should call it an *immanent noumenology*. If one gets rid of the ‘real world’ *qua* ‘das ding an-sich’ (as Nietzsche saw long ago) one is not left with an apparent world *generatio aequivoca*, but rather, one is left—in a shining new dawn—with a real world that we have made.



phenomenology, for both thinkers, for different reasons, there is no necessary and irrevocable split between reality and experience.

The problem with this splitting is that it tends to encourage a belief that human beings are responsible for the content of *experience*—they create it—but have nothing to do with the content of *reality*. This splitting thus encourages alienation.<sup>186</sup> If one insists on applying this split to Marx and to Nietzsche, one misses what makes both figures interesting and similar. This similarity is that human beings are responsible for the *content* of reality. For Nietzsche, though he finds this thought troubling, experience—and often false experience—determines (eventually) the content of reality.<sup>187</sup> This will be argued at great length in the third chapter. *For Marx, experience cannot determine the content of reality*. This hypothesis is antithetical to Marx's materialist conception of history in which it is a major principle that the content of reality—in the final analysis—determines experiences of reality within a certain range of possibilities dictated by the level of the development of the productive forces.<sup>188</sup> However, this does not mean that for Marx

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<sup>186</sup> Phenomenology and existentialism too are mostly alienated, as this thesis would argue more fully with a larger scope. Even when it is understood that 'things' cannot 'be' unless there is some being that 'exists', *vis*, Da-sein or the 'Being-for-itself', even so, 'human beings'—in the primary forms of existentialism—are never responsible for the *content* of reality, they are merely (passively) responsible for the fact that it *is*. One finds no active generation of being in Heidegger or Sartre. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, Routledge: London, 2002. p. 217: '... the For-itself adds *nothing* to the In-itself except the very fact that there *is* In-itself ...' In Sartre, as in most materialism, the imagination can only be used to flee reality—and freedom. The imagination in Sartre is the opposite of perception, as in the normal understanding, and creates only the unreal. Thus, in Sartre, the primary idea of this thesis (that of a created or manufactured objectivity) is unthinkable, as is the idea of a reality that can change. What is for Sartre—his 'Being in itself'—is 'cast in the bronze of being', and it is unreachable: we can only ever perceive facets, profiles, or aspects of what is. His existentialism, though it borrows the language of idealism, is no different in essence from pure materialism. Existentialism—and *particularly* Sartre's—is extremely unconformable with the idea that human beings might be able to influence the content of reality *in any way*.

<sup>187</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 'Only as Creators'. pp. 69–70.

<sup>188</sup> Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*. pp. 21–22.

reality and experience must forever be two separate realms. As stated in the introduction, there is no metaphysical duplication of 'things' into 'what is' and 'experience of what is' in Marx.

If the old materialist/idealist assumptions are held to be true for Marx in that for him, it is assumed that there is: a) an inexorable gap between reality and experience; and b) human beings can influence what they experience but can never influence the content of reality, this poses a problem for this thesis which holds two contrary assumptions. These are that: a) for Marx, *objective reality* is a human product, and the manner in which we act *directly and profoundly* influences its content; and b) for Marx, it is very possible to experience this said product, the *objective human product* reality—*qua* the real material life process of 'man' as she produces the means of her existence—exactly as it is.

There are many examples of Marxists or readers of Marx who believe unshakably that it is *unforgivable* to conflate experience and reality, that this practice is 'contrary to science'. A particularly strong example is Claude Levi-Strauss.

At a different level of reality, Marxism seemed to me to proceed in the same way as geology and psychoanalysis ... All three demonstrate that understanding consists in the reducing of one type of reality to another; that the true reality is never the most obvious; and that the nature of truth is already indicated by the care it takes to remain elusive. For all cases, the same problem arises, the problem of the relationship between feeling and reason, and the aim is the same: to achieve a kind of *superrationalism*, which will integrate the first with the second, without sacrificing any of its properties.

I was therefore opposed to the new metaphysical tendencies which were then emerging. Phenomenology I found objectionable in that it postulated a kind of continuity between experience and reality. I agreed that the latter encompasses and explains the former, but I had learned from my three sources of inspiration that the transition between one order and the other is discontinuous; that to reach reality one has to first reject experience, and then subsequently to reintegrate it into an objective synthesis devoid of sentimentality. As for the intellectual movement which was to reach its peak in existentialism, it seemed to me to be anything but a legitimate form of reflection, because of

its over-indulgent attitude towards the illusions of subjectivity. The raising of private preoccupations to the dignity of philosophical problems is far too likely to lead to a sort of shop-girl metaphysics—which may be pardonable as a didactic method but is extremely dangerous if it allows people to play fast-and-loose with the mission incumbent on philosophy until science is strong enough to replace it: that is to understand being in relationship to itself and not in relationship to myself. Instead of doing away with metaphysics, phenomenology and existentialism introduced two methods of providing it with alibis.<sup>189</sup>

Levi-Strauss puts Marx and Freud on the same level as the solid ground of geology, and states that all three are too solid and sensible to engage in so-called ‘shop-girl metaphysics’. Levi-Strauss is of course right to suggest that Marx is the first to admit that ‘true reality is never the most obvious of realities’. But this correct assertion contains two incorrect assertions. Firstly, that for Marx, the ‘true reality’ that everyday experience conceals—and thus that we must repudiate, if we believe in truth—is some Kantian ‘thing in itself’ that good science must always strive for, in vain. As the title of the first section of this thesis suggests, for Marx, that which is objective and real—‘true reality’—is always already a human product. Secondly, it suggests that for Marx, the striving of science must be *in vain*. Marx believed that *his science* could *begin* to reveal true reality to us exactly as it is, as a dynamic, unfolding, human product, always already profoundly connected to us.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*. pp. 57–58.

<sup>190</sup> Marx’s science, as will later be argued, is—as an exercise in thinking—for him an inferior substitute for communist *praxis*. While capitalist conditions prevail, we can only *intellectually* understand that the world is not how it appears to everyday experience—with the aid of Marx’s science. When communist conditions prevail *materially*, we will *experience* reality as it is, and all science and philosophy will be obsolete, except as ends in themselves. In communism, alienation is thereby overcome and freedom—as the space in which human autonomy becomes possible—is achieved.

For this thesis, to think, as Levi-Strauss did, of ‘true reality’ as being ‘Being in relation to itself’, is quite simply antithetical to Marx’s manner of thinking, in which ‘true reality’ is a matrix of living labour in *dynamic relations* with embodied dead labour. Levi-Strauss, the father of structuralism, saw symbolic/social reality as having only the most tenuous links with physical reality, being a ‘series of contrasts’, a self-referential semiological system.<sup>191</sup> Thus of course he will find any attempt to conflate experience and reality to be absurd. However, Marx himself eschewed both the idea that we live in a ‘symbolic reality’ *and* the idea that we live in ‘physical reality’. Levi-Strauss thus misses the point, that the real, material world that we live in is *also* a social thing, and is thus neither self-referential (i.e. creating meaning through a play of arbitrary and differential signs) nor autonomous (i.e. ‘real’ in the sense of the pure materialists, that which has ‘being in relation to itself’ to ‘discover’). For Marx, ideas and things are not oil and water—he would find the canonical pressure today to separate the symbolic and the real to be a stifling impediment to the truth.<sup>192</sup> Against materialism, Marx said the following, but his comments also speak against structuralism and post-structuralism.

He [Feuerbach] does not see how the sensuous world around him is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest ‘sensuous certainty’ are only given to him through social development, industry and commercial intercourse.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Derrida’s first move in philosophy was to cut this connection entirely and to say that Levi-Strauss had done so already, only he knew not what he did. ‘Structure, Sign, and Play’. p. 286.

<sup>192</sup> Though the ideal and the material are not mixed as thoroughly as in Nietzsche (as already noted), this does not mean that they do not mix in Marx.

<sup>193</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 62.

Simply put, for Marx there is no world of ‘Being in relation to itself’ for science to disclose by destroying the manifold ‘illusions of subjectivity’—or there once was, but no longer is.<sup>194</sup> The real world around us is rather a labour-saturated *product*—there are strands of sensuous activity tying humans and things (they are only ‘things’ if this is the case) that we cannot in the present see.<sup>195</sup> *Understanding reality in its truth means understanding it in its relation to us.* Paul Breines stated that the Party intellectual, like any other scientist, studies the laws of history *from without*,<sup>196</sup> and Breines suggests (along with many others) that to do so is to destroy the gift that is Marx’s *actual science*. His is a science beyond microscopes and impartiality; his science wanted to see the world *as it is*: a material object packed with living, invisible crystals of encounterable human activity, a real thing that one cannot hope to understand unless one radically expands and reinterprets the meaning of science, as Marx tried to do.<sup>197</sup>

Hopefully, having now been exposed to the idea that for Marx ‘the gap’ between reality and experience is *in no way inexorable*, we are now prepared for the first three parts of this chapter, to discuss: 1) the content of reality, 2) how it is created, and 3) what kind of access is possible. Hopefully too the one true and the two false elements of Levi-Strauss’ position can now be fully understood. That is—the true part—Marx *does* believe that reality can appear to us in inverted

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>195</sup> Money is the first ‘thing’ in which the activity within it becomes utterly generic and thus invisible. Marx has an anecdote about this not quite yet being the case in Ancient Rome, when the emperor Vespasian needs to convince his son Titus that one need not recoil from the money generated by sewage taxation. *Capital*. p. 205. ‘Money has no smell’. Simmel repeats this anecdote in *The Philosophy of Money*. In our world the activity objectified in *all things* is generic and invisible: to the point that (in our alienation) we no longer understand that it is there. The ‘savage’ for whom trading objects is a solemn, dangerous and exquisitely personal proposition, is closer to the truth than we are, not further.

<sup>196</sup> Paul Breines, ‘Praxis and its Theorists: The Impact of Lukács and Korsch in the 1920s’, in *Telos*, No 11, Spring, 1972. p. 67.

<sup>197</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 90: ‘Moreover, in the analysis of economic forms neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of assistance.’

and distorted shapes, and does so almost exclusively today. Physical sciences, though they do a little better than political economy as regards getting at the truth, do not understand the nature of reality, and are crippled in their manner of investigation by misconceptions that will forever bar them from the truth.<sup>198</sup> However—the first false part—Marx *does not* believe that reality is something ‘objective’ that has nothing to do with us. *For Marx, objective reality is always already a human product of material and supra-material composition.* And—the second false part—this objective reality that is also a product of ‘man’ *is by no means* incurably beyond our reach. As already stated, in the estimation of this thesis, Marx was not a phenomenologist or existentialist, but he had no problem with the idea that makes Levi-Strauss—and Sartre—so unconformable: that of a continuity between experience and reality. For Marx, any idea of the world as a thing apart from ‘man’ and the activity of ‘man’ is *itself* a distorted perception. And further: no advance in ‘science’ can *undistort* our perception one jot, as the root of this distortion not a lack of knowledge or some small flaw in the method of science: the problem (and this will be explained in full within chapter one) is private property. No capitalist science—and all science is thus today—will ever find anything but matter that exists apart from us. No science, in short, will see things are they are. Achieving continuity between experience and reality is highly desirable for Marx, as the third part of this chapter will argue. In this continuity, the work of science and philosophy is simultaneously culminated and made redundant, as Karel Kosik points out in his book *Dialectics of the Concrete*,<sup>199</sup> for the world is seen as it is, as connected to us, as essential *relations*. This concludes the preliminary discussion on ‘the gap’ in Marx. A second preliminary discussion follows before we begin the direct Marx exegesis.

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid. p. 677. Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. modern-Verlag Edition. p. 8.

<sup>199</sup> Karel Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World*, D. Reidel Publishing Company: Dordrecht-Holland/Boston-U.S.A, Netherlands, 1976. p. 32.

*A brief genealogy of the interpretation of Marx in this thesis: on the idea that reality is a human product, specifically, past/objectified human activity*

Georg Simmel in his *Philosophy of Money* studies the objectification of human activity into encounterable forms. Money for Simmel, as for Marx,<sup>200</sup> is a social bond that can be carried in one's pocket.

The interactions between the primary elements that produce the social unit are replaced by the fact that each of these elements establishes an independent relation to a higher or intermediate organ. Money belongs to this category of reified social formations. The function of exchange, as a direct interaction between individuals, becomes crystalized in the form of money as an independent structure.<sup>201</sup>

However, this Simmel text—though it could be seen as the first instance of the reading of Marx put forward in this thesis—will not be dwelt upon here for two reasons. The first is that for Simmel, these reified social formations exist *in* the world: they are among us, but they are not the material out of which the world is composed. Secondly, Simmel did not believe that he was reproducing Marx in his own work. In Simmel's mind, he was doing work *based on* Marx that departed from Marx himself in fundamental ways. As he writes in the preface, he is making an 'attempt ... to construct a new storey beneath historical materialism ...'<sup>202</sup> This thesis is more interested in Simmel's student, György Lukács, who in *History and Class Consciousness* puts forward

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<sup>200</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 157: 'The individual carries his social power, as well as his bond with society, in his pocket.' Rundell (in 'Marx and the Postmodern Image of Society'. p. 174) writes on this quote: 'Money ... smashes the ancient community to become the community itself.'

<sup>201</sup> Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, Routledge: London & New York, 2004. p. 175. cf: Marx, *Capital*. p. 165: 'It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things.'

<sup>202</sup> Op. cit. p. 56.

similar ideas, with two differences. First of all, he entertains the idea—admittedly not consistently<sup>203</sup>—that *reality itself* (and not just select elements of it, i.e. money) is composed of past human activity. Secondly, he entertains the idea that this notion is a straightforward interpretation of Marx, not a creative departure that engages with some basic theme.

With this point of view the two main strands of the irrationality of the thing-in-itself and the concreteness of the individual content and of totality are given a positive turn and appear as a unity. This signals a change in the relation between theory and practice and between freedom and necessity. The idea that we have made reality loses its more or less fictitious [read idealist] character: we have ... made our own history and if we are able to read the whole of reality as history (i.e. as *our* history, for there is no other), we shall have raised ourselves in fact to the position from which reality can be understood as our 'action'. The dilemma of the materialist will have lost its meaning for it stands revealed as a rationalist prejudice, as a dogma of the formalistic understanding. This had recognised as deeds only those actions which were consciously performed whereas the historical environment we have created, the product of the historical process was regarded as a reality which influences us by virtue of laws alien to us.<sup>204</sup> '... nature is a societal category ...'<sup>205</sup>

This reading of Marx from late in the 1910s was critiqued heavily by the Communist International, particularly by Grigory Zinoviev, and Lukács found himself out of favour with the party for a very long time (until the end World War II) though he survived Stalin's famous purges.

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<sup>203</sup> Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, R. Livingstone (trans.), Merlin Press: UK, 1971. p. 111: An example of Lukács' early writing that contradicts to some extent what is about to be treated here is: 'In other words, modern philosophy [vis., idealism] sets itself the following problem: it refuses to accept the world as something that has arisen (or e.g. has been created by God) independently of the knowing subject, and prefers to conceive of it instead as its own product.'

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. p. 234



Lukács was accused of two ‘charges’ by Zinoviev. The first charge related to being a bourgeois and an idealist, and Lukács took this one seriously. He internalised Zinoviev’s critique of his early work and by 1950, Lukács was levelling this same charge against others, saying: ‘either being is primary (materialism), or consciousness is primary (idealism).’<sup>206</sup> If one does not accept the primacy of being, one is by default bourgeois and idealist. Through statements such as these we can see that the nuance of *History and Class Consciousness* has been blunted. The later works disavow ‘the idea that we have made reality’, the ‘position from which reality can be understood as our “action”’ and, his critique of ‘vulgar’ materialists who see the laws of history as being laws alien to us. Lukács was schooled in the party in a certain kind of thinking: you must understand that objective reality creates us (this is true Marxism/materialism), or you fall into the abyss of subjective idealism, of thinking that human beings can influence reality, alongside the idealists/bourgeois.<sup>207</sup> This thesis reads Marx as Lukács read him—mainly—before his schooling by the party. But there was another charge, just as serious, against Lukács which related to his idea that ‘nature is a societal category’. In formulating this idea in *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács began to feel that there was a difference between Marx and Engels—a rather large difference. Albrecht Wellmer sums this up very well, writing in essence that for Marx (as Lukács saw) nature is societal, whereas for Engels, society is natural.<sup>208</sup> In Engels, the laws of history are

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<sup>206</sup> Lukács, ‘Existentialism’, in *Marxism and Human Liberation: Essays on History, Culture and Revolution*, Dell Publishing Co: 1973. p. 245.

<sup>207</sup> The party reading of Marx thus cannot hope to create a situation in which alienation is overcome.

<sup>208</sup> Wellmer has many excellent quotes of this nature. Wellmer, ‘Communications and Emancipation’. pp. 235–236: ‘In Engels’ theory, the tendency to interpret historical materialism and the critique of political economy according to the methodological model of the natural sciences becomes quite explicit ... He clearly expresses the view that scientific socialism would provide a general knowledge or the laws governing historical and social processes—knowledge which would make scientific control of social processes possible in the same sense in which the knowledge acquired by the natural sciences makes the control and manipulation of natural processes possible. This “naturalisation” of history is also, as has often been pointed by Engels’ critics, the real essence of this “dialectization”—i.e., “historicization”—of nature. In contradistinction to Marx’s historical materialism, Engels’ dialectic materialism is literally a “reversal” of Hegelian dialectics. As in Hegel, dialects for

laws of nature that have nothing to do with us.<sup>209</sup> In Marx, the laws of history are crystallised human activity, dead actors determining the actions of the living. The Second International and the Communist International both primarily saw things the way that Engels did. Thus they did not take kindly to young upstarts writing that there was no such thing as *Marx and Engels*, but that rather there was Marx *and* Engels, and that Marx's own ideas on the laws of history were different from those held by Engels to the point of being antithetical, and were in fact rather close to those ideas that the Communist International usually labelled idealist and bourgeois. The Communist International quite reasonably did not want any young party members pulling at that particular thread, and the young Lukács was therefore roundly castigated for suggesting that Marx and Engels had differences of opinion on the nature of reality. However, in this instance, Lukács did not internalise the party critique, holding firm (but silent) in his belief that Marx and Engels were not one. As he noted at a later date: 'I wrote my [1922] self-criticism as an "entry ticket"'.<sup>210</sup>

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Engels is the moving principle and the principle of movement for a "substance" which guarantees the unity of the world and in particular the unity of nature and history. For Engels, however, this "substance"—as the principal of unity—is "matter" rather than "spirit". As a consequence, "dialectics"—as Engels himself puts it—now becomes a "science" concerned with the general laws of motion and development in nature, history, and thought. This ontological interpretation of dialectics, however, can under materialistic presuppositions only lead to a naturalisation of history instead of a historicization of nature. Dialectic materialism degenerates into naturalist metaphysics ... While Marx's historical materialism represents a demystification of dialects, Engels' dialectic materialism represents a re-mystification of materialism: materialism has become metaphysical again.'

<sup>209</sup> Engels, *Anti-Dühring*. Sourced from: John Bratton & David Denham, *Capitalism and Classical Social Theory*. Second Edition, University of Toronto Press: Canada, 2014. p. 94: 'Dialectics, however, is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought.'

<sup>210</sup> Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*. p. xxx. Though Lukács continued—even post WWII, when he became again a trusted member of the party—to believe that Engels had missed elements of the spirit of Marx, he remained committed to Lenin's reading of Marx, which for this thesis is far too close to Engels' reading. Rather, it is here considered that both Engels and Lenin are too Hegelian, too cathected of the idea of a (natural) meta-social telos, of a(n esoteric) history that at every point (even the first one) knows where it is going (and to some extent, or in some manner, already has contributed to progress/the deepening of

The *response* to Lukács in the 1920s is vital to how this thesis reads Marx. And it was not just the leading figures of Communist International who were ‘policing’ the way that Marx was being read. As Jacoby notes, Marxists of all persuasions overcame their differences, from the Social Democrats to the most committed Bolsheviks, all agreeing that young Lukács—and Karl Korsch, who was also in the ‘firing line’ at this time—had crossed a line and needed to be set straight. This moment in history is important because it is not yet over. In following the young Lukács, this thesis (were it to come into circulation) would probably be subjected to the same critique that was born in the 1920s and that one will still hear today, should one propound a reading of Marx that holds human beings responsible for the creation/content of reality.

Firstly, critics would likely claim that this thesis is incorrect, in that Marx and Engels were not different, but the same,<sup>211</sup> and any small differences are indicative of ‘progress’—for this thesis, step-by-step progress *away* from Marx, *toward* Hegel, via the systematic divorce of the activity of human beings and the content/telos of objective reality. Secondly, it might be argued that the reading of Marx in this thesis does not understand Marx or materialism and is bourgeois and idealist. This was the most repeated of the arguments levelled at Lukács in the 1920s,

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knowledge). Stalin took this Hegelian chain of thought as far as it would go, divorcing the laws of history from human activity utterly, and making human beings, basically, into conduits for the actualisation of a plan that ‘nature’ had for a perfected humanity—and murdering anybody who would not go along with this plan. (For Lenin, Stalin’s approach to Marx was marred by a misreading/non-understanding of Hegel/the dialectic. For this thesis, Stalin’s approach—and the ‘human machines’ logic of Nikolai Bukharin—is Hegel laid bare, stripped of his systematic mysticism and obscurity, exposed in his brutality. This is why this thesis argues that Marx did not just *deepen* the Hegelian system, but that he *changed* it also, though not thoroughly enough. There was still too much Hegel in Marx: and Lenin was wrong, in that Stalin and Bukharin understood Hegel very well, they had learned him from the archaeological remnants of Hegel left in Marx, which appear as the most deterministic moments in Marx’s *oeuvre*.) The only real point on which Lenin is closer to Marx than Engels was in his understanding of the pitfalls of ‘vulgar materialism’, an element of Marx that Engels’ own pure materialism would not let him see.

<sup>211</sup> The Soviet mania regarding images of Marx’s head followed by Engels’ head, Lenin’s head and Stalin’s head is an obsessive return of the repressed knowledge that each had in profound ways departed from the ideas of his predecessor.

suggesting that he was new to Marx, and simply did not yet understand him. The final critique, the one that briefly brought together various factions of Marxists in the 1920s, is not customarily heard today. It is that Lukács' and Korsch's 'Marxism as subjective idealism deprived reality of its objective laws that were independent from the will of men.'<sup>212</sup> It was a peculiar time, when Marxists of all persuasions were uniting to defend objective reality against the theft of its laws: to defend their own alienation against two young men who had had the audacity to understand Marx (and who, in the interpretation of this thesis, had understood Marx very well).

Lukács, in short, suggested that the laws of history—all elements of objectivity—are tied to human activity and that reality itself is past human activity. That he was shouted down and changed his mind on parts of his youthful opinions is insignificant to this thesis. A great deal of writing on Lukács is devoted to the idea that he had a strange power of prophecy, in that he read the 'mature Marx'—the only works available at the time—as if he was reading the works and words of the 'young Marx'.<sup>213</sup> But this 'observation' is spurious, based in the mistaken idea that there is a rupture between the young and the mature Marx, and that it is the *young* Marx who is interested in what this thesis is defining as alienation. As argued in the introduction (quoting Márkus), Marx wrote his most comprehensive work on alienation *in the so-called mature period*.

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<sup>212</sup> Jacoby, 'Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism'. p. 132.

<sup>213</sup> The early works of Marx began to be made available late in the 1960s as discontent with the (totalitarian) state of 'really existing socialism' began to grow. In this context the 'young Marx' was 'discovered', because it was assumed (and this is still a problem today) that party intellectuals had created a nightmare of totalitarianism by putting the theory of the 'mature Marx' into practice. Thus, those who hated terror and loved freedom needed to find a Marx of their own. It has been very convincingly argued for 50 years that this splitting of Marx is artificial, and that the traits/theory of the so-called young Marx and the traits/theory of the so-called mature Marx were united in Marx the human being. The strong influence of Althusser in contemporary Marx scholarship is the primary reason that these convincing arguments against splitting Marx do not dominate the literature.

Lukács' gift did not consist of understanding documents that he had no access to, but was more concrete: it consisted of *actually understanding* the works available to everybody.

The question of the 'mature' and 'young' Marx is thus not a pressing one for this thesis. Rather, it is more interested in reading *all* of the works of Marx and seeing in *all* of them what the young Lukács saw in the mature Marx—and it is there, in *all* of them. Lukács perceived in Marx a hatred of alienation and a desire to overcome alienation; he understood that one cannot overcome alienation until one sees the world as past human activity, and sees the laws of history—in full recognition of how hard they push on us—as being tied to the will and the activity of human beings.

Lukács' students carried on the spirit of the young Lukács, who to quote once more, wrote in 'Taktik und Ethik', an essay written before *History and Class Consciousness*: '[t]he vulgar Marxists, "since they did not understand the historical interpretation of Hegel's, rendered development a process that was completely automatic—not only independent of consciousness, but qualitatively distinct from it."'<sup>214</sup> Continuing this work and this spirit, Márkus writes:

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<sup>214</sup> Jacoby, 'Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism'. p. 127. Lukács makes the same inexplicable move as Lenin, saying fundamentally that one cannot understand Marx adequately without understanding Hegel. As this thesis has already argued, the reading of the 'vulgar Marxists' of Marx—that history is a process that is completely automatic, and that, although it appears as if 'men' drive history, this appearance is false, for wiser, external forces are doing business through our activity, working through us—is *in its very essence Hegelian*. The reading of Hegel as being radical, and of there being in Hegel a reciprocal relationship of influence between *Geist* and free human beings, is *at best* tenuous in the view of this thesis. It is perhaps a competing strain of thinking within the broader works of Hegel, but as a move that so deeply contradicts the bulk of the theory, its destiny is to be strangled or crushed by that which surrounds it. In the end, for Lenin, 'active' human beings can only be active in so far as they *actualise* goals external to themselves, becoming willing tools, 'world historical individuals'—subordinate moments of *Geist* in *its* own development, as Rundell writes—and thus Lenin returns to determinism via Hegel anyway. Marx overcame his determinism—in so far as he did—by *departing* from Hegel. Thus, the problem is not that 'vulgar Marxists' do not understand Hegel, it is that they do not understand Marx. Lukács saw that for Marx, history is not automatic, and this is what he is being

The conception which is equally present in the Marxism of the II. International and in the Stalinist interpretation of Marxist theory and which regards the development of the productive forces (understood at that as purely technical progress) as some inevitable, autonomous and automatic process having the force of a necessity of nature, is completely alien to Marx.<sup>215</sup>

Again, in this same spirit, Heller writes:

The idea that the transition from capitalism to communism is an objective law of nature is incompatible with Marx's second theory of contradiction. According to this theory, only the revolutionary struggle of the collective subject (the working class), having become such by virtue of its radical needs and revolutionary practice, can guarantee the transition to and creation of the future society ... No quasi-natural force makes itself felt 'behind the backs of people': from the dispositions of the collective teleology, what people *really want* 'emerges'.<sup>216</sup>

And Marx himself, in a new translation by Márkus, stated:

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remembered for here. His mistake, however, was to think that Marx got this idea from Hegel. The idea of a reciprocal relationship of influence between free human beings and their own depersonalised activity (of an empirical history of 'man' that has no metaphysical forces operating in, under, or behind it) is Marx's own and is ultimately alien to Hegel. Changing history by retrospectively/retroactively attributing this idea to Hegel—as a major trope of his—is a perverse and unnecessary (Hegelian) move, another way of denying the possibility of change and creation, of denying philosophy. For this thesis, it is a mistake to try to understand Marx via Hegel. If one sees Marx as being Hegelian, the best of Marx is lost, as Marx's least interesting (and most dangerous) moments are his strongly deterministic moments—which are for this thesis Hegelian lapses—and, as will frequently be argued here, these moments are far from being the truth of Marx (the element of his thinking that in the end supresses all others). Rather, they are *exceptions* that fundamentally sit outside of an otherwise coherent body of thought.

<sup>215</sup> Márkus, *Anthropology and Marxism*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 67.

<sup>216</sup> Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*. pp. 85–87. Of course Marx does write at great length about what happens 'behind the backs' of producers in *Capital*. Systems come into being that no individual or collective are consciously responsible for. They are, however, inexorably tied to the real social life processes of individuals.

*History* does *nothing*; it possesses *no* ‘colossal riches’, it ‘fights *no* battles’! Rather it is *man*, actual and living man, who does all this, who possesses and fights; ‘history’ does not use man as a means for *its* purpose as though it were a person apart; it is *nothing* but the activity of man pursuing his ends.<sup>217</sup>

In *Capital*, we seem to have a problem with this reading, when Marx appears to accept Vico’s distinction between historical laws that ‘man’ can change, and natural laws that ‘man’ cannot.<sup>218</sup> But one should not make too much of this. It is simply more of the matter of ‘intrinsic virtue’, more recognition that the activity of ‘man’ does not create magnetic charges etc., and more recognition that we make our own history, but not as we choose.<sup>219</sup> Immediately after citing Vico’s maxim, Marx criticises any social science that ignores matter—‘[e]ven a history of religion that is written in abstraction from this material basis is uncritical’—and any physical science that ignores history:

The weaknesses of the abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism which excludes the historical process, are immediately evident from the abstract and ideological conceptions expressed by its spokesmen whenever they venture beyond the bounds of their own speciality.<sup>220</sup>

It is clear, as the young Lukács recognised, that Marx’s materialism is not *unphilosophical*. One cannot after all imagine from within the bounds of pure materialism that objective things are a

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<sup>217</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 84. Marx cited from the *Holy Family*.

<sup>218</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 493–494.

<sup>219</sup> Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*. p. 10: ‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.’

<sup>220</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 493–494.

product of human labour. And yet Marx believes this. Thus, there is more to his materialism than 'pure materialism.' We can now begin the direct exegesis.



This thesis will now review a selection of Marx quotes from his *oeuvre* that support all that has been argued above:

Owing to its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labour confronts the worker during the labour process in the shape of capital, dead labour, which dominates and soaks up living labour-power.<sup>221</sup> This fact expresses merely that the object which labour produces—labour's product—confronts it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour. Labour's realization is its objectification.<sup>222</sup> In machinery, objectified labour confronts living labour within the labour process itself as the power which rules it ...<sup>223</sup> Hence, just as the worker relates to the product of his labour as an alien thing, so does he relate to the combination of labour as an alien combination, as well as to his own labour as an expression of his life, which, although it belongs to him, is alien to him and coerced from him and which ... [is] a burden, sacrifice etc. The communal or combined labour posited in this way—as activity in the passive, objective form ... as an alien objectivity ... hence itself a *particular* existence apart from them.<sup>224</sup> ... the whole world of wealth (i.e., the objective being of man) ...<sup>225</sup> In creating an *objective world* by his practical activity, in *working-up* inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species being ...<sup>226</sup>

The last quotation is the most important for this thesis, though they are all evidence for its interpretation of Marx. As Márkus said: 'man *forms and develops his own abilities only by objectifying*

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid, Chapter 15. p. 548.

<sup>222</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 66.

<sup>223</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 78. Marx cited.

<sup>224</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. pp. 470–471.

<sup>225</sup> Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*. p. 39. Marx cited.

<sup>226</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 71.

them.<sup>227</sup> The world is not a ‘world’, but is ‘the inorganic body of man’. And inorganic is the perfect word here in that it is: a) the non-living body of ‘man’; and b) something that has not sprung up ‘organically’, but is the product of human influence and manipulation.<sup>228</sup> As Márkus wrote, quoting Marx, there is not ‘man’ on the one hand and ‘world’ on the other, but there are ‘only two different sides of the development of the social individual’.<sup>229</sup> The constitution of ‘the world’ is human beings in development relating to and developing via interaction with their own objectified past activity, past activity which in its embodied extension *is* both the world and the human essence.<sup>230</sup>

It is conventional to believe that Marx is a figure split in two, agonising between two positions, that: a) we are free and alone in the universe, making our own history; or b) the Universe is sentient, has its own goals, and produces us in order to achieve its independent and autonomous aims. It is also conventional to believe that in Marx—as in Hegel—the two positions are contradictory and that the latter position ultimately prevailed. For this thesis, this is a false dichotomy. It applies to Hegel—perfectly, for the idea/move of us being free and alone is clearly and logically voided by *Geist*, the cunning of reason, and ‘Universal History’. But Marx *departed* from Hegel, and it does not apply to him—or, it applies to him only in what this thesis

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<sup>227</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. modern-Verlag Edition. p. 9. cf. Marx. ‘Only through the objectively unfolded wealth of *human* essence is the wealth of the subjective human sensibility either cultivated or created—a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short, senses capable of human satisfaction, confirming themselves as essential human powers.’ Cited in Ibid. p. 19. Simmel said something similar when he said the soul must leave itself on its path to itself. Simmel, ‘Culture and Crisis’, in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. Sage: UK, 1997. p. 75.

<sup>228</sup> Márkus collects quotes from *Grundrisse*, *Capital III*, and the *1844 Manuscripts* in which Marx explicitly calls the world the inorganic body of man. Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. pp. 3; 6; 13; 14; 83.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

<sup>230</sup> As Marx noted, Hegel was the first to see that as we create things, things create us, but he ruined his own insight by making *Geist* ultimately responsible for everything that ‘men’ did.

identifies as his Hegelian lapses. Marx says it very clearly in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*: we make our own history, but not as we choose.<sup>231</sup> The dead voices weigh on us. The history that we make, being not some ethereal thing made of smoke, but a real, unfolding, functioning and material world, gets its own ideas and pushes back on us, despite the fact that it is nothing but our own past activity. Marx explains this lucidly in the *Communist Manifesto*:

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. In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present: in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality. And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois the abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.<sup>232</sup>

In different texts, in different words, Marx's basic message is the same. The two sides of the social individual, 'the world' and concrete human beings, the immediate and non-immediate body of 'man', both need to find the means to flourish, a flourishing that is expanding and reciprocal, rather than one—as in capitalism, but especially pre-labour law capitalism—in which one feasts remorselessly upon the other. The human animal cannot grow if she does not objectify her activity. To have a *relation* with our objectified relations is the key to our growth, as well as being the reason that the world and humanity exist.<sup>233</sup> But we can spend too much time objectifying our activity. The *1844 Manuscripts* explore this theme at length. Their resounding lament is—and this is echoed in a condensed form in his anniversary of the *People's Paper*

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<sup>231</sup> Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*. p. 10.

<sup>232</sup> Marx, *Communist Manifesto*. pp. 61–62.

<sup>233</sup> This discussion will be taken up again in the third part of this chapter.

speech—why does our ingenuity backfire on us? Marx comes from the position of believing that the objectification of our energies should lead to greater subjectivities, in that there are more and greater externalised energies (a greater human essence) to appropriate. Instead:

The laws of political economy express the estrangement of the worker in his object thus: the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more values he creates, the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes; the better formed his product, the more deformed becomes the worker; the more civilized his object, the more barbarous becomes the worker; the mightier labour becomes, the more powerless becomes the worker; the more ingenious labour becomes, the duller becomes the worker and the more he becomes nature's bondsman.<sup>234</sup>

Here we have a statement that for Marx, human beings are servants of structures, and thus, that greater structures can only lead to greater subjugation. But despite this, to read Marx as a 'determinist' is to misunderstand his position. The structure is 'winning', in the passage above, the structure to a large extent determines our thoughts, actions, directions and determines that our contents and desires are of benefit to it, even when this is detrimental to us—detrimental, that is, from within a certain perspective that values human autonomy. For Adorno, when we become a mere addendum to production, we are, in a sense, no longer even alive.<sup>235</sup> The classic—less dramatic—example is *specialisation*. As Marx writes in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, specialisation means the enlargement of the field of knowledge, at the cost that each man knows only a fragment of it.<sup>236</sup> But none of this means that Marx is a determinist, or a structuralist.

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<sup>234</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. pp. 67–68. cf: Schmidt, *Concept of Nature in Marx*. p. 7: 'At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy ... All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force.' Marx is quoted, from his 'Speech at the Anniversary of the *People's Paper*', April 1856. This speech also quoted in: Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air*. p. 20.

<sup>235</sup> Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, Verso: UK, 1999. pp. 15–16; 27.

<sup>236</sup> Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Great Books in Philosophy Series, Prometheus Books: New York, 1995. pp. 156–157: "We are struck with admiration," says Lemontey, "in seeing among the ancients the same individual

Human subjection to human structures is not for Marx a permanent devil's pact—i.e., if you want to be human (to speak and think) the cost is not being human. Human subjection to human structures/activity is necessary for a time, in order to push us past early limitations.<sup>237</sup> It is then a fetter to be overcome. That nobody has yet been 'absolutely free' in human history—and as already discussed, the extent of human subjection to human structures is variable across time, space and class<sup>238</sup>—does not mean that human beings who will not be determined by their own past activity cannot exist in the future. Our unfreedom today is stark for Marx, and we must understand it, *not* in order to come to believe that it is eternal, but in order to overcome it, so that our past activity can become a means for the enrichment of our humanity, and not, as in the passage above, a master to which we play the role of bondsman in a form of service that means that the more we give, the less we have. In communism, the more we give, the more we are.

On the topic of our unfreedom today, it can be noted that for Marx, we must not be fooled by the fact that nobody is any longer the private property of anybody else. This does not negate our unfreedom/slavery in the least. It was stated in the introduction that blaming the bourgeoisie for worker exploitation is a waste of time for Marx. In our society one only 'blames' those who have volition, those who have done 'wrong', but who could have chosen to do 'right'. For Marx, none of this applies to the capitalists' exploitation of the worker. That in appearance people are dominating people under capitalism—that they are free enough to dominate—is for

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being at once, and in an eminent degree, philosopher, poet, orator, historian, priest, administrator and general. Our minds are awe-stricken at the contemplation of so vast a domain. Each one now plants his hedge and fences himself within his own enclosure. I do not know if by this cutting up the field is extended, but I know very well that man is lessened thereby."

<sup>237</sup> I.e., long tutelage/immaturity makes us capable of 'using our own reason'/maturity. Before the long period of unfreedom, there is no being capable of freedom.

<sup>238</sup> There is a hugely interesting discussion in the *Grundrisse* on this topic. pp. 163; 158. This thesis does not permit scope to comment, except to say that for Marx, the path to de-alienation (necessarily) traverses through extreme alienation.

Marx an illusion. Under the conditions of capitalism, unfreedom is universal, and the worker and the ‘profiting’ non-worker are both unfree.

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-alienation. But the former class finds in this self-alienation its confirmation and its good, its own power; it has in it a semblance of human existence.<sup>239</sup>

The bourgeoisie/proletariat relationship is not a relationship between living ‘men’. It is a relation of domination, but it is the domination of the dead over the living, the past over the present, of the conditions of work over the workers (and non-workers) themselves. The capitalist opens his mouth and it appears as if she speaks, but in reality, only capital speaks and demands that the proletariat reduce himself to a non-human labour function. Nobody living wins in capitalism. As

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<sup>239</sup> Marx & Engels, *The Holy Family: or, Critique of Critical Critique*, Foreign Languages Publishing House: Moscow, 1956. p. 51. Bertell Ollman writes about this fairly well in his book *Alienation*, but this work is inferior to Márkus’ comments in *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 79. The following is a long quote, but worth including *in toto*: ‘The same conception [as in the *Holy Family*] reappears, in a more mature form, recapitulating the results of the critical analysis of capitalist society, in a late manuscript of Marx written just before the final version volume one of *Das Kapital*. “In reality the domination of the capitalist over the workers is nothing else but the domination of the *conditions of work* which have become autonomous vis-a-vis the worker (those conditions include, aside from the objective precondition of the production process—the *means of production*—, also the objective preconditions of the subsistence and the efficiency of labour power, i.e., the means of subsistence of life belong also to them) over the *worker himself* ... The *functions* fulfilled by the capitalist are only functions of the capital—of the value that increases its value by sucking up living labour—practiced with *will* and *consciousness*. The capitalist functions only as *personified* capital, capital as a person, just as the worker is only personified *labour*, which is for him suffering, exertion. To the capitalist, however, labour belongs as a wealth-creating and increasing substance, just as in reality labour appears as an element unified with capital in the process of production in the character of its living, changing factor. Therefore the domination of the capitalist over the worker is the domination of the thing over the man, that of the dead labour over living labour, of the product over the producer, since actually commodities, which become the means of domination ... over the worker (although only as a means of domination for capital) are mere results of the process of production, merely its products.” ’

Adorno wrote, *nobody is 'alive'*. The dead hold all the cards and we have not one desire that is not theirs—unless we desire the overcoming of capitalism as the current source of our alienation and estrangement—unless, and this is important, we cease to take our needs from advertisements, from the culture industry, and begin to *imagine* new ones.

As stated above, Marx does not see human subjection to human activity as being an inexorable and eternal fact. The opposite is true, and—now that it *no longer serves a function*—he sees it as a bane to be remedied as swiftly as possible. Marx conducts several experiments in his thinking regarding the question of overcoming this domination/alienation. In 1844, his desire is to merge the two sides of ‘the social individual’, to re-embed human beings in the earth that is our other body, to make essence (as Marx defined it in 1845, as the ensemble of human relations, as the world) and existence one, in the absolute overcoming of what this thesis defines as estrangement.<sup>240</sup> But in the estimation of this thesis, Marx feared that re-establishing (or re-illuminating) the bonds between human beings and the earth<sup>241</sup> would be a regression. Though he had his problems with capitalism, Marx ultimately came to support the fact that in the modern world, human beings are not embedded in their environment and that to re-embed them completely would stifle the growth—the industrial growth, to be clear—that we needed to get to

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<sup>240</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition, Marx cited. p. 14: ‘Thus society is the completed, essential unity of man with nature, the true resurrection, the fulfilled ... naturalism of man and humanism of nature.’

<sup>241</sup> These bonds are visible in every single human society except our own. The radical bourgeoisie destroyed them as well as they could in their insatiable hunger for what Weber calls ‘formally free labour’. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, T. Parsons (trans.), George Allen & Unwin Ltd: UK, 1796. p. 21. The ‘private property’ relation to land is the only relation in which ‘history’ means nothing. A great many people needed to have their ancestral and habitual bonds with the land severed, in order that a) a few could ‘own’ them, and b) the unhomed would have no way to live (and no place to live) unless they submitted to wage slavery.

freedom.<sup>242</sup> For Marx, capitalist freedom is an illusion, and is only the freedom of the autonomised structure to dominate, determine and feed upon us. This thesis considers that Marx stops trying to overcome estrangement *completely* in the mid-1840s and comes to accept a gap between essence—as the ensemble of social relations—and existence, a gap between objective and subjective development. That is, as long as this gap does not become too great. Estrangement is vital for the process of man forming and developing ‘his *abilities ... by objectifying them*’. To encounter one’s own objectified activity as a thing, the world as a concatenation of things or an ‘immense collection of commodities’,<sup>243</sup> it must to some extent stand apart and be only partially appropriated. *However*, Marx *does not* give up on his desire to overcome alienation as this thesis has defined it. For Marx, it is imperative that our own activity come to be seen as such, that the world come to be seen as our own past activity. ‘Man’ and world can have some distance between them—what one is, and what one *can be*, given the state of the development of the productive forces—so long as it is seen that the world is the objectified activity of man, and thus it will remain unable to dominate him in a semblance of autonomy.

In the *Grundrisse*, Marx experiments with the idea of making each side of the social individual *fully autonomous*, with his concept of the famous automatic factories.<sup>244</sup> But this idea is

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<sup>242</sup> Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 61: ‘... We shall, of course, not take the trouble to enlighten our wise philosophers by explaining to them that the “liberation” of man is not advanced a single step by reducing philosophy, theology, substance and all the trash to “self-consciousness” and by liberating man from the domination of these phrases, which have never held him in thrall. Nor will we explain to them that it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means, that slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. “Liberation” is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse ...’

<sup>243</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 125.

<sup>244</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 704: ‘What was the living worker’s activity becomes the activity of the machine.’ cf. pp. 711–712.



doomed, for machines cannot create value, and they cannot even preserve and transfer the value that they already contain without a human presence. Machines allow human beings to objectify more activity than they could otherwise, but they cannot create value, and ultimately a factory with *no* variable capital is not a true factory: it may be object creating, but it cannot be *objectivity* creating. In *Capital*, Marx decides to bring about a less radical divorce by keeping labour as a part of human life but also very strictly demarcating life and work.<sup>245</sup> The goal of this is clear. He wants the means of production, the world as expended labour/accumulated knowledge/the human essence, to grow—its growth for Marx is tied to/makes possible concrete human growth, for what we are is largely an internalisation of the external.<sup>246</sup> But he also wants it to *not determine* any of our activities, traits, attributes or futures in the realm of freedom, where on the solid base of expanding large-scale industry—but again, not determined by it—we can finally benefit from this bank in which we have made so many ‘labour deposits’, developing our energies as an end in itself,<sup>247</sup> which also just means being free. Communism is the world in which there is more ossified humanity outside of us than any human being could internalise in a lifetime. It is the world in which there is the most to appropriate, at the least cost to freedom.

This is not to say capitalist ‘freedom’, which is the freedom of the dead to possess the living (i.e. the freedom of capital), but communist freedom, in which the present masters the past, and the living can live, speak, act and begin to steer the ship for the first time in history. Being unfree in the past, as mentioned above, of course served a purpose. ‘Early man’ for Marx is lazy and pacific, and it was only in—at least partial—unfreedom and servitude to her own past activity (the human beings who were the ‘agents’ of this change were every time, to varying extents, only walking, talking ghosts) that she became ambitious and productive—that she

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<sup>245</sup> This is made explicit in *Capital III*, pp. p. 958–959, but the desire is also clear, though less clearly formulated, in the first chapter of *Capital*.

<sup>246</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 173.

<sup>247</sup> Op. cit. p. 488.

became human.<sup>248</sup> Marx writes in *Capital* that capital brings human beings together, and in its greed for self-valorisation, it makes demands on human beings that push them beyond old limits.<sup>249</sup> But the time for unfreedom that calls itself freedom is over. Just as for Nietzsche, only so much Christian guilt (and no more) can make (some of) us capable of becoming supermen (while too much will make us last men), for Marx, just so much indentureship (and no more) to capital can make us great enough and free enough to grasp our destinies and increase both, while too much will make of us barbarians. We have reached the point where service is no longer making us better, but only ever worse. Again, this is one perspective, but it is one that would be shared by Marx and Nietzsche. The former had his own critique of the slave morality, a critique of levelling and universal envy. Nothing on earth could have made Nietzsche fond of Marx (who would be for Nietzsche just another howling dog<sup>250</sup>), but he would have agreed with Marx's sentiment when Marx savaged those 'communists'—and there were many—with whom he did not agree.

Crude communism is only the culmination of such envy and levelling-down on the basis of a *preconceived* minimum. How little this abolition of private property represents a genuine appropriation is shown by the abstract negation of the whole world of culture and civilization, and the regression to the *unnatural* simplicity of the poor and wantless individual who has not only not surpassed private property but has not yet even attained to it.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 51. As always, this is not absolute. As Márkus and Heller teach us, for Marx, there are always conflicting forces at work behind the unfolding of history, agency, radical need *and* the structural determinants that work through us without our conscious knowledge.

<sup>249</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 449–450.

<sup>250</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 90.

<sup>251</sup> Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*. Marx cited. p. 39.

The world is made of our past activity. ‘The whole objective world, the “world of commodities”, vanishes here as a mere aspect, as the merely passing activity, constantly performed anew, of socially producing men.’<sup>252</sup> That is its constitution, and Marx’s aim is to benefit from this past activity without being determined by it: this is what he means by a ‘genuine appropriation’ above. In Marx’s mind, there are too many dead voices speaking in the world—the world *is* in fact dead voices—and not enough living voices. The living meanwhile do not know that ghosts speak through them. Marx expresses frustration in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* at the human tendency—in the moment that a revolution has been successful—to have a failure of imagination and dig up corpses: to dig up old banners and armour instead of moving forward into the as yet unwritten future.<sup>253</sup> This failure of the imagination occurs because all too often in daily life, the voices that people imagine to be their own, and the ideas that they would die for, are not in fact their own. This is the basic argument of most forms of structuralism. The ‘big Other’ writes all books, speaks all words and thinks all thoughts—and at the same time does not exist. The problem from the point of view of this thesis is that structuralism does not see the two sides, as Marx did. Structuralism sees the structure and nothing else: anybody who looks like an actor is *actually* a fragment of the structure *possessing* a ‘person’. Marx sees a fuller picture: on one side the actor (living humans pushed upon by structures and, ultimately composed of elements of the structure that they have internalised, but not for that reason utterly devoid of agency) and on the other, the stage and the script, the world *qua* hypostatized human activity.

Márkus suggests that Althusser got Marx wrong twice. Firstly, the structure/world, though it can appear as separate and autonomous—and it usually does—can never *be* separate and autonomous. It is our other body and is connected to us.<sup>254</sup> Only in illusion can it appear to

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<sup>252</sup> Heller, *Theory of Need in Marx*. Marx cited. p. 73.

<sup>253</sup> Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*. p. 10.

<sup>254</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. pp. 77–78.

be truly external to us, a dead rock that we live on, a world of autonomous gods and monsters, some of whom created the world, or a stark material world animated by cold clockworks, cunning laws of history.<sup>255</sup> Inversely, human beings can never be entirely reduced to functions—that is to say, entirely determined (or interpollated) by the structure.<sup>256</sup> As its creators, human beings can never be fully reduced to the status of puppets by the said structure, though it can at times—when the pressure of contradiction is high—exert a very strong influence over all of their thoughts and actions. Secondly, when we are unfree, when we are pushed upon to a great extent, this is a result of human beings having lost or, more accurately, having not yet gained control. Such a situation is remediable via conscious human sensuous activity, via human praxis,<sup>257</sup> which is the goal of the communist revolution. In short, Althusser saw the contingent, unfree state of the human being—the manner in which history unfolds while we are primarily unfree—as being permanent and inexorable, as the secret of all human history. For Althusser, the theatre has no author,<sup>258</sup> and the communist revolution creates something divorced from the will of ‘man’. It creates something willed by history—authorless history. The abyss throws a dice and then the hand of history pulls the strings of beings who dance, without autonomy. This is fundamentally Althusser’s bleak view.<sup>259</sup> For Marx, it is different: the world has an author, and it is us. ‘Men are

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<sup>255</sup> Here, Marx and Nietzsche diverge. The Gods and monsters are real for Nietzsche, within a reality that can support them. For Marx, who is more ‘Enlightened’, a commodity and a nymph (*qua* discrete things) are both illusions: the surprising difference is that for Marx, the disenchanted or de-magified world beneath these false phenomenal appearances is itself magical, from the perspective of a pure materialist.

<sup>256</sup> Loc. cit. Castoriadis is also convincing in his argument that the structure could not possibly determine us as fully as many structuralist theories assert. Castoriadis, ‘Socialism and Autonomous Society’, in *Telos*, No. 43, 1980. p. 105: ‘A totally internalized institution would be equivalent to the most absolute tyranny and, at the same time, to the stopping of history. No distance would be possible with regard to the institution, any more than a change in the institution would be conceivable.’

<sup>257</sup> Marx & Engels, *Communist Manifesto*. p. 55.

<sup>258</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit.

<sup>259</sup> Gedö has an explanation for the strange nature of Althusser’s position. Gedö, ‘Why Marx and Nietzsche’. pp. 335–336: ‘Nietzschean thought-motifs, even though entirely without reference to, acceptance of, or application of Nietzsche, pervade all three phases of Althusser’s philosophical activity. These thought-motifs

the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real active men ... and the existence of men is their actual life-process.’<sup>260</sup> The authorship is not known to us—every god invented is a transferal of responsibility/act of bad faith—and the self-production of human beings is *severely* constrained by the status quo: what we think and can think is ‘the direct efflux of ... material behaviour’.<sup>261</sup> But none of this negates the fact that the world is activity, and that human beings are authors of both self and world, which are not in the Marxian conception of things discrete entities, as they are for Althusser, and as they must be, if one sees the determining structure as *actually* being a thing apart, and not as Marx saw it, as only *appearing* to be a) apart and b) as having all the power—and as appearing this way *only because we are alienated*, because we have become the tools of our tools.

Heller agrees with Márkus in his critique of Althusser’s belief that the laws of history: a) have no author and b) are our author.<sup>262</sup> There will be a complete discussion of the false dichotomy between anthropology or class struggle and determinism or historical materialism later in the chapter as an important theme. Though this thesis denies a *rupture* in Marx, it does not deny a *strenuous tension*, and thus it is difficult to discuss any element of Marx without some mention of freedom and determinism surfacing. For now, we have done what is needful, which was to explain the constitution of the world—a task already in part completed in the introduction. The constitution of the world is, in short, past human activity, in a form at rest—

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were merged with other philosophical ideas (including those of positivistic orientation) and had a strong influence on Althusser's interpretation of Marx, an influence that was partly direct, partly mediated by philosophical structuralism, French Nietzscheanism, and even by Lacan’s adoption of Heidegger. The Nietzschean thought-motifs, hidden in the presuppositions of Althusser's philosophizing, but carried in his explanation of Marxism, a philosophy alien to Nietzschean thought-motifs, brought about tempting shock effects, a shimmering intertwining of theoretical stringency and arbitrariness, transparency and opaque depth, conclusive proof and flotsam in a vacuum.’

<sup>260</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 47.

<sup>261</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>262</sup> Heller, *Theory of Need in Marx*. pp. 85–87.

objectivity in Marx's sense of the word—and present human activity, in a form at unrest—subjectivities sustaining and adding to objectivity.<sup>263</sup> Now it is timely to discuss the manner of the creation of the world that is 'our inorganic body'.

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<sup>263</sup> It cannot be stressed enough that objectivity is essential *relations*, and that when we speak of the world as a totality, we are speaking of matter, old activity embedded in matter, new sensuous activity and living human beings: the world is not a world, but a real social life process.

We have just established that the world is made of hypostatised human activity—against the more orthodox reading, from Engels to Stalin and beyond, which sees the material world as being a fixed thing that can be changed only cosmetically/superficially. Such change is guided by laws *external* to ‘man’ and his activity: laws that, in fact, determine all human activity.<sup>264</sup> In this second part of the chapter on Marx, we will discuss *how this world*, composed of hypostatised human activity, *is created*. Provisionally, we can say that if the world is made of activity, then it is clear that in order to make it, we must act. The primary mode of activity that is generative of seemingly autonomous structures is *labour* activity, human productive activity, the activity through which human beings produce the means for the subsistence of their lives—and reproduce the means of production—in a manner to some extent circumscribed by the already extant means of production that they find around themselves.<sup>265</sup> This mode of production *must not*, as Marx writes in *The German Ideology*:

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<sup>264</sup> This matter is complex, as noted above, in that Engels recognises some human autonomy, Lenin does not completely divorce the laws of history from human activity—as is demonstrated in his debates with Bukharin—and Marx frequently writes material that, at first glance, validates the orthodox materialist reading. However, it is nonetheless clear that the reading of Marx that this thesis propounds is for ‘orthodox Marxism’—recognising that this is itself heterogeneous—backwards and incorrect, a form of ‘subjective idealism’. This was, at least, the complaint of the Communist International when Lukács first voiced the interpretation being put forward here.

<sup>265</sup> Marx also speaks of the importance of the activity of *exchange*, but before one has things to exchange, one already has a means of production at a specific level, determining to some extent relations of exchange as one element of the broader ‘relations of production’. That is, determining who has things as their own disposable property to exchange and enough liberty of time and movement to begin engaging in this important human activity.

be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals.

Rather, it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are.<sup>266</sup>

This is, as already stated, the ‘real social life process’ which is material, objective and social. It is sensuous activity, it is the world, it is the unfurled and unfurling human essence, *and* now we can add: it is life. This is the mode in which human beings, via the coordinated application of human brains and nerves to some object, activate their capacity to perform labour—a capacity, for Marx, that is a part of all human beings.<sup>267</sup>

Labour is *different* from other forms of activity because it creates an objective world.<sup>268</sup> Human activity becomes *labour* when it becomes productive, when it is useful or *socially necessary*—the latter comes about when there is a division of labour regarding the production of useful things. Labour—as stated above—is not strictly that kind of activity that produces the things that human beings—or any other animals—need *to survive*. All animals produce what they need to survive without creating a world, without proving themselves to be ‘conscious species beings’. The crux of the matter is ‘usefulness’, as ‘usefulness’ is tied to *need* which for Marx, can in human beings extend well beyond necessity, function and bare utility (though utility will always remain inexorably tied to the creation of value). Need is need in human beings, Marx

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<sup>266</sup> Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*. p. 10.

<sup>267</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 134: ‘If we leave aside the determinate quality of productive activity, and therefore the useful character of the labour, what remains is its quality of being an expenditure of human labour-power. Tailoring and weaving, although they are qualitatively different productive activities, are both a productive expenditure of human brains, muscles, nerves, hands etc., and in this sense both human labour. They are merely two different forms of the expenditure of human labour-power.’

<sup>268</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 71: ‘In creating an objective world by his practical activity, in working-up inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species being ...’



writes in *Capital*, whether it arises from the stomach or the imagination<sup>269</sup>—the activity that generates an armchair is *labour*, it is value creating activity, although no organic form of life can die for lack of one. If something can fulfil a human need—for example, the *socially specific* human need to eat cooked food with a knife and fork, a need *not* fulfilled by shovelling down raw meat<sup>270</sup>—it can do so because it is not some fragment of unadulterated ‘nature’. Rather it is a ‘thing’, as this thesis has defined things—as material objects containing a quantum of objectified human energy. We recognise the embedded activity by stating that something has *value*—except in distorted fetishism, where we are attracted to the thing *without* recognising that the thing is covetous to us because it is a product, because it is saturated in human activity. When labour is useful or socially necessary, *it is constitutive of value*, it is the modality of activity that causes things to be. Whenever one finds value nestled in something, some substance—if one finds that it can satisfy a human need (and humans are humans *because* found ‘objects’ do not satisfy)—this is because this thing has had some duration of productive, useful, socially necessary attention applied to it. It has become a ‘use-value’, a *created object* that is a duality in that it has a *material substance*—matter—and a *non-material* (but real) *substance*—value. In combination, the functional unity of the two substances has: a) objectivity and reality; and b) some kind usefulness for a human being<sup>271</sup>—an ability to perform as a need satisfier. This productive or labour activity is the

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<sup>269</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 125.

<sup>270</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 92: ‘Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth.’

<sup>271</sup> A human being of a particular place and time, that is. As Marx writes, the activity that produces things also produces needs of certain kind—which to some extent determines what kind of human being we are.

*Grundrisse*. p. 92. Sex is just as helpful to think about as hunger in this context, and for Marx, the manner in which the need for sex manifests itself is the one *most* indicative of development. Just as for ‘modern man’, bolting down raw food is not an adequate solution to hunger—his *need* is for a steak, which is a materio-social object—so sex according to heats and unconscious responses to genetic markers is no longer an appropriate response to desire. (This thesis will not posit rape as natural, as this feeds into the dangerous trope that modern men rape because they cannot control ‘natural’ urges, a trope that allows the patriarchal nature of modern society to conceal itself.) The *need* to date and get married is a sign of what Marx sees as a higher

kind of activity that makes the/a world. So too, only in making a world and interacting with it do we become human—for as already stated, things are only things, are only real and objective in so far as they are products, and humans are only humans because they can objectify their own activity and enter into relations with it.<sup>272</sup>

For Marx, we also create prostheses, organs external to those contained in our bodies: our brains, nerves, hands and feet. These are planes, trains, roads, jackhammers, the internet,

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society. As he writes: 'The immediate, natural, necessary relationship of human being to human being is the *relationship of man to woman*. In this *natural* species-relationship man's relationship to nature is immediately his relationship to man, as his relationship to man is his relationship to nature, to his own *natural* condition ... In this relationship the extent to which the human essence has become nature for man or nature has become the human essence of man is *sensuously manifested*, reduced to a perceptible *fact*. From this relationship one can judge thus the entire level of mankind's development.' As this is an early text, we still see the strong desire in Marx to absolutely overcome estrangement that he later moderates. The *1844 Manuscripts* are quoted here in Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 69.

<sup>272</sup> The objection might arise here that for this thesis, Marx cannot be said to be real and objective, and neither can a two-foot square patch of dessert that nobody has yet seen, or a part of the ocean too deep for creatures like us, even with the aid of machines. On this topic, Marx himself writes: '[f]or that matter, nature, the nature that preceded human history, is not by any means the nature in which Feuerbach lives, it is nature which today no longer exists anywhere (except perhaps on a few Australian coral islands of recent origin) and which, therefore, does not exist for Feuerbach either.' Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 46. If Marx does not go so far as to say that a place that 'man' has never been does not exist—and this is debatable, turning on interpretation—he does unequivocally say that an undiscovered coral island does not belong to *the state of nature* in which 'men' live—the nature/reality/world we have produced. Only the things that we make, properly speaking, belong to objective reality. (This thesis refuses to say 'our reality', for in doing so, one becomes idealist and falls into the trap of believing that 'our reality' is not really real, instead of the opposite as Marx writes, that the coral island is not really real, is not part of nature—the nature we have produced—and is in fact, although composed of matter, *nothing*.) Marx in *Capital* writes of '[a]ir, virgin soil, [and] natural meadows' as being use values that are not values. p. 131. Here he departs from his usual language, in which 'bare nature'—one should say pre-nature—is 'mere material', 'nothing to man' until it has come to be the bearer of value. But one cannot and must not let phrases like this in Marx persuade that Marx believes in an autonomous reality *that is not always already 'a product of industry'*, that is not part matter and part congealed activity.

cranes and nuclear power plants<sup>273</sup>—all prosthetic limbs of ‘man’, strange limbs that are nevertheless directed by the minds and wills of ‘men’. In the Marxian mindset, tools are tools, and anything done by a tool is done by a human being. If one woman lifts 10 tonnes of steel with a crane, *she* has still done it, or if a man in a bunker directs a drone and kills a distant target, *he* has still done it. Machines give human beings strengths and abilities beyond the relativity limited strength of their bodies, but the things that we do with machines are still *human* actions.<sup>274</sup> If twenty human beings combine their energy to lift a car, this is the same as one person lifting a car with a forklift as, the energies of the twenty human beings who made the forklift are there with the driver, helping her.<sup>275</sup> If a man walks on a two wooden legs—or the latest in ‘blade’ prostheses—we do not say the legs have walked the man, though we are happy enough to say that a drone has ‘dispatched’ a target.

Marx spends a great deal of time writing about one species of organ in particular: the species of organ that the human being designed to help himself create subsistence goods. These are for us food, a home, clothes, things to go in the home—and all of a certain character. A white, middle-class man, ‘homed’ and ‘fed’ in the village of a goatherd, would likely not feel that his ‘human’ needs were being fulfilled. Colonials in early Australia often wrote of starvation though they ate piles of kangaroo every day: there was not any bread! For a nomad prior to the Neolithic revolution, the need of ‘home’ was only fulfilled by roaming. What a human being is

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<sup>273</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. Marx’s own examples were: ‘locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc.’ p. 706. In *Capital*, Marx returns to this theme, asking why nobody has studied the evolution of these vital external organs of ‘man’ in Darwinian style. pp. 493–494.

<sup>274</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 285: ‘An instrument of labour is a thing, or a complex of things, which the worker interposes between himself and the object of his labour and which serves as a conductor, directing his activity onto that object. He makes use of the mechanical, physical and chemical properties of some substances in order to set them to work on other substances as instruments of his power, and in accordance with his purposes.’

<sup>275</sup> Hydraulic power and the energy released by burning fossil fuel are also, of course, factors, but in our alienation we are in the habit of attributing *all* of the energy of the forklift to these things.

and needs is not static for Marx, but hugely elastic. It is determined by environment, or in his own words, the level of development of the productive forces, the state of his tools.<sup>276</sup>

Subsistence goods creating organs (tools) basically do two things. As repositories of value—being direct products of labour from an earlier moment in time—they already have value, and when fresh labour is applied to them, they release the value stored within them and transfer it into a new item. Secondly, apart from having value of their own—value that only *appears* to be consumed in the labour process when in reality this value is only changing form<sup>277</sup>—these external organs of ‘man’ help ‘man’ impregnate a great many new items with new value, particularly when these organs are tools of the form of production called ‘large-scale industry’. Any human being can with nothing but her own body take an ‘object’ of ‘nature’ and manipulate it until it has value. But this barehanded production requires that: a) one is a genius; and b) one has time. When one uses industrial or mechanised technology to impregnate the world with value/create the world (and all new value created on the factory floor is the value being extracted from the living workers—the ‘variable capital’—though there is an illusion that workers are the merely facilitating the combination of *already valuable* things) one needs neither genius nor time. One can rather create many more valuable items with the expenditure of much less skill and time.

Marx is careful to point out that machines cannot cause a human being to generate *more* value per hour than she could with hand tools: they are not magic. What they do is sow fresh human energy into a greater magnitude of (already valuable) raw material and thus, though no more fresh value is added than before in a given time period, more *old* value/dead labour is *transferred/preserved* from raw material into new product. The capitalist can thus (only seemingly

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<sup>276</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 1035.

<sup>277</sup> It is called ‘constant capital’ by Marx because, within ‘normal’ conditions of production, the return is equal to the expenditure.

paradoxically) make more money from selling mass-produced goods that each individually contain less value than a handmade equivalent would.<sup>278</sup> This shallower but wider distribution of the new value of workers is the crux of the creation of relative surplus value—it is not as simple as there being *more* things created—which capitalists resorted to after they were forced to recognise labour laws, and thus abandon their quest for absolute surplus value. But what is important here is that whether I am making toys by hand or with the latest machine on the market, the *productive* activity remains the same: a human being is acting and this useful action is producing something. It is producing an item that has: a) a substance of value and b) a quantity of value.<sup>279</sup> All production is, in short, about creating a material (visible) object saturated with an invisible (but very real) immaterial substance.

The manner in which one acts when creating useful things—one creates commodities when one creates useful things but has no interest in their use—generates a reality with a history and a horizon of possibility that directly corresponds to the specificities of the technology used. The state of religion, culture and politics are all determined by the specificities of productive activity. When technology changes, the world literally changes. If any human beings refuse to change, they will find themselves ‘out of touch’, they will find themselves at the centre of a locus of hostility, they will become Don Quixote.<sup>280</sup> History finds it easy to hold Charles I, Louis XVI and Tsar Nicholas II responsible for their own depositions. We are directed to a tax that bypassed parliament, to a shameless extravagance in the face of abject poverty, to the execution of peaceful protesters. But Marx disagrees with all of that—for the most part—saying: the world moved on and they did not. We look to their activity for the reasons for their deaths, and

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<sup>278</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 308–309.

<sup>279</sup> To determine the specific quantity, the exchange-value, one needs a series—chain—of use-values.

<sup>280</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 176: ‘And then there is Don Quixote, who long ago paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economic forms of society.’

because we look there, we find it. But in human history one can find 10,000 acts of tyranny as bad or worse, in response to which not one person thought: let us kill this king.

Marx says, on the contrary, some change in productive activity—the real, material human life process that is in its extension the world—demanded a corresponding change in politics, art, sexuality, education and religion. If the material world changes, and a group of people tell you that it has *not changed* and demand that you act in the manner most appropriate for a world that *has now disappeared*, then of course there will be tension and trouble. In short, sensuous useful activity engenders a world—the composition of which is the sensuous relations between living labour and hypostatized/dead human labour—and then the consciousness of ‘man’ is determined by the contingencies of that world. Perhaps some will be able to keep their old ways and mindsets out of sheer determination—or folly. But the minds of most are not that strong, and soon, the newfangled men—the people made by the times and for the times—will come for them.

A more complete elucidation of Marx’s two forms of determinism is appropriate here, as we are speaking about how the world is formed—by the activity called labour—and in the works of Marx, the manner in which we labour/the tools that we use, has a determining force upon us—the extent of which we are about to discuss. Of the two forms of determinism present in Marx’s works, there is one that is compatible with ideas of freedom and one that is not. It will be concluded that both forms of determinism are different responses to the same problem: that for Marx, human experience/will cannot determine reality/the course of history, because in the final analysis, material reality determines experience. We are caught in a circle, in which the manner in which we act while we produce our means of subsistence and the tools that we use determines the content of reality, which in turn determines the content of human consciousness, which determines what we think and how we act while we produce our means of subsistence.

Marx sees that historical change occurs and that the source of this change is not conscious human willing.<sup>281</sup> And yet, something quite frequently acts as a circuit breaker, changing the manner in which human beings act/produce/use technology, which changes the world—the base—which changes the content of the human essence/consciousness/need, and all other elements of the superstructure. Marx's two responses are as follows. The first is to 'lean on'/lapse into Hegel and create a model of social change *qua* materialist dialectics in which human beings are dissolved by automatic processes. This manner of thinking goes against Marx's broader aim of overcoming alienation, and for this thesis, it is *always* a lapse. The second is to create a model of change in which human beings *attempt* to make their own history, but generally fail due to prevailing conditions of alienation—all the dead voices that speak *through* us, though we do not notice that the words passing through us are not our own. This model too is a modality of materialist dialectics—this is not the 'class struggle' model that competes against the 'historical materialism' model, but the model in which 'historical materialism' and 'class struggle' form two parts of a whole. Following Márkus and Heller, this thesis regards this as the model that best describes the works of Marx. It will now examine the problem of the circle more closely, and Marx's two responses to it.

The below is the most definitive statement of Marx's idea that human beings do not make history as they choose, according to a conscious plan:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life.

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<sup>281</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*, modern-Verlag Edition. p. 88.

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework [womb is a pleasing alternate translation] of the old society.<sup>282</sup>

Marx and Nietzsche—as well as Freud—are quite close in opinion here, in that they all (in the style of Hegel) discredit what you tell them about yourself, about what you think about why you have ‘acted’ in such and such a manner. Rather, they say, the ‘sovereign I’ is *not* the coherent master of its domain that it believes itself to be, and all prefer to divine the *real, unconscious* motivations behind your thoughts and actions. For Marx, in the quote above at least, what you think and how you act are more determined by the pressures of the unfolding laws of history, by external factors, than by anything internal to a given human being, such as personal reason,

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<sup>282</sup> Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*. pp. 20–21.



calculation, pain, reward, etc. For Nietzsche (and for Freud), the real impetus of your action is the pressures of the unknown movements of the drives in the unconscious (or of the body, as Nietzsche more often wrote). But we will for now put Nietzsche (and Freud) aside here, having noted this similarity, as we are explicitly discussing a problem that troubled Marx. For him, the world is composed of human activity, and the means of its creation is human labour: purposive, value-bestowing activity. However, although we make the world, and although human labour is the fount of history, we are not free to make the world or its history as we choose. The world changes, but not because of anything that human beings consciously decide. We are, in the end, too determined by the world to determine it. In *Capital*, years after Marx wrote the above, he stated that he still held firm in the beliefs that he had written down in his ‘draft’ of *Capital*,<sup>283</sup> and engaged in new elucidations of the same sentiment.

... the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought.<sup>284</sup>

Human consciousness is thus not what it thinks it is. It *consciously* directs neither the broader progress of our species, nor the narrower, individual actions of our lives. Like Hegel’s philosophy, it comes too late, after the individual act or the broader telos ‘has cut and dried’, but nevertheless takes credit for it. The consciousness that thinks that it is in charge is itself a product of laws external to it, the obstinate laws of the surrounding material world. The ideas in people’s heads about the world around them come from the world around them, and as discussed above, it is not the case that human beings decide that the world should change and then change it. Rather, the world changes, and *then* people change. The mass movements that we

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<sup>283</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 102.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

associate with change are not what they seem. They occur *after* some change in the base has already occurred, after some minority attempts to keep some element of a superfluous/redundant superstructure in place. There is thus a clear barrier to human beings directing the course of history, and it is that our minds would have to change *before* the world did.<sup>285</sup> To change the world of tomorrow, one must change the specific mode of the useful activity of today. One must change the manner in which we impregnate matter with value in the creation of a world. However, one cannot change the manner in which one labours if the manner in which one labours—and what we think about everything more generally—is determined by the exigencies of the world in its current form. Marx states, again and again, that freedom is not possible until we create a situation in which our value-creating activity is of a very specific nature. However, if we are not yet free, we are not in a position to direct history towards the conditions that will make freedom bloom.

Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature.<sup>286</sup> Let us finally imagine, for a change, an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common, and expending their many different forms of labour-power in full self-awareness as one single social labour force ... For a society of commodity producers, whose general social relation of production consists in the fact that they treat their products as commodities, hence as values, and in this material form bring their individual, private labours into relation with each other as homogeneous human labour,

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<sup>285</sup> To propose a 'hidden imaginary' in the works of Marx of course releases us from this bind, but that will be put aside for the moment as this 'hidden imaginary' cannot be made responsible for all social change. It only comes into being after a great deal of history has already unfolded and it only makes change *possible*, not easy or likely. Finally, the 'hidden imaginary' does not contradict the idea that the exigencies of a given world determine what we think. It just means that after a certain amount of history has unfolded, human beings become capable of thinking thoughts that disturb the logic of the extant world, and can alter the course of history from its most likely path.

<sup>286</sup> Marx, *Capital III*. pp. 958–959.

Christianity with its religious cult of man in the abstract, more particularity in its bourgeois development, i.e., in Protestantism, Deism, etc., is the most fitting form of religion. In the ancient Asiatic, Classical antique, and other such modes of production, the transformation of the product into a commodity, and therefore men's existence as producers of commodities, plays a subordinate role, which however increases in importance as these communities approach nearer and nearer to the stage of their dissolution. Trading nations, properly so called, exist only in the interstices of the ancient world, like the gods of Epicurus in the *intermundia*, or Jews in the pores of Polish society. Those ancient social organisms of production are much more simple and transparent than those of bourgeois society. But they are founded either on the immaturity of man as an individual, when he has not yet torn himself loose from the umbilical cord of his natural species-connection with other men, or on direction relations of dominance and servitude. They are conditioned by a low stage of development of the productive powers of labour and correspondingly limited relations between men within the process of creating and reproducing their material life, hence also limited relations between man and nature. These real limitations are reflected in the ancient worship of nature, and in other elements of tribal religions. The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life—process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control. This, however, requires that society possess a material foundation, or a series of material conditions of existence, which in their turn are the natural and spontaneous product of a long and tormented historical development.<sup>287</sup> The social relations of individuals to one another as a power over the individuals which has become autonomous, whether conceived as a natural force, as chance or in whatever other form, is a necessary result of the fact that the point of departure is not the free social individual.<sup>288</sup>

Marx says, tautologically, freedom is the only possible precondition of freedom. If we want freedom during non-labour time—if we want the fount of our activity/interests/ideas/beliefs to

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<sup>287</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 171–176.

<sup>288</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 78. Marx is quoted from the *Grundrisse*.

be ourselves, rather than these things being determined by our own dead labour—then we must act freely during the labour process, in order that we understand that we are objectifying our activity. We must do it voluntarily, and do it in such a way—mastering the means of production *qua* associated producers—that this new and renewed activity will not, once congealed, master us. However, if we are not free to begin to act in such a manner that will *create* freedom until we are *already free*, and if, until we are free, the exigencies of the extant world determine how we act, then there is a clear barrier to freedom.

And so we have a problem, the problem of the circle introduced above. If the impetus of human history is not conscious human willing—and it will not be until we have created the (communist) conditions that make such a thing finally possible—then it must be something else. This thesis has admitted that Marx at times lapses into something resembling a Hegelian manner of thinking, and when he does so, the ‘something else’ that guides history appears to have little to do with human beings, except in so far as these human beings act as vessels for external forces. However, this is a false semblance. Even in Marx’s strong deterministic paradigm, the laws that direct the activity of today are the congealed activity of yesterday. As Marx writes in *The German Ideology*, in an extremely deterministic section: ‘the conditions of their self-activity ... are produced by this self-activity.’<sup>289</sup> Living human beings may be running around with slogans on their lips and fire in their eyes, convinced that they are fighting to bring about a change that they ‘believe in’, when in fact that change has already occurred, and they are only outraged because they are sensitive to a contradiction that they do not understand. They are being moved by forces and, in typical human fashion, they insist on coming up with a ‘reason’ for their activity based in a heroic ego that is responsible for every deed, and then they insist on believing that the individual motivation preceded/precipitated the action, that it came first and not after.

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<sup>289</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 91.

The strongly deterministic answer to the problem of change does not solve but rather sidesteps the issue of free will. This solution looks at the material constitution and laws of the present and states that, given the nature of for example, capitalism, there can be no result/outcome of the development of capitalism except communism. The law of the falling rate of profit is the prime example of this kind of thinking. Another is the following:

in short all conditions of wealth, that the greatest conditions for the reproduction of wealth, i.e. the abundant development of the social individual—that the development of the productive forces brought about by the development of capital itself, when it reaches a certain point, 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; hence the capital relation a barrier for the development of the productive powers of labour. When it has reached this point, capital, i.e., wage labour, enters into the same relation towards the development of social wealth and of the forces of production as the guild system, serfdom, slavery and is necessarily stripped off as fetter. The last form of servitude assumed by human activity, that of wage labour on one side and capital on other is thereby cast off like a skin and this casting—off is itself the result of the mode of production ...<sup>290</sup>

In sum: ‘the bourgeoisie create their own grave diggers’.<sup>291</sup> Such a statement is a proposition that this thesis cannot personally entertain, that freedom can be the blind result of unfreedom. It is not in Marx—in this strongly deterministic moment/lapse of Marx—the product of *Geist*, for Marx rejects ‘Universal History’ even in his deterministic moods. But rather, the future that we *foresee*—with dialectal science—is the only possible outcome of the world as it is, *as we have unfreely/unconsciously created it*. This is a possibility that Marx entertains in the moments where he denies human agency more completely, and takes his most passive stance, looking at what is, what was and what must come next, according to the nature of the laws of the extant. Here,

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<sup>290</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 749.

<sup>291</sup> Marx & Engels, *Communist Manifesto*. p. 57.

change is ‘automatic’. But even here, the orthodox reading is not strictly speaking correct, for the laws of the extant still remain a human product and thus, human beings cannot be said to be passive vessels through which an external force achieves its aims. History here is undirected and undirectable, *but we still make it*. There is a Hegelian flavour to this solution—though it rejects *Geist*—in that what *ought* to be, what we want, is irrelevant. This is the view of Marx—in his strongly deterministic moments, and they are there in his writings—that is widely believed to be the primary or triumphant *Weltanschauung* of his works.

However, as noted above, Marx provides *two* solutions or responses to the problem of how human beings make history, but not consciously. The other solution is the one that this thesis has so far primarily been engaging with, the solution that Márkus and Heller emphasise in their respective readings of Marx, in which ‘determinism’ and ‘class struggle’ are *not* competing moments but are rather two integral parts of a whole. *This* is the solution that, for this thesis, is Marx’s primary or triumphant position. From within the logic of this position, one does not end up with the nonsense of human freedom being the result of alien forces, an idea in no way made more plausible by situating them as being blind or insentient.<sup>292</sup> In this particular paradigm, Marx states that we do have free will—though it is frequently thwarted—and that although the ego is not (yet) all that it believes itself to be, it is not without defences against the partially autonomous structures that are its own activity congealed. And though we must endlessly struggle against our own congealed dead labour, and be beaten by it much of the time, in the end what we *want* will prevail, for the world *is* ‘the social individual’. It may master us, yes, but this is human beings being mastered by human activity. We may be unfree—in the sense of what we will call in the Nietzsche analysis ‘desserts freedom’—but dead labour is still human labour, and thus, even in unfreedom we are still in a sense getting what we want. And in addition, because this is a weak or

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<sup>292</sup> That this nonsense is missing from Márkus and Heller’s reading of Marx is perhaps the best feature of this reading.

compatibilist determinism, our free will is not *always* thwarted, and thus, living labour at times gets its voice heard in more direct ways as well. Marx therefore practiced and studied politics as well as political economy—a move which makes no sense at all from within the logic of his strong determinism.

For Castoriadis, the strong determinism in Marx—which this thesis is situating as being ultimately idiosyncratic—is Marx’s final, mature position. And if it is taken seriously, for Castoriadis it negates Marx’s ideas about freedom and human beings directing the course of their own destiny.<sup>293</sup> Rundell agrees with Castoriadis to some extent about the strong deterministic strain of Marx’s thinking paralysing and supressing<sup>294</sup> a competing strain of thinking, a competing view *outside* of—or at least ‘not reducible to’—the paradigm of labour and production, a strain of thinking in which human beings have more volition. Thus Rundell departs from Márkus and Heller, neither of whom see Marx’s determinism and voluntarism as being remotely contradictory. As both figures argue so well, the two are complimentary. However, Rundell also uses Castoriadis against himself here, and finds a different path back towards Márkus and Heller. Rundell states that on the one hand, Marx has a strongly deterministic strain of thought, one that removes human beings and human wills from the equation of history. And on the other hand, he says, Marx has a ‘hidden imaginary’ that ‘undermines the theoretical principles of the paradigm of production’ and grants human beings the power to effect change.<sup>295</sup>

Rundell’s move is attractive, in that it is able to recognise strong determinism and strong voluntarism within the works of Marx without one negating the other. However, ultimately this thesis will not follow him on this point. Instead, it is considered here that the strong determinism

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<sup>293</sup> Castoriadis, ‘On the History of the Workers’ Movement’, in *Telos*, No. 30 Winter 1976–77. p. 14.

Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, K. Blamey (trans.), Polity Press: UK; USA, 2005. pp. 45–54.

<sup>294</sup> Rundell, *Origins of Modernity*. p. 11.

<sup>295</sup> Landry, *Marx and the Postmodernism Debates: An Agenda for Critical Theory*. p. 189. Rundell cited.

that Castoriadis and Rundell read in Marx appears infrequently, and must be read as being exceptional/a lapse into a kind of Hegelian thinking that is ultimately alien to Marx. This thesis prefers the reading of Márkus and Heller which sees Marx's determinism as on the whole being softer, and as being one half of a whole in which determinism and voluntarism operate together, and in fact *require* one another. It therefore rejects Castoriadis' assertion that one must choose, an assertion that will be revisited later in this chapter.

However, although this thesis on balance rejects Rundell's splitting of Marx—this splitting that goes with and beyond Castoriadis' splitting of Marx—it does take from Rundell the idea of the 'hidden imaginary' in Marx, using it to help solve a problem that arises when one follows Márkus and Heller's reading of Marx. In this reading, where determinism and voluntarism are two sides of a whole, there is—and this is taken from a close reading of Marx—a 'what we want' that directs the unfolding telos of 'man'. However, this 'what we want', the 'what we want' of the living (when we are not being fully determined, i.e. being ruled by the 'what we want' of the dead) is circumscribed by the fact that human consciousness is very much determined by the world as it is. 'Man' can have a radical need in this paradigm, but this need cannot be *all that* radical. A radical need is, after all, a need that a given means of production can engender but not satisfy.<sup>296</sup> This severely limits the scope of change in human life, for the possible avenues for change are circumscribed by extant reality—and the point is to change the world. Radical need can explain paradigm shifts and how quantitative growth can become a qualitative shift, but it cannot really open up human history—the human telos—to any kind of real self-directing. Our ability to change the world is still very limited in this reading of Marx. If one adds to this reading of Marx Rundell's 'hidden imaginary'—though it is not needed here, as it is in Rundell's reading, to reconcile opposites—then the human telos is opened up to real, radical change. This change is not unbounded, for this thesis is developing the 'hidden imaginary'

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<sup>296</sup> Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*. p. 69.



into a materialist theory of the imagination, where the imagination can break open the laws of the extant, *but it is also a product of the extant*, and thus, can only break them open within reason.

The full discussion of determinism and voluntarism, however, belongs to a later part of this Marx chapter, that on creation and imagination. It can now be seen that the extent to which we are determined by the world around us and its laws is a question of the efficacy of the human imagination, as Marx suggests in the following:

... just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honoured disguise and borrowed language.<sup>297</sup>

If we are to become able to change the world, to change the world as Marx desired it to be changed, we need an imagination. We must not waste an opportunity for the new by destroying the old and then rebuilding it, because we do not know what else to do. And we must make sure that if we are calling for change, we are not calling out with the voices of the dead, or in some other way having forces external to us act through us. Because to do so is never to change the world. Rather, it is only a process of remedying a contradiction *of* the world, which is the opposite, to serve and preserve the actual, to bring the superstructure into alignment with the base in some manner or another, without understanding why we are acting, thinking thoughts that are not our own or that have nothing to do with our actions.<sup>298</sup> To engage the hidden

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<sup>297</sup> Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*. p. 10.

<sup>298</sup> As previously stated, matters are complicated by the fact that for Marx, the communist revolution is *both* what we want and what is simply coming. The imagination, as will later be discussed, is *more* relevant today in that we are no longer revolutionary and communism is not simply coming: it has no chance of coming into being unless it is imagined/willed into being.

imaginary is to become a radical Don Quixote. That is to say, rather than holding onto a form of consciousness/style of life that no longer has an adequate base to support it, one must forge a form of consciousness that *does not yet* have an adequate base to support it, and change the course of history in such a manner that such a base comes into being. This is not how change has occurred in the past, and indeed, Marx mocked the idealists who believed that the road to freedom began in the mind.<sup>299</sup> However, as long as the road does not *begin and end* there—in the mind, in communication, in daydreaming or delusion—and one is careful, one can remain in the orbit of Marx.

For now, we can move on, as we have achieved the goal of this part of the chapter in discussing more immediately how the world is created in the works of Marx. The world is activity. It is created by acting, and largely by a specific form of acting—sensuous, value-bestowing activity—a form of acting that for Marx is made more efficacious through the development of tools.<sup>300</sup> Finally, though value-bestowing activity is made more powerful and far-reaching through the use of tools, the state of these tools in their extended, objective materiality, wields a powerful force on human beings. It determines many things, from the nature of human relations—the relations of production that go along with the level of the forces of production engendered—to the content of human consciousness. Though the world is objectified activity, how we as living human beings can act in it—and how much we can hope to change it—is to some extent circumscribed by the specific exigencies of this crystallised activity, an extent that, as we saw above, is complex and contested. The world *qua* old activity determines the content of

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<sup>299</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 37: 'Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts. Let us teach man, says one, to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man; says the second, to take up a critical attitude to them; says the third, to knock them out their heads; and—existing reality will collapse.'

<sup>300</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 285. The role of the imagination in labour will also be discussed in fuller scope later in this chapter.

new activity, until, that is, we learn how to objectify activity in such a manner that it does not turn against us. The world is made by working. For Marx, our freedom or unfreedom is tied to our work practises *qua* world creation practices, and specifically, it is tied to the fact that our work practices are not seen as what they are, i.e., organised, value-bestowing or objectivity-producing activity. For Marx, there can be no freedom until the nature of labour is understood and made rational and transparent.

The preceding two parts of this chapter have stressed the idea of the creation of reality, and in particular: 1) the activity through which reality is made—labour; and 2) what this ultimately means, that the world is composed of past human activity. A secondary theme has been the *conditions* under which we labour: that is, how determined human beings are by their own past activity *while* they objectify new activity in the present, and how much resistance or autonomous human thought (i.e. self-determination) is possible within the broader conditions of determinism. This secondary theme will become a central focus later in the chapter. The above two parts also stressed that when one does not see that reality is expended human activity in a solid form, one will imagine that the world around us is just a thing that we were born on, and one will not see, as Marx did, that ‘*man* is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is *the world of man* ...’.<sup>301</sup> Marx did not think in a conventional way and he did not believe in the existence of the thing in itself, rejecting both the materialist and the idealist forms of this idea. Rather, he believed only in the existence of created things, which are not (and are never) finished, but are always already embedded in the living life process of ‘man’.

For Marx, we have made the world, and the world in turn has made us. Or, to be explicit, we are born into a world of tools that are *harder* than we are. We seize a hammer, hit a nail and imagine that the world is changed. The world stays as it was, except in so far as one further drop of human labour has been added, but you have been changed. Among Marx’s greatest teachings is this: that a set of equipment is a kind of vice and as it squeezes you, your shape is no longer in

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<sup>301</sup> Marx, ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’. p. 250.

your own hands. We outline the shapes of tools on the tool-shed wall, with no awareness of the irony, that at the same time the tools are quietly moulding out our shape.<sup>302</sup>

There is an anti-idealism in that Marx says: you cannot change the world by changing what you are. You are a product of the world, and thus you must change what you are by changing the world. However, we make the world with tools and must change the world with tools, and there is a danger here, because these tools are *not neutral objects*, and they have the power to fashion us as we ‘use’ them.<sup>303</sup> But this anti-idealism is not materialism as the term is usually understood: most especially, it is not the materialism of the physical sciences. Marx is very interested in the truth of the material world, of accessing this world and changing it. But the material world that Marx targets is not the same ‘material world’ that the physical sciences attempt to ‘explore’. As argued above and demonstrated in his polemics against Feuerbach, this ‘world’ that science aims at for Marx no longer exists: it has absorbed vast quantities of human labour and has become something new and complex. For Marx, what you see through a microscope is never the full story, but a distortion of the truth—the truth is materio-social—an attempt to understand the object without its social context. Science fails before it starts when it equates truth and lack of bias. From this standpoint, the physical sciences are unable to reach

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<sup>302</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 1054.

<sup>303</sup> Adorno, Horkheimer and Márkus all criticise Marx for seeing this and yet nonetheless placing the tools of large-scale industry at the centre of his (practical) theory of human emancipation. Adorno and Horkheimer write that: ‘The technological rationale is the rationale of domination.’ *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 121; Márkus, quoting Lukács, writes that the danger to human beings lies not just in the ‘*social forms of application* of these civilisational achievements, but *grips their material content as well*.’ Márkus, ‘Alienation and Reification in Marx and Lukács’, p. 158. Yet this thesis considers that neither of these critiques takes into account the full scope of Marx’s concept of de-alienation. The machinery is not rendered benign (in communism) merely by prohibiting private ownership of it (Marx is not that naive). It is rendered benign/neutral when it is seen as it is, and only then can it ‘become what it is’, objectified past human activity that can then be brought into the service of living human beings.

reality, which is human and humanized. Any science that wears a ‘bourgeois skin’<sup>304</sup> can only lead us away from the truth of things.

All the notions of justice held by both the worker and the capitalist, all the mystifications of the capitalist mode of production, all capitalism’s illusions about freedom, all the apologetic tricks of vulgar economics, have as their basis the form of appearance discussed above, which makes the actual relation invisible and indeed presents to the eye the precise opposite of that relation.<sup>305</sup>

A true science will need to stop looking at things as if they are material: but it will not do so until capital is no longer in charge. There is no royal road to science.<sup>306</sup> But it is clear that science, for Marx, cannot become objective until communist conditions are created.

We are all stumbling around in the dark. Idealists are interested in ideas, and materialists are interested in ‘things’. Thus, both miss the point. The real world—Marx’s real world—is composed of neither ideas nor things. If one wants access to the real world, one must abandon the idea that the path to truth is either the path of the ideal or of the material. Rather, the path to the truth is a middle road, one of the kind that the mature Lukács, schooled in party materialism, had learned to deride and call idealist.<sup>307</sup>

For Marx, the real world is *relations*, though *in appearance* things *seem* otherwise. In *Capital*, on this point, Marx writes: ‘[t]herefore, when Galiani said: Value is a relation between persons ... he ought to have added: a relation concealed beneath a material shell.’<sup>308</sup> All we can see is the shell and we are led profoundly astray if we mistake the material shell for the truth and the

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<sup>304</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 682.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid. p. 680.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid. p. 104.

<sup>307</sup> Lukács, ‘Existentialism’. p. 245.

<sup>308</sup> Op. cit. p. 167.

entirety of the thing. The truth of the thing is not what appears to either the eye or even the eye behind a microscope. Reality is a combination of the social and the material: this is what objectivity is. This part of this chapter will employ two texts on this topic: Márkus' already much-utilised *Marxism and Anthropology* and Kosik's *Dialectics of the Concrete*. Marx uses many terms, such as 'the real social life process',<sup>309</sup> that are—properly understood—irreducible to more limited forms of materialism or idealism. With these terms, Marx is writing about the world as relations. Both Márkus and Kosik emphasise this often missed element in Marx's understanding of reality. The following series of related Marx quotes have been collated mainly by Márkus and Kosik:

As far as only the general form of capital as self-perpetuating and self-realising value is concerned, capital will be declared to be something immaterial, and therefore, from the standpoint of the economist who recognises exclusively *either things or ideas—relations* exist for him not at all.<sup>310</sup> [The minds of people] reflect always only the immediate *phenomenal forms* of relations, rather than their internal structure. If the latter were the case, of what use would science be?<sup>311</sup> ... all science would be superfluous if the outer appearance and the essence of things directly coincided ... For ... the *phenomenal form* ... as contrasted with the *essential relation*, the same difference holds that holds with respect to all phenomena and their hidden substratum. The former appear directly and spontaneously as current modes of thought; the latter must first be discovered by science.<sup>312</sup> Thus 'science', because it sees objects as mere objects, does not get to the truth of anything, though it does a better job than Political Economy does.<sup>313</sup> ... all science would be superfluous if the outer appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.<sup>314</sup> That in their

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<sup>309</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 78.

<sup>310</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. modern-Verlag Edition. p. 8.

<sup>311</sup> Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete*. p. 32. Marx is cited from a Letter to Engels, 27th June, 1867.

<sup>312</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>313</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 677.

<sup>314</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit. Marx cited from *Capital III*.

appearance things are often presented in an inverted way is something fairly familiar in every science, apart from political economy.<sup>315</sup>

And another, this time from Kosik himself:

Dialectics does not consider fixed artefacts, formations and objects, the entire complex of both the material world of things and that of ideas and of routine thinking, to be something original and autonomous. It does not accept them in their ready-made form, but subjects them to investigation in which the reified forms of the objective and the ideal worlds dissolve, lose their fixed and natural character and their fictitious originality, and show up as derivative and mediated phenomena, as sediments and artefacts of the social praxis of mankind.<sup>316</sup>

The above may appear somewhat confusing. Marx says that: a) science misses the point; b) science is needed to get to the truth; and c) science would be superfluous if we saw reality as it really is. But this confusion can be cleared up expediently. As regards a) *non-Marxian* science misses the point, because it mistakes phenomenal forms—how things appear to us, as property, as matter—with the truth of things. Marx is saying that what we see, our experience, is not the truth: the truth lies elsewhere. But unlike in idealism, the truth is not what we create in our endless adventures in failing to make contact with *das ding an-sich*. And unlike in materialism, the truth is not some obstinate, material reality that we squat outside of, looking in. This is what has been asserted in all the above, in different ways. Marx is saying, ultimately, that the problem with science is that it looks at things as if they are ‘things’ (being deluded by the phenomenal appearance, which suggests that things are things) instead of looking at things as they really are, as objective creations, as products, as elements of an unfolding process, as *relations*. Thus, in

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<sup>315</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit.

<sup>316</sup> Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete*. p. 6.



relation to b), a science is needed to get to the truth of things, but not a science *of things*. The science that is needed is a Marxian science of labour and of human relations that can access and reach the world because it does not think that the world is a 'world'. Marxian science sees the world as the inorganic body of 'man', as a 'real social life process' and as the unfolding, objectified/extended human essence, as relations. Marxian science can *begin* to make this real world disclose itself to us—as already stated, Marxian science is a poor substitute for communist praxis which, unlike Marx's science, will *in fact* disclose the world to us. But all science can do is convince us that our senses are deceiving us. And so as for c), if communist praxis were to truly disclose reality as relations, Marx's science would become redundant and irrelevant. The reason is clear: nobody will be fooled anymore by the false phenomenal appearance, because there will no longer be a false phenomenal appearance. Science will be unnecessary because, in the new (communist) real social life process, the manner in which we create reality will precipitate a change in our relation to reality as regards our senses. Quite simply, in communism—and this is precisely how Bacon imagined conditions in Eden—there are no illusions for science to unmask. As Márkus points out, for Marx, when communism has become our mode of existence the world will be transformed and we will change with it. Human senses will be modified as a part of our new modality of metabolism with the earth. Marx's science will be unnecessary on the day that it has become *second nature*, but the science itself cannot bring about this transformation—only a changed modality of sensuous activity can.

When we are communist, we will *see* the world exactly as it is: as relations. And more important than every person reading *Capital*—which can tell us how things really are, though our senses will tell us that things are otherwise—is that every person change their mode of activity, change their manner of acting in the real social life process that is the material world. This change must be precipitated by the abolition of private property and the seizure of factories by workers. There is, to be clear, one mode of making the world that will disclose it exactly as it is.

We will live in the truth, and there will be no more false phenomenal appearance to struggle against, and thus, no more need of science in this sense of cutting through illusion to get to the truth. In communism, we will live in the world as it is, and thus, the question of access will be a non-question.

Sense perception must be the basis of all science. Science is only actual when it proceeds from sense perception in the twofold form of both sensuous awareness and sensuous need, that is, from nature.

The whole of history is a preparation for ‘man’ to become the object of sensuous awareness and for the needs of ‘man as man’ to become sensuous needs.<sup>317</sup>

We must live in the world that we have made, the nature that is our other body, and it must be the source of our needs and the means of fulfilling them—all but radical needs, which require an alteration of reality in order that reality can fulfil them. Seeing the world as it is—a feat that lies beyond the powers of science, and can only be achieved by producing with the free social individual as the starting point—is the precondition of freedom.

Again we return to the circle where freedom is the presupposition of freedom. But the focus here is to argue that to be free we must see the world as it actually is. Marx does not militate against positivism (simply) because it is *wrong*, but because positivism—any form of positivism that assumes that value, law and form all pre-exist human activity and are *just there*, waiting to be cognised by an observant animal—*must* see the world as other than it is, and thus makes freedom impossible.<sup>318</sup> For Marx, science and philosophy as they stood in his day (and still

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<sup>317</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 72.

<sup>318</sup> As already argued at length, attempts at world mastery/understanding must rebound from us when what we already know about ‘the world’ prohibits all actual understanding of it. As long as we do not understand that the world is objectified human activity, all new activity expended—even that expended in attempts to understand and master ‘the world’—is soaked up by the world and becomes (because we are alienated and *lose* everything we put into ‘the world’) the strength of a force that dominates us. As this thesis has argued, this is a

stand) could not disclose ‘the world’ because both were, by and large, simply concerned about ‘experience and existence’ not being in alignment, about closing ‘the gap’ between ‘what is’ and ‘what we know’, either in order to better master ‘nature’ or because one ‘loves truth’.<sup>319</sup> They both—science and philosophy—began with the assumption that existence, what is, is fixed and only experience can change, and that the ‘essence’ of disclosure has nothing to do with *activity*, except (for science) when that activity is an ‘experiment’. Just as Protestantism is the most appropriate religion for capitalist conditions,<sup>320</sup> so idealism is the best philosophy and positivist science is the best suited modality of science. The one, as Marx so famously suggested, calms the masses<sup>321</sup> while the next insists that what we have made is made with our minds and is not real.

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force that is composed mainly of the congealed activity of dead human beings. The dead will determine the actions of the living, and thus, freedom will be impossible until we get beyond positivism/scientism, the very method of which militates against seeing the world as dead labour, i.e., human influence is read as *contamination* of the field, which is thereby reduced to the ‘matter’ which is for Marx not ‘real’.

<sup>319</sup> Making ‘experience’ coincide with ‘existence’ is of course a concern for Marx, though not the *hitherto existing* concern, for ‘the world’, or the ‘existence’, that Marx wants to be disclosed is one of two parts of the social individual, the dead labour that looms over the living. That is to say, the world that Marx seeks is a different world to the one that positivism seeks, for Marx’s truth is one that is mutable and materio-social, a *product* of industry. Marx also uses different terminology: that of false phenomenal appearance verses real relations, and earlier in his career, of human existence coinciding with human essence. The latter really means, if one understands Marx as this thesis does, human beings attaining a state of humanity proper to the level of technology we have developed, by overcoming specialisation and alienation, by ceasing to be tools to our tools, which live a human life and make us into a mere means to the endless valorisation of capital. In this terminology, ‘existence’ means a given living human being and ‘essence’ means the world *qua* a repository of dead labour awaiting appropriation. Closing the gap for Marx means both seeing the world as it is—this access can become complete in a world in which science is not needed in questions of truth, i.e. in which the truth is *perceivable*—and *reducing* the gap between objective and subjective development (as earlier discussed, this *estrangement* to some extent must remain). It *does not* mean bringing about a ‘happy match’ between a static world that has always been and a human mind that dwells apart from it and seeks to understand it. And it certainly does not, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, mean accepting ‘the gap’ as a fact of life.

<sup>320</sup> Marx, *Capital*. pp. 171–176.

<sup>321</sup> Marx, ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction’. p. 244.

The last insists that we have not made what we have made, studying it as a fact that has nothing to do with us.<sup>322</sup>

Capitalism, as Marx discusses at length in the *Grundrisse*, keeps the worker away from his tools and the fruits of his labour—divorcing him from dead labour—and hides the fact that he personally has power, fooling the worker into thinking that it is *capital* that has all the power, that *capital* creates the value in the work processes that he is involved in, and he is at best a passive player or facilitator in the creation of value. Thereby, capitalism convinces human beings that that world is something apart, that things are just things and that they are *over there*.<sup>323</sup> Positivism takes this mode of seeing, contingent upon capitalist production, and goes on with its work of ‘proving’ that the false phenomenal appearance, the material shell that is the bearer of value, is ‘true’ and that ‘demagified’ ways of seeing are ‘true’ and superior to all others, that they are Universal and Objective. This blindness is called seeing and this regression is called progress. And capital—personified in human beings—keeps paying, patting positivism and positivistic science on the back, for of course it approves of the dead labour of wo/men as being seen as *anything but that*. Capital says: science, you may do anything, but it must *never* make the working day shorter. Invent anything you please, if it makes living labour live longer, if it entertains/distracts him, if it helps her get to work. But anything that increases non-labour time is forbidden. Technology is for creating more use-values (more dead labour) and increasing the non-labour time of living labour is antithetical to that project.<sup>324</sup>

For Marx, what is is not fixed. It changes as the way we work changes, and accordingly, the *sine qua non* of *seeing of the world as it is* is *creating* this world in a transparent and reflexive

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<sup>322</sup> Op. cit. p. 494.

<sup>323</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. pp. 452–453.

<sup>324</sup> Op. cit. ‘It is completed in large-scale industry, which makes science a potentiality for production which is distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital.’ p. 482.

manner.<sup>325</sup> In creating the world in a transparent manner we change the manner in which the *experience of the sensuous* is possible—we become able to experience not just ‘material things’—a *false* experience if we confine our understanding of ‘things’ to the matter in them and ignore all else—but we can come to experience our activity as being sensuous also, as Marx expressed desire for in his critique of all hitherto existing materialism in his theses on Feuerbach.<sup>326</sup> Then, and only then, the full truth of what is—created objectivity, the real, materiality drenched in objectified human activity—will lie open to us and the activity of the wo/men of the past will cease to dominate us.

When we change the world—by changing our technique, technology, and relations of production—we change human consciousness and we change what it means to experience. And, in theory, human self-determination becomes possible when the determination/mastery of human beings by the world ceases. This particular reading of Marx will perhaps be called humanist—any reading of Marx that disagrees with Althusser is generally called humanist, no matter what its specific content—but it is not humanism. Or, to be clearer, this thesis does not self-identify as humanist, if humanist is taken to mean that for humanist Marxists, the human essence is considered to be non-historical.<sup>327</sup>

Marx discusses access to the world in chapter one of *Capital*. When it comes to the truth of something one must look beyond accepted modes of understanding. Regarding value, for example, value exists in our world, but it is neither ‘natural’ nor ‘conventional’. Marx critiques the idea that ‘the value of a thing is the price that it will bring’,<sup>328</sup> arguing that any vendor will learn in a day that prices are beyond his control—they are tied firmly to objective processes, and are thus

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid. pp. 171–176.

<sup>326</sup> Marx, ‘Theses on Feuerbach’. pp. 283–286.

<sup>327</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 60. Marx was never a humanist in this manner.

<sup>328</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 126.

not just arbitrary numbers that people have ‘got used to’. On the other hand, value is not ‘natural’—and thus scientists can look forever in vain for value among the chemical properties of a pearl or a diamond.<sup>329</sup> The truth of value lies between the social and the material, between the arbitrary and the immutable. The reason that truth eludes us—we can barely conceive that a thing might be social and material at the same time—is that behind the way we think about the world and the motivations for our everyday activities (the very way in which we see, hear, smell and touch) is the capitalist mode of labour, an irrational and unfree mode of production. If we want to see the world as it is, we must first see the production of the world as it is. Science cannot yet help, for science sees just as incorrectly as the rest of us. In the meantime, science: a) misses the truth at every turn and *must* do so; and b) as well as disclosing no truth, with every ‘advancement’ science improves the stranglehold of the dead over the living, and enshrines it more deeply as ‘truth’. To quote again: ‘[a]ll our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force.’<sup>330</sup>

The fact that we see things as being autonomous chunks of matter is a direct product of the fact that the worker does not understand the nature of the production process and his part in it, that value is his and the product is his. As the factory becomes an external thing that uses the worker, the world follows suit, becoming a fascinating and dangerous place as ‘man’ becomes dull and placid. ‘Modern man’ laughs at the ‘primitive’ who thinks that things have spirits. Such a thought—as already noted—is likewise created by a specific means of production, but it is closer to the truth of things. That product and producer are alien, each denying a relationship to the other, is not primarily a problem of *equity*—though it is that too. It is primarily an ontological

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid. p. 177.

<sup>330</sup> Schmidt, *Concept of Nature in Marx*. p. 7. Marx is quoted.

problem that distorts all of human sense and sensibility.<sup>331</sup> We change how we labour to change ourselves, our senses, and our world: the term ‘real social life process’ is shorthand for all of this.

Marx is not an idealist. He believes that no force on earth can help people to see the world as it is—no science can ‘explain’ it to us so well that we could actually see it—until the capitalist mode of production, with its mode of seeing, thinking, feeling and acting has been radically and *materially* overthrown. This in turn will open a new space for a new world, rich in depth and colour, and a new human being, rich in senses.<sup>332</sup>

In the eyes of positivist science, the world is the world is the world, and all that we can control is: a) superficial change, and b) how human beings *see* the world. Human beings can move dirt around and dig up metals, and they can (to varying extents) see the result of their tinkering. That is all that we can control—and both are tied to better mastery of ‘natural processes’. Marx was of course an advocate of mastery, but the above is not Marx’s science. In Marx’s science, the way in which we act changes the content of reality and nature, changing us and the manner in which we relate to the world, our means of experiencing it. It is easy to see in Marx some rare modesty when he refrains from giving formulations for the socialist cook-shops of the future.<sup>333</sup> But it is not modesty. The recipes of an ape do not interest *homo sapiens* and our recipes would not interest socialist man: a more universal and generic species. Communism is not about the redistribution of ‘wealth’. Marx desired nothing of the ‘working man’ except that he participate in his own mass extinction. Revolution is the alteration of ‘man’—and the world—

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<sup>331</sup> To repeat an earlier point, abolishing private property is not about ‘fairness’. From this mistaken perspective, ‘socialists’ become ascetic and see this abolition as being the annihilation of wealth, which is the opposite of what Marx wanted: the disclosure of the world as it is to all, a double opening of the world to sensual appropriation and to appropriation in a more direct sense, as the individual embodiment of the collective essence. Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 124: ‘... *human* life required *private property* for its realisation, and ... it now requires the suppression of private property.’

<sup>332</sup> Rundell, *Origins of Modernity*. p. 170. Marx quoted.

<sup>333</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 99.

on a mass scale.<sup>334</sup> The workers of Europe, dehumanised and abused by capital *en masse* since the sixteenth century, were ready in the nineteenth century for this change. Today, most of the Global North are *not ready* and part of the reason is that communism has become Christian, something that Marx to some extent predicted and feared. As he noted: '[n]othing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a socialist tinge.'<sup>335</sup> Those who are comfortably exploited—whose needs are the needs of *das man* and thus largely fulfilled—are asked to hate capitalism because of the people who it hurts, the forgotten, misbegotten and wretched ones who neither Marx nor Nietzsche championed.<sup>336</sup> Marx (as touched upon in the introduction) was only interested in

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<sup>334</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 95.

<sup>335</sup> Marx & Engels, *Communist Manifesto*. p. 74.

<sup>336</sup> The people doing the demanding, Marx would describe as crude communists or levellers, who are Christians whether they believe in God and Christ or not *qua* champions of the slave morality. As Nietzsche writes in *The Genealogy of Morality*, today the church is if anything *slowing down* the spread of the poison Christianity, and the attack on greatness is taking other forms, one of which is for Nietzsche socialism. (p. 19). On Marx against Christianity and crude communism, see: Marx & Engels, *Communist Manifesto*. pp. 80–81: 'A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society. To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind.' cf: Ibid. p. 74: 'Religious socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.' cf: Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 108: 'Dear friend, I give you what you need, but you know the *conditio sine qua non*; you know the ink in which you have to sign yourself over to me; in providing for your pleasure, I fleece you.' cf: Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*. pp. 38–40: 'This crude communism "appears in a double form; the domination of material property looms so large that it aims to destroy everything which is incapable of being possessed by everyone as private property. It wishes to eliminate talent, etc., by *force*. Immediate physical possession seems to it the unique goal of life and existence. The role of *worker* is not abolished but is extended to all men. The relation of private property remains the relation of the community to the world of things. Finally, this tendency to oppose general private property to private property is expressed in an animal form; *marriage* (which is incontestably a form of *exclusive private property*) is contrasted with the community of women, in which women become communal and common property. One may say that this idea of the *community of women* is the *open secret* of this entirely crude and unreflective communism. Just as women are to pass from marriage to universal prostitution, so the whole world of wealth (i.e., the objective being of man) is to pass to the relation of universal prostitution with the community. This communism, which negates the *personality* of man in every sphere, is only the logical expression of private property, which is this negation. Universal *envy* setting itself up



wretchedness when it was the wretchedness of the *worker*. And even there, he was interested only for three reasons: 1) workers were the *best possible* revolutionary subjects, in that a) dialectically speaking, losing one's freedom to capital was a necessary precursor to gaining freedom, and b) only those who *make* the world can *change* the world; 2) they were *ready* to become revolutionary, in that a) from the *subjective* point of view, the conditions of the workers were becoming so abysmal that they had nothing to lose, and that b) from the *objective* point of view, they were being forced by the contradiction-ridden nature of the means of the production into becoming the agents of the next wave of social change; and 3) the consequences of the revolution of the proletariat went beyond the proletariat, in that the revolution of the proletariat *must* emancipate everybody.

From the relationship of estranged labour to private property it further follows that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the political form of the emancipation of the workers; not that their emancipation alone was at stake but because the emancipation of the workers contains universal human emancipation and it contains this, because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and every relation of servitude is but a modification and consequence of this relation.<sup>337</sup>

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as a power is only a camouflaged form of cupidity which reestablishes itself and satisfies itself in a different way. The thoughts of every individual private property are *at least* directed against any *wealthier* private property, in the form of envy and the desire to reduce everything to a common level; so that this envy and levelling in fact constitute the essence of competition. Crude communism is only the culmination of such envy and levelling-down on the basis of a *preconceived* minimum. How little this abolition of private property represents a genuine appropriation is shown by the abstract negation of the whole world of culture and civilization, and the regression to the *unnatural* simplicity of the poor and wantless individual who has not only not surpassed private property but has not yet even attained to it. The community is only a community of *work* and of *equality of wages* paid out by the communal capital, by the *community* as universal capitalist. The two sides of the relation are raised to a *supposed* universality; *labor* as a condition in which everyone is placed, and *capital* as the acknowledged universality and power of the community.”

<sup>337</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 77.

If one understands what communism is, according to the interpretation of this thesis, then it is not an act of altruism/self-sacrifice to become a communist—even a ‘rich man’ has a world to gain if only he will let go of his private property. And there is no real question of people with ‘something to lose’ ‘making a difference’ anyway. On the one hand, for Marx, the oppressed must rise up themselves: there is no question of doing it for them.<sup>338</sup> On the other hand, everybody has something to gain from the end of this world<sup>339</sup>—it is only when one listens to crude communists (ascetics for whom the process of making the optimal material conditions for their own neurosis universal is equal to ‘justice, fairness, and equality’) that one will hear about sacrifice. It is only in their appraisal that one will hear about a paradise of everybody growing their own turnips, which: a) has nothing to do with Marx, and b) is of course not appealing to a decadent (and ‘self-interested’) populace—a people who have already cathected to a stronger force, the utopia of the hamburger.<sup>340</sup> Making sacrifices for unknown others—being

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<sup>338</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 95: ‘The alteration of men on a mass scale is, necessarily, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.’ In the Christian mindset, we hate poverty because the pain of the poor hurts us—and thus we give, *but only so much as to end the immanent hurt, not the poverty itself*. In the communist mindset, we encourage the poor to end their current wretchedness because it hurts them—we encourage the poor to reject an inhuman existence and demand a human one. This may sound like neo-liberal ‘tough love’. The difference is, the neo-liberals say, end your poverty by getting a job. The communists say, end your wage-slavery by engaging in revolution—kill your boss. Additionally, neo-liberals, in general, deny that the structure exists—there is no society, just free individuals, for whom anything is possible. Communists, in general, focus on the power of structures external to human beings, saying that there are no free individuals, just a structure that is feeding on you and that needs to be destroyed. Accordingly, we also need the poor (if we are not poor) to revolt for our own sake, as above: as Marx writes, the workers cannot emancipate only themselves, but must emancipate humanity.

<sup>339</sup> Including the bourgeoisie, which today is most of us.

<sup>340</sup> Peter Beilharz, *Labour’s Utopias: Bolshevism, Fabianism, Social Democracy*, Routledge: USA & Canada, 1993. p. 129. Of course not every single person in the world can have two cars and a flat screen television, but this is not in any case wealth, but spiritual poverty. Communism will increase the needs of all and the wealth of all. That is its basis and premise.

“unegoistic” [and embracing] the instincts of compassion, self-denial, self-sacrifice’, being good, and being Christian<sup>341</sup>—has quite literally nothing to do with communism, and is its opposite.

Marx wanted *more* for all, not less. Marx had his own idea of the *Übermensch*<sup>342</sup> which, as a universal *Übermensch*, is of course utterly distinct from Nietzsche’s and contrary to it. For Nietzsche, a universal *Übermensch* is absurd in principle, as one cannot make everybody the same

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<sup>341</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*. p. 6.

<sup>342</sup> It is conventional to translate *Gattungswesen* as ‘Total Man’ and this is reasonable, so long as one understands that the desire for a ‘total man’ is quite literal, as it was a part of the early desire to overcome estrangement utterly. That is, each and all would have appropriated everything, each ‘man’ would be ‘total’ in that there would be no traits/powers of the species not present in every individual. Heller wrote that Marx ‘... never had a Superman in mind; what he did have in mind was supersociety ...’ (Heller, ‘The Legacy of Marxian Ethics,’ in *The Grandeur and Twilight of Radical Universalism*, Transaction Publishers: USA, 1991. p. 121.) But this is misleading. What Marx wanted, after he gave up on the idea of the Total Man *qua* absolutely de-estranged man, was a Superman in a Superworld, apart but connected, the world being the precondition of the greatness of the humans and the humans being the precondition of the greatness of the world. Heller’s greatest insight into Marx is into his democracy, which is neither direct nor representative. In Marx’s communist democracy, a single person *counts* as the species, and thus, if one gets a letter requesting ‘political duty’, one is not representing some group of interested parties, but acting as a human being for all human beings. It is thus not representative, but it is not for that reason direct, for there is no need for everybody to have a hand on the apparatus. Patricia Springborg, ‘Karl Marx on Democracy, Participation, Voting, and Equality’, in *Political Theory*, Volume 12: 1984. p. 542: ‘Either the people are an integral part of the state or they are not and “if they are an integral part of the state, then it is obvious that their social existence is already their actual participation in it,” and this by virtue of the fact of membership of the state. The false alternatives of political participation either as “all” or “not all” is predicated on the abstract separation of civil society and the state, which in turn falsely presumes the political to be constituted by single political acts performed by individuals, focusing exclusively on the legislature as the locus of popular participation.’ In Marx’s mature communism, everybody is free, nobody is dominated—as we have established, today those who ‘dominate’ dominate *because* they are unfree, because they are capital personified—and though there is still estrangement, every individual embodies concretely a heroic amount of the accumulated knowledge and power of human history, and thus: ‘If citizens could not achieve their own private good without achieving the general good, there would be no vicious people except fools.’ (Marx, *Holy Family*. p. 178. Helevetius quoted.) Heller is highly critical of Marx’s concept of *Gattungswesen*, but is also inconsistent on this point. Sometimes she sees communism as a Supersociety as above, and sometimes as *no society*, for example: ‘Self-contained atoms circling around each other, like the free gods in Epicur’s universe, are not very human and not very attractive, at least not for me, and finally, not even Marx’s own imagination could catch up with the implications of his own theory.’ Heller, ‘Marx and the Liberation of Mankind’ in *The Grandeur and Twilight of Radical Universalism*. p. 205.

*except by levelling down.*<sup>343</sup> But what is the same in both is that both desired the end of the current world and the beginning of a new epoch.<sup>344</sup> Marx did not want more bread for the workers.

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<sup>343</sup> Marx believed that so long as socialism was kept free of utilitarian and Christian aims, it would be possible to elevate everybody. Horkheimer attempts once to apply Marx's logic of the Universal Superman to Nietzsche, but this is simply incorrect. 'If Nietzsche had realized that an extremely advanced domination of nature would make stultifying toil superfluous, he would have realized that his conviction that "all excellence [develops] ... only among those of equal rank" means that either all or none would become supermen.' Wiggershaus, 'The Frankfurt School's "Nietzschean Moment"' . p. 145. This is indeed how Marx feels, following Kant and Hegel, but nothing could have made Nietzsche 'realise' this. For Nietzsche, there are natural hierarchies and more contentment for human beings if we follow them. Nietzsche hates communists for making mediocre people feel bad about their mediocrity. Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*. Penguin Edition. p. 191: 'For the mediocre it is happiness to be mediocre; mastery in one thing, specialisation, is for them a natural instinct ... Whom among today's rabble do I hate most? The Socialist rabble, the Chandala apostles who undermine the worker's instinct, his pleasure, his feeling of contentment with his little state of being—who make him envious, who teach him revengefulness ... Injustice never lies in unequal rights, it lies in the claim to "equal rights." If this is what you are, it is what you are, and there is happiness in it, if nobody is above you telling you that you must become great, that everybody must be 'super'. But though Nietzsche attributes a passion for equality to all socialists, Marx was not interested in it. Marx, *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*. pp. 159–160: 'But one man is superior to another physically, or mentally, and supplies more labour in the same time, or can labour for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This equal right is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right. Right, by its very nature, can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard insofar as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one definite side only—for instance, in the present case, are regarded only as workers and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another is not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal ... In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: "From each

Thesis eleven is about *changing the world*. This does not mean our world with some alterations, but rather it means a new world. To reconnect this discussion with the aim of this part of the chapter, it means a new world that we can, each and all, *access*. We will be able to see it and its wealth will be our wealth, instead of today's case, where external/objective wealth is equal to internal/subjective poverty and we cannot see anything as it is. The only current path to the growth of the wealth of the external world is that of barring access to it—except 'on business'—and making the process of world enrichment one with a process of human diminution, a part of which is poverty of the senses. What we are is limited, in that we appropriate little of what we expend—appropriation and consumption are far from identical, when consumption is nothing but an empty mechanism to precipitate more production—and what we see is limited, because we are so proud of our 'demagification' which is in fact simply an insidious blindness regarding the actual nature of the world. The idea of the 'total man' is tainted with chauvinistic and superficial Soviet associations, but in essence it means that wealth is the wealth of 'the social individual', that world and people, as the real social life process, thrive as a unity. That is, where we see that the world is our accumulated essence, and where becoming human means

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according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" cf: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*. Cambridge Edition. pp. 221–222: "The doctrine of equality! There is no more poisonous poison anywhere: for it seems to be preached by justice itself, whereas it really is the termination of justice. "Equal to the equal, unequal to the unequal"—that would be the true slogan of justice; and also its corollary: "Never make equal what is unequal."

<sup>344</sup> Considering how close Marx and Nietzsche's ideas are on autonomy —on certain points—it is astounding how different the *next* world looks for each of them. The greatest difference (despite there being hierarchy in Nietzsche's) is that for Marx, human beings should be free of *drives*, drives are a part of the realm of necessity. Marx's belief that in freedom there would be no domination is of course also at the antipodes of Nietzschean thinking. For Marx, we only dominate when we are dominated, living human beings only dominate living human beings on the behalf of dead labour. For Nietzsche, the will to power is a will to dominate, and the increase of strength in the next world will see more domination, not less. Or, perhaps one should say, more *visible* domination. For Nietzsche, there is no shortage of domination in our world, as the Christian dominates the poor with charity—which is why it is made sure of that poverty is mitigated but never ended—and terrorises himself with guilt.

appropriating this essence according to one's needs, and then objecting fresh activity, according to one's abilities.

The next part of this chapter will examine the role of the imagination in the generation of this new world, and the role of the imagination in the creation of our present one. There will be two components of the next part of the chapter. The first will be on the role of the imagination in labour. The second will be an explicit discussion of self-determination and determinism in Marx. The final part of this Marx chapter will tie together all of the above, writing explicitly about the role of the imagination (in Marx) in human autonomy, making sure that it is understood what autonomy is for Marx, and how it relates to: a) what the world is made of, b) how we make the world, c) questions of access to the world, and d) the human imagination, and the role of the imagination in the tension between freedom and determinism. From the extensive discussion thus far, it is hoped that by now the similarity between Marx and Nietzsche that the first section of this thesis will explore (that 'the "objective" is always already the product of human activity') has been demonstrated as being true for Marx.

*The role of the imagination (in the works of Marx) in creation: labour and world creation*

As mentioned above, this section of the Marx chapter will have two parts. The first will discuss the role of the imagination in making human labour into a form of activity that can generate objectivity. The second will discuss the role of the imagination in questions of human freedom: this will *not* be a discussion on the imagination and autonomy, the scope of which is the final part of the chapter.

*The role of the imagination in human labour*

The role of the human imagination in the creation of objectivity is for Marx significant. For Marx, human labour is a qualitatively different process to animal 'labour'.

Admittedly animals also produce. They build themselves nests, dwelling, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc. But an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, whilst man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, whilst man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. An animal produces only itself, whilst man reproduces the whole of nature. An animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, whilst man freely confronts his product. An animal forms things in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. pp. 71–72.

Animals do not create an inorganic body. They do not, in Marx's odd language, objectify their own species life.<sup>346</sup> In asking why an animal is poor in world—Heidegger's terminology is applicable here<sup>347</sup>—this quote of Marx's is vital. An animal, Marx writes, cannot produce anything that is external to itself. An animal cannot *lose* an object. It is not capable of estrangement. It cannot 'freely confront' its own product, it cannot have a relation with it—and thus 'being' *qua* being human and materiality *qua* 'world' are not possible for it, and in addition, freedom and unfreedom are not possible, if one considers freedom to be the absence of alienation *qua* one's own product looming over one and determining the manner of one's own existence. Again, *loss* is important, and we are reminded of Márkus' excellent quote: 'man *forms and develops his own abilities only by objectifying them.*' The animal cannot do so. The animal cannot create objective, real reality and thus, it cannot create itself as something supra-animal. In order to create such things, one needs a separation. As this thesis has been arguing, reality cannot come to be until there is an animal that can engender it. The qualities of reality and objectivity must be granted to objects, and only human beings seem to be able to do this.

In 1844, Marx is somewhat tautological when he writes on this theme. He writes that 'man' can do what he does because he is what he is—he objectifies his own activity because it is in his nature to do so.<sup>348</sup> Marx is at this stage of his writings preoccupied with the personal experience of the (alienated and estranged) individual human being, in whom there is no strength and power. It is the human being *qua* wretched being, grovelling under his own objectified

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<sup>346</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 72.

<sup>347</sup> Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: world, finitude, solitude*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1995. p. 196: "The stone is worldless ... the animal is poor in world ... man is world-forming."

<sup>348</sup> Op. cit. p. 71: '... free, conscious activity is man's species character ...' Marx is not yet asking where this nature comes from, and never really asks this question. However, later he is careful to always state that the essence of humanity is nothing but the sum of its objectified activity, and thus, the essence of 'man', whatever it may be, is the product of the labour of 'man' and changes as the nature of the activity changes.



activity—under the conditions created by, during and after the industrial revolution, which take the specific form of machines that horde all human strength and power—and being mastered by it. The 1844 notebooks are coloured by a hatred of a system in which reality becomes great and powerful through vampirism, through depleting concrete human beings of every drop of humanity. In the notebooks, we see a mode of differentiating between ‘man’ and animal that is ambivalent. We see a (fleeting) desire to make sure that development no longer be the development of an externality that is our master, to our own detriment, but rather that development should be one thing only, should be the unified, simultaneous development of both sides of the social individual. As already discussed, Marx abandoned this desire as this would end—rather than mitigating—estrangement. And as we are now in a position to fully understand, ending estrangement would destroy our status as ‘men’. It was stated earlier that ending estrangement would slow human development or impair the (dialectal) process through which human beings develop, which is why the ‘mature’ Marx prescribed moderating and not ending estrangement. Now it can be said that ending estrangement would end the conditions under which reality and objectivity are created. This is not to say that Marx became ‘pro-estrangement’, for it still must of course be moderated in that loss of humanity in/as objects needs to be recouped by a subsequent appropriation of externalised energies, in a proper balanced metabolism with the earth. In other words, we cannot have relations with our products unless they are things, and they cannot be things unless they are lost. Labour, in order to make us grow, must be a sacrifice. The young Marx, seeing nothing but sacrifice, railed against this idea. The older Marx accepted it.

In his later writings, when Marx has accepted some degree of estrangement as a fact of life—but not alienation, which he continues to rail against—Marx is also less tautological. There is less talk about human beings being able to do what they do because they are what they are, which in 1844 does both ‘explain’ why we can make a world—it is our nature to make a world—

and the direction of our telos, towards the *conscious* objectification of our species life, our more complete or higher nature that we have not yet attained. But the mature Marx does not engage in such tautologies. In his later writings Marx does not simply say that it is our essence to make a world *qua* an inorganic body, for the mature Marx is vigilant against positing any kind of eternal essence in/for man.<sup>349</sup> Marx steps back and states that as part of an unfolding process in which human activity is the engine (though not *yet* in a conscious manner), human beings have developed the ability to create *unnatural* environments<sup>350</sup> of astounding solidity in which to live. As this process has unfurled, human beings have reached a point at which the process of the creation of their life and environment—which is one and the same—can be understood and mastered, and can be made conscious. The *aim* is the same in the young and the mature Marx.<sup>351</sup> Only the language changes, tautology is excised and estrangement is accepted as the largest part of the process rather than as a flaw in it to be remedied. Separating the realm of necessity from the realm of freedom in his mature writings is just another *means* of actualising the same early aim, to understand what the human being always already has been—an animal that creates reality—and to shake off our entire history of bad faith regarding this issue and become what we are: creators of the real.

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<sup>349</sup> As already noted, Althusser makes far too much of this shift, which does not render ‘man’ a *tabula rasa*, or obliterate the human subject from history. All it means is a rejection of strong metaphysics, where essence precedes existence. For Marx, Sartre’s maxim of (humanist) existentialism does hold, in that existence precedes and engenders essence.

<sup>350</sup> Objective, connected, linear, worlds are of course unnatural, and the feat of humankind—this thesis argues following Marx and Nietzsche—is in creating such a thing, not in ‘finding’ it.

<sup>351</sup> Again, following Márkus, this thesis too believes that Althusser misreads this movement in Marx when he reads it as a conversion at least as vast as when Saul became Paul, a leap from humanism to anti-humanism, from idealism to materialism. As this thesis has already suggested, Marx himself always walks the line between humanism and anti-humanism (though as a younger man he is of course closer to the former, and calls himself a humanist) and his materialism is a deepening of idealism, not a departure from it.

For the young and old Marx we are creators of the real. We are the only animal that can create a product external to our bodies. There is a world (and human beings) only because we can do so. This is the language of 1844 and for this thesis, Marx does not outgrow this fancy, but continues to believe it. However, his language does change, in a manner that is here significant:

We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.<sup>352</sup>

This is of course one the most quoted passages of *Capital*. But it needs to be combined with this earlier quote: '[a]n animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body.' We need to wonder: why does it matter in the least whether a spider has an image of a web in its 'mind' before it makes it or not: why does it matter ontologically? For this thesis, it matters because the web never becomes external and encounterable to the spider. The hive never becomes a 'bee-world': it never becomes objective. As Lukács comments on this quote: '[t]his expresses the central ontological category of labour: through labour, a teleological goal becomes realized in material reality, thereby forming a new objectivity.'<sup>353</sup> An animal can make a burrow, but it cannot have and then realise a 'teleological goal'. Thus, it cannot lose its 'object' and nothing an

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<sup>352</sup> Lukács, 'The Dialectic of Labour: Beyond Causality and Teleology'. Marx is quoted from *Capital*. cf: Marx on traditional West African peoples: 'The commodities are first transformed into bars in the head and in speech before they are exchanged for one another.' *Grundrisse*, p. 142. This quote is less helpful for my specific argument, for imagination is not here the impetus to labour, but rather transforms an extant thing with no labour being involved, a rare instance of thought influencing being in Marx. It is still, however, useful in demonstrating that the imagination can be creative in Marx, and is not simply a method of transforming the earth in phantasy only or the faculty that allows us to see things when they are not physically present.

<sup>353</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit.

animal produces can become an object for it, or at all: it does not become real. The web is the spider, and thus, neither ‘exist’.

The imagination is therefore important. The two things that Marx proposes as necessary in order for labour to get beyond ‘instinct’ and become human, are: a) the imagination; and b) a conscious will.<sup>354</sup> The human animal manages to create an image of a thing that does not yet exist—using his power to create an image of something not yet extant. He builds it—using his will to direct his physical powers, his metabolism with nature, to make the image actual—and then it exists. If ‘man’ lives in a world—and she is not ‘man’ if this is not the case—it is because she has built a world, a world that is different to ‘nature’ as it had ‘been’ before. It is only by altering ‘nature’ that we create ‘reality’, ‘objectivity’, ‘worldliness’. But we must remember that these worlds are *sensuously produced*. Marx does not recognise *thought* in itself to be identical with labour, as an activity that is generative of objectivity.

What Marx does recognise here is a concrete human being whose specificity is determined by the concrete world around it. If one has an imagination that can change the world, this too is possible only in the context of the real social life process that this ‘man’ is embedded in—a ‘man’ who can imagine a thing external to itself, and who can then, via sensuous praxis, bring this thing into being/objectivity. There is no magic in the hands and feet of ‘man’. There is no magic in the prostheses that she develops, feet that can run at 100 kilometres an hour, hands that can make skyscrapers. The magic, the ontological genesis of objectivity, is in the combination of imagination and concentrated sensuous activity. Thought can create nothing—as Marx says endlessly to Hegel and to other idealists. But he also says, as above, that *sensuous activity alone* cannot create. The bee and the spider do not create. Creation requires a combination of both, and this combination Marx calls labour. The imagination is

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<sup>354</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 284.

integral to it, because the things that ‘men’ create do not exist before they are created. It is only because something is ‘seen’ before it becomes that it can become.

One further thing should be stated before moving on. In the introduction to this thesis, it was said that the materialist imagination, as this thesis attempts to theorise it, is a paradox—or seeming paradox. If one is a ‘materialist’, especially a positivist or empiricist, one will imagine (perhaps even believing that one is following Marx<sup>355</sup>) that nothing can appear in a human mind that has not ‘come in’ through the senses.

As Cyril Smith comments in relation to this notion, Hobbes wrote that:

‘After the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. And this is it, the Latins call Imagination.’ Locke, for whom all correct knowledge originated in sense impressions, took it for granted that anything imagined was ‘mere idea’. And Hume put it like this: ‘But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty ... it is really confined within very narrow limits ... All this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience.’<sup>356</sup>

In this reading, what has been written above is impossible. One cannot ‘see’ something that has never been: this is logically impossible. One may again quote Marx: ‘... the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought.’<sup>357</sup> Or

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<sup>355</sup> Althusser is the paradigm of this. Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an investigation’, in *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, Aakar Books: India, 2006. p. 108. ‘Ideology, then, is for Marx an imaginary assemblage ... a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the “day’s residues” from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete individuals materially producing their existence.’ Althusser cites *The German Ideology*, a text that this thesis reads very differently.

<sup>356</sup> Cyril Smith, *Karl Marx and the Future of the Human*, Lexington Books: USA, 2005. p. 216.

<sup>357</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 102.

perhaps, one will quote Marx on the impotence of the imagination: '[a]ll mythology overcomes and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in the imagination and by the imagination; it therefore vanishes with the advent of real mastery over them.'<sup>358</sup>

For this thesis, these objections are both understandable, but neither undermines it in the least. This thesis is not 'unorthodox' insofar as it does not believe that for Marx thought can influence matter. There is here an awareness that for Marx, matter determines thought, and thinking about things can influence nothing in the real world. However, this thesis also demands an alteration in understandings of what the real world is for Marx. The real world is human activity. The reason that this human activity is real and encounterable is the human imagination, a materialist imagination that: a) can change the world, but b) cannot create *ex niblo*. None of these apparently contradictory statements really contradict one another, if one is open to the idea that reality is the real, materio-social human life process, and not a thing apart from us.<sup>359</sup> It was not there before it was there. We brought it into being, but it, in turn, brought us into being. We cannot think and cause change to occur because what we can think is determined by the material state of the world. And yet, without a kind of thought, without imagination, the world would not exist—our labour would be like the labour of the other animals and would not be capable of producing objective things. All of the above holds together, if one is patient and reads Marx with all major presuppositions—about both the nature of Marx and the nature of reality—held in parentheses.

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<sup>358</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 110.

<sup>359</sup> Or, to be clear, it is more apart from us than a web is in relation to a spider, but less apart from us than it is in the 'imagination' of a positivist.

Following some brief digressions above regarding the imagination, freedom and determinism—and one more complete elucidation around the two kinds of determinism in Marx—this thesis will now move to a full and explicit discussion that will put all of these fragments in order. We have already examined several ways of reading Marx, the first of which can be called incompatibilist, and is the standard reading of Marx. Castoriadis sums up this position very effectively:

The two concepts of ‘historical materialism’ and ‘class struggle’ are profoundly incompatible. As soon as one is taken seriously, the other is voided. Ultimately, it is the concept of historical materialism which is fundamental to Marx’s theoretical work.<sup>360</sup>

This thesis has adopted the position that the above division is only true when the laws of history—and the world itself—are considered as unrelated to the activity of human beings. After Marx’s death, Engels struggled with questions about human volition. He knew that for Marx, spontaneous human activity was not completely impotent/impossible, but he also felt that only a revolution of production—not a political revolution—could change anything. His solution was elegant enough: ‘in the final analysis’, the base determines the activity of the superstructure.<sup>361</sup> Yet Engels struggled because for him, the laws of history were laws of nature and had nothing to do with human beings. Thus, he had to struggle because in his separation of the laws of history and human activity, ‘historical materialism’ and ‘class struggle’ had become incompatible in a manner that they were not for Marx, for whom there was no such separation. Lenin, who had not separated the laws of history from human activity fully, struggled even more with these

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<sup>360</sup> Castoriadis, ‘On the History of the Workers’ Movement’. p. 14.

<sup>361</sup> Engels, ‘Engels on Historical Materialism’. p. 82.

questions, and was in the strange position of being an outsider at the head of a party.<sup>362</sup> He read Hegel, which could not help him, because in Hegel too, the aims of *Geist* cannot ultimately be influenced by human beings—which are the concrete means for *Geist* to work out *its* aims. Thus in Hegel too, determinism and freedom—though Hegel would deny it as energetically as a pious man will tell you that ‘God made us free’—are not compatible.

Stalin is a good proof of the above hypothesis. For him, this whole question did not even exist, because he divorced the laws of history and the activity of men completely—following in the footsteps of Bukharin and not Lenin.<sup>363</sup> In this move, the entire question of class struggle disappeared and all that was left was historical materialism; party ‘dialectal materialism’ is what remains of historical materialism when class struggle is dissolved. The problem with Castoriadis is thus that Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are all lumped together. This thesis considers that for Marx, the laws of history and human activity are not divorced, and for this reason, as Márkus and Heller note, determinism and free will are not incompatible. However, this is not the end, for this thesis has not simply chosen Márkus and Heller over Castoriadis. There is another manner of reading Marx—Rundell’s manner—which is to use the idea of a ‘hidden imaginary’ in order to reconcile a strong deterministic strain with a competing idea of self-determination. The ‘hidden imaginary’ means that, unlike in the understanding of Castoriadis, to take one strain of thought seriously does not render the other one ludicrous—though the strains are not equal, as Rundell notes, in that the deterministic strain is more hardy and strangles the ‘class struggle’ paradigm.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Dunayevskaya, ‘The shock of recognition and the philosophic ambivalence of Lenin’. pp. 44–45.

<sup>363</sup> Loc. cit. As already noted, this thesis is no advocate of Lenin. His reading of Marx is only marginally superior to Engels’ reading. It is, however, considerably better than the reading of Bukharin and Stalin.

<sup>364</sup> Rundell, *Origins of Modernity*. p. 11. It should be noted here that Márkus and Rundell do not describe their own respective theorisations of Marx in the manner that this thesis is describing them. Both prefer to theorise Marx in a way that reconciles continuity and difference, *viz*, by periodising Marx and ascribing a different form



Bringing the hidden imaginary to the reading of Márkus and Heller has two benefits, already partially elucidated above. The first is that a greater scope emerges for human beings to change the conditions in which they are embedded. Márkus and Heller both emphasise the moments in Marx where he insists that history is not a thing apart from ‘man’, that history does not happen behind our backs, that development is self-conscious and that in the unfolding of history, what we want emerges. However, although Heller emphasises radical need as a human driver of immanent historical development, as a driver it is not as ‘profitable’ as a materialist imagination could be—and of course, the conjunction of an active human imagination and radical need is also fruitful, as it unhinders the nature of these radical needs to some extent.

The other benefit of looking at these different modes of theorising in conjunction is that one can see that there is a strong and a weak strain of deterministic thinking in Marx. There is a strain, as Castoriadis notes, that is incompatible with any idea of human self-determination. And there is a strain, as Márkus and Heller note, that is entirely compatible with such an idea. This thesis recognises both strains but, contra Castoriadis—and to some extent Rundell—it sees the strong strain of determinism in Marx as being exceptional. It sees it as a lapse—a Hegelian lapse—and ultimately something that lies outside of his usual mode of theorising, which is fundamentally as Márkus and Heller perceive it.

Finally, in another mild disagreement with Rundell, this thesis rejects the idea that the human imagination lies outside of the category of labour, outside of the base, and exists in the superstructure, in the realm of politics/the social/culture/the symbolic. Rundell’s ‘hidden imaginary’ in his reading of Marx lies outside of Marx’s paradigm of production. Based in the

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of critical theory to each period of his life/set of texts from that period. See: Márkus, ‘Four Forms of Critical Theory—Some Theses on Marx’s Development’, in *Thesis Eleven*, No. I, 1980. pp. 78–93, and Rundell, *Origins of Modernity*. pp. 201–204. This thesis has not rejected this approach, but as this work has been done already, this thesis prefers to explore different emphasises not fully exhausted by the authors themselves.

works of Castoriadis, he writes that the hidden imaginary is tied to ‘*interpretive complexes, at the heart of which lie imaginary significations*’.<sup>365</sup> As already intimated, the hidden imaginary is opposed to a strong determinism. It facilitates the paradigm changes that strong determinism cannot adequately account for, and allows Marx to hold onto an idea of self-determination that for Rundell is ultimately antithetical to his (Marx’s) broader understanding of how history works.

For this thesis, it is fruitful to use the hidden imaginary as Rundell does, to posit it as the force that breaks apart the brutal clockwork of the materialist conception of history, that differentiates Marx from Hegel and Stalin, and guarantees that for Marx, we are not trapped in whatever world we find ourselves in. However, according to this thesis, it is not *outside* of the paradigm of production. The idea of a robust human imagination as the precondition for change and human self-determination is not incompatible with the materialist conception of history—though it is of course incompatible with that ‘fully developed’ dialectal materialism that is its contrary. As we saw in the beginning of this section of the Marx chapter, the human imagination is integral to the *normal* human labour process. Márkus and Heller help us understand—and Rundell provides the last piece, though not laying it in place—that the materialist conception of history is a whole of two halves: a determinist half and a self-determining half. The imagination that can change history need not be something external to the process, something that contradicts materialism and historical materialism. It can be a part of it. As Márkus and Heller help elucidate, historical materialism is not, for example (as a thinker such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty understood it), a brutal process in which error and creation are not possible. This

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<sup>365</sup> Rundell, *Origins of Modernity*. pp. 169; 228. Rundell, ‘Marx and the Postmodern Image of Society,’ p. 181: ‘[w]e can interpret Marx’s “hidden imaginary” as implying that the transitions between historical epochs, the relations between systems of material production and their natural environment, social actors and classes, are constituted and mediated by the development of interpretive complexes, at the heart of which lie imaginary significations.’

understanding has always been a misunderstanding—or, to be more precise, it is an understanding of some outlying moments of Marx that are Hegelian in nature.

This thesis wishes to follow the work of Márkus and Heller in attempting to make Marx whole again, ending his separation into two competing figures—a separation which has a long history. The human imagination is what makes human labour capable of engendering objectivity. It is also what makes human beings capable of changing a given modality of objectivity, when the dead begin to get the upper hand over the living. This discussion will be completed in the next and final part of this chapter, where we will discuss the imagination and autonomy in Marx.

The role of the imagination (in the works of Marx) in autonomy is twofold. The first element relates to the function of the imagination *within* conditions of autonomy, of the human *qua* ‘end-in-itself’,<sup>366</sup> the human being beyond the situation of being conditioned automatically (in both identity and activity) by the state of the labour process, what Marx describes as a conditioned, ‘one sided-existence’.<sup>367</sup> The second relates to the function of the imagination as regards *creating* conditions of autonomy. We will begin with a discussion of the function of the imagination within established conditions of autonomy.

This thesis has distinguished between freedom and autonomy in the works of Marx. Freedom, as has been consistently argued, is the overcoming of alienation, which is the precondition for the overcoming of determinism. Freedom means no longer being enslaved to our own past activity—it is thus largely negative. Autonomy is positive, though Marx does not write all that eloquently or thoroughly on it:

In fact, however, when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity’s own nature? The absolute working out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a *predetermined* yardstick? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute moment of becoming? In bourgeois economics—and in the epoch of production to which it corresponds—this complete working-out of the of the human content appears as a complete emptying-out, this universal

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<sup>366</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 488.

<sup>367</sup> Marx & Engels, *The German Ideology*. p. 91.

objectification as total alienation, and the tearing-down of all limited, one-sided aims as sacrifice of the human end-in-itself to an entirely external end ...<sup>368</sup>

It is *Nietzsche* who describes what Marx means by autonomy better than Marx himself ever does.

On autonomy, Nietzsche writes:

We, however, want to *become who we are*—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves! ...;<sup>369</sup> In respect to the future there opens out before us, for the first time in history, the tremendous far-flung prospect of human-ecumenical goals embracing the entire inhabited earth. At the same time, we feel conscious of possessing the strength to be allowed without presumption to take this new task in hand ourselves without requiring supernatural assistance; indeed, let our undertaking eventuate as it may, even if we have overestimated our strength, there is in any case no one to whom we owe a reckoning except ourselves: henceforth mankind can do with itself whatever it wishes ...;<sup>370</sup> mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, nature ... and over fate ...<sup>371</sup> There are a thousand paths that have never yet been trodden, a thousand forms of health and hidden islands of life. Man and man's earth are still unexhausted and undiscovered.<sup>372</sup>

These are among the best definitions of autonomy ever written, and in writing them, Nietzsche describes perfectly the conditions of human life in Marx's realm of freedom—which is, as this thesis has defined it, a realm of autonomy—the end towards which communism is the means. That a robust imagination is necessary in this realm of freedom/autonomy (in order that we no longer lose heart every time we see an open space before us and dig up old banners and flags)

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<sup>368</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit.

<sup>369</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. p. 189.

<sup>370</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 257.

<sup>371</sup> Nietzsche quoted in Ridley, 'Nietzsche's Intentions: What the Sovereign Individual Promises'. p. 185.

<sup>372</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*. p. 102.

scarcely needs to be stated. When the dead voices cease to speak and the living try to find their own, the imagination will be needed as the space in which to generate new content, new laws and new identities, none of which are any longer directly/automatically informed by the labour process.

One may say that for Marx, *reason* is the only king, and that it is spurious to state that the imagination will be the most privileged faculty in the realm of freedom. However, Marx said in several different ways that freedom means the cessation of mundane considerations.<sup>373</sup> This kind of freedom, what this thesis is describing as autonomy, means that nothing is necessary, and all things are ends in themselves. Nietzsche called communists practical men with grey dust in their brains, but this cannot be said about Marx.<sup>374</sup> Autonomy is the realm beyond necessity.<sup>375</sup> Nothing there has a reason anymore and function becomes irrelevant. Reason and rationality are not fetishized in the works of Marx, but are pursued as *the only real guarantors of non-alienation*. If we do not produce rationally, as associated producers, as free social individuals, then the world will again begin to appear to the people of the future as it does to us, as if it is a ‘thing’. In Marx’s realm of autonomy, the dead no longer speak or clutch at the living. We are no longer determined by our own product, our own inorganic body. It is not *reason* that will speak in this space, but *imagination*, as every moment remains open, in transparent becoming. This is the role of the imagination in autonomy, and it is significant. On top of this, the imagination is present, in every act of labour, making sure that there is a world and that there are human beings. This

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<sup>373</sup> Marx, *Capital III*. ‘In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases’. pp. 958–959. Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. pp. 71–72: ‘It [an animal] produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, whilst man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom.’ Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value: Part III*, Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1971. p. 257: Communism is the end of labour ‘...dominated by the pressure of an extraneous purpose which must be fulfilled.’

<sup>374</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 376.

<sup>375</sup> Marx, *Capital III*. pp. 958–959.

thesis will now briefly discuss the role of the imagination in bringing about conditions of autonomy (briefly because the theme has been addressed extensively in the preceding discussions of freedom and determinism.)

There is in Marx a strain of determinism in which autonomy could come about with no exercise of the human imagination being necessary—or even possible. It is the strain in which accidentally/unconsciously created history ‘acts through’ human beings, bringing about new forms of society that are determined solely by the exigencies of past forms of society.<sup>376</sup> In this strain, and this strain only—which this thesis sees as being a Hegelian lapse/s in Marx—autonomy could come into being in a manner in which the human imagination plays no part. For Castoriadis, what this thesis calls a lapse/s is Marx’s mature position, and there is no room for the imagination (for the imagination to exist, that is, without contradiction) in Marx at all. For Rundell, as for Castoriadis, what this thesis calls a lapse/s is Marx’s mature position also. However, for Rundell, there is in Marx a ‘hidden imaginary’ that undermines his strong determinism and means that, unlike in the thinking of Castoriadis, Marx’s ideas about human self-determination are not *negated* by his model of historical materialism, although they are still *suppressed*. For this thesis, with Márkus and Heller, human history is ultimately directed by human beings, though in a manner in which actual conscious control is extremely limited. Thus, the imagination has a role to play in bringing about communism/autonomy, but not a simple one.

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<sup>376</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. pp. 91–92. These particular passages are here apt, as Marx writes that the revolutionary impulse is just as automatic as is the impulse to obedience. Revolution in this paradigm is not for us, but we revolt on the behalf of the means of production, clearing away an upper class of human beings who are no longer acting as capital personified, who have developed interests beyond the development of the means of production (i.e. protection of self-interest that has become protection of an obsolete mechanism) and who thus need to be destroyed. Marx writes, interestingly, that at this point and this point only, the one-sidedness of the existence of ‘man’ is permitted to appear, for as long as the ‘contradiction’ lasts. After the revolution, human beings go back to being conditioned to be obedient. The point is that revolutions can take place (within Marx’s lapses) with no human agency or imagination mobilised.

As Heller writes, ‘from the dispositions of the collective teleology, what people *really want* “emerges”’.<sup>377</sup> Though we do not sit and plan history (or, more precisely speaking, when we *do* sit and plan history, we are not aware of how much the ‘contradictions of material life’ that we consider to be ‘unpolitical’ are putting words in our mouths), what we want or what we think *ought* to be still has a role to play, and can even be said to indirectly direct our telos. If living human beings are to know what they want, then they must have the power to be something more than an element of the mode of production personified. As this thesis consistently argues, this power exists, and it is the imagination. This thesis does not consider that what is best for *living* human beings could be the result of something other than the will of *living* human beings—a modicum of will that was an accident of history and that will *remain* a scrap unless we begin using it by fighting against the forces that determine us, and begin directing history toward a place in which our ability to fight these forces is extended. No invisible hand can usher us towards autonomy, for in following invisible hands, we abnegate autonomy. For this thesis, Marx understood this, most of the time, which is why it insists on calling his strong deterministic moments *lapses*. And this is also why this thesis believes that the human imagination has a role *both* in bringing about human autonomy and in enabling this autonomy to function once it has been *consciously/imaginatively* instituted.

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<sup>377</sup> Heller, *Theory of Need in Marx*: pp. 85–87.



## *Chapter 2: A backwards glance before going forward:*

### *the thing in itself from Kant to Nietzsche*

This chapter has two main functions. The first is to demonstrate that the roots of the materialism that is the basis of the materialism being developed in this thesis—the materialism of Marx and of Nietzsche that forms the foundations of the materialist imagination—are primarily idealist. Why these roots are important to this thesis will be explained below. The second function is to bridge the Marx and the Nietzsche chapters in such a manner as to begin the Nietzsche chapter having established a rudimentary understanding of the idea that although both Marx and Nietzsche situate the objective as being a human creation, Marx's version of this idea is the weaker. That is, for Marx, the objective is human activity congealed in a material shell—thus, the old matter/spirit dualism in a sense lives on—whereas for Nietzsche, in the interpretation of this thesis, the objective is a human creation that is (that has become/is becoming) *real*.

To return to the first main function of this chapter: other developments were of course hugely influential (Darwin's influence, for example, on both Marx and Nietzsche was profound). But the idealist development that began in Kant and terminated in Hegel is for this thesis the real pre-history of the materialism of both Marx and Nietzsche. This chapter will briefly and roughly outline the development of the thing in itself from Kant to Hegel, via Fichte, and then follow this idealist development into the materialist understanding of the thing in itself in the theory of Marx and Nietzsche. It thereby aims to demonstrate that: a) the materialism of Marx and Nietzsche has idealist roots; and b) it is in Nietzsche that this materialism with roots in its own opposite finally becomes a materialism of the highest form possible in that it understands that the material is a product, and that this product is material.

Marx and Nietzsche both overcame the idealist preoccupation with consciousness, preferring instead to study what is, *objectivity*. However, the brute realm of being is not for Marx or for Nietzsche what it is for most materialists. It is not a *found* environment to be weighed and measured, mastered or understood. It for Marx a *product*, a product of much industry, and among the elements to be studied are ossified layers of past human activity. The objectivity that Marx is looking for is not unrelated to us; it is, as the last chapter hopefully make clear, sensuously produced by human beings. In the works of Nietzsche, that what *is* is produced is even clearer. ‘*Life not an argument.*—We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we are able to live—by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith no one could endure living! But that does not prove them.’<sup>378</sup> In most forms of science it is taken for granted that things exist: being is assumed, and science studies the ‘properties’ of apparently autonomous and unproblematic ‘things’. But neither Marx nor Nietzsche take being for granted. They want to study what is, but not in the naive manner that science usually does. Marx and Nietzsche both wanted to study the real world, but both understood that the real world is the one that we have made.

As this thesis is interested in disclosing the idealist roots of the materialism of Marx and of Nietzsche, we will begin with Immanuel Kant in our discussion of the development of the idea of the thing. For Kant, ‘the thing in itself’ is a limit. In Kant’s understanding of ‘things’, nothing can be that is not *caused*.<sup>379</sup> Because there are *phenomena*—objects that can be experienced—there *must* be *noumena*—‘objects’ that cannot be experienced but that are causally responsible for the empirical existence of the apparent objects that we can experience. ‘Everything that is, exists as substance, or a determination dependent on it ... Everything contingent exists as the effect of

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<sup>378</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. p. 117.

<sup>379</sup> Allison, ‘Nietzsche Knows no Noumenon’. pp. 295–310.

another thing, namely its cause.’<sup>380</sup> In Kant, every appearance is at the same time a concealment, in that the manifestation of ‘the thing’ (its appearance) pulls it into space and time, into synthetic relations and categories, in a manner that, *even if* it resonates with the nature of the thing in itself—via human *intuition* (and it may)—it is still altered, it is still ultimately *a product of cognition*, influenced more by the nature of this cognition than by the independent nature of *das ding an-sich*. Thus, the thing in itself that is the cause of the appearance does not appear in/as the appearance of a thing.

The transcendental concept of appearances in space, on the contrary, is a critical reminder that absolutely nothing that is intuited in space is a thing in itself, and that space is not a form that is proper to anything in itself, but rather that objects in themselves are not known to us at all, and that what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose true correlate, i.e., the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them, but is also never asked after in experience.<sup>381</sup>

In essence, for Kant, there can be no experience unless a host of pre-experiential cognitive processes occur, the most important of which are: 1) the creation of the self (the self-positing of the being who is the agent of *a priori* processes)—a spontaneous creation of a productive imagination;<sup>382</sup> and 2) the *a priori* creation of space and time *by this self*—this self that, as

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<sup>380</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. p. 352.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid. p. 178. cf: Ibid. p. 263. cf: ‘But appearances are only representation of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves.’ p. 233: ‘However, the appearances are not things in themselves, but themselves only representations, which in turn have their object, which therefore cannot be further intuited by us, and that may therefore be called the non-empirical, i.e., transcendental object = X.’

<sup>382</sup> Ibid. pp. 230–260. The following quotes all relate to the ‘transcendental synthesis of the imagination’. The *imagination* is not explicitly stressed in all of them, but the theme remains a) the creation of the self by the self, and b) the impossibility of the existence of a(n apparent) world prior to the existence of this self. Ibid. p. 232: ‘Now no cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representation of objects is

Nietzsche mocks, has pulled itself out of the swamp of nothingness by its hair.<sup>383</sup> Kant calls the faculty that engenders the ‘transcendental I of apperception’ the ‘creative’ or ‘spontaneous’ imagination, and the action through which the self creates the self the ‘figurative synthesis’ or the ‘transcendental synthesis of the imagination’.<sup>384</sup>

To quote:

This synthesis of the manifold of sensible intuition, which is possible and necessary *a priori*, can be called figurative (*synthesis speciosa*), as distinct from that which would be thought in the mere category in regard to the manifold of an intuition in general, and which is called combination of the understanding (*synthesis intellectualis*); both are transcendental, not merely because they themselves proceed *a priori* but also because they ground the possibility of other cognition *a priori*.

Yet the figurative synthesis, if it pertains merely to the original synthetic unity of apperception, i.e., this transcendental unity, which is thought in the categories, must be called, as distinct from the merely intellectual combination, the transcendental synthesis of the imagination.

*Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object even without its presence in intuition. Now since

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alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name transcendental apperception. That it deserves this name is already obvious from this, that even the purest objective unity, namely that of the *a priori* concepts (space and time) is possible only through the relation of intuitions to it.’ Ibid. p. 245: ‘Yet the combination (*conjunctio*) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title synthesis in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the *object* without having previously combined it ourselves, and that among all representations combination is one is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity.’ Ibid. p. 456: ‘Thinking, taken in itself, is merely the logical function and hence the sheer spontaneity of combining the manifold of a merely possible intuition ...’

<sup>383</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 21.

<sup>384</sup> Op. cit. p. 256.

all of our intuition is sensible, the imagination, on account of the subjective condition under which alone it can give a corresponding intuition to the concepts of understanding, belongs to sensibility; but insofar as its synthesis is still an exercise of spontaneity, which is determining and not, like sense, merely determinable, and can thus determine the form of sense *a priori* in accordance with the unity of apperception, the imagination is to this extent a faculty for determining the sensibility *a priori*, and its synthesis of intuitions, in accordance with the categories, must be the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, which is an effect of the understanding on sensibility and [N.b.] its first application (and at the same time the ground of all others) to objects of the intuition that is possible for us. As figurative, it is distinct from the intellectual synthesis without any imagination merely through the understanding. Now insofar as the imagination is spontaneity, I also occasionally call it the productive imagination, and thereby distinguish it from the reproductive imagination, whose synthesis is subject solely to empirical laws, namely those of association, and that therefore contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of cognition *a priori*, and on that account belongs not in transcendental philosophy but in psychology.<sup>385</sup>

To be clear, the ultimate presupposition of a world is for Kant an ego sufficiently coherent and unified to create a world: a being that can engage the principles of pure understanding and make experience (for itself) and subsequently, (an apparent) world possible.<sup>386</sup>

The transcendental deduction of *a priori* concepts therefore has a principle, toward which the entire investigation must be directed, namely this: that they must be recognized as *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experiences (whether of the intuition that is encountered in them, or of the thinking). Concepts that supply the objective ground of the possibility of experience are necessary just for that reason. The unfolding of the experience in which they are encountered, however, is not their deduction (but their illustration), since they would thereby be only

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid. pp. 256–257.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid. p. 337.

contingent. Without this original relation to possible experience, in which all objects of cognition are found, their relation to any object not be comprehended at all.<sup>387</sup>

In Kant's logic, the world of appearances could not be unless there was a being for whom they appeared. Thus, if one does not take for granted the existence of the world—and Kant does not—then one must posit an ego that brings it into being. If one does not take for granted the existence of the world-begetting ego—and Kant does not—then the ego must have a capacity to beget itself, or it, and the world (the apparent world) simply would not be.

By contrast, for Marx and for Nietzsche—though this thesis emphasises the created nature of objectivity—the material world that is capable of supporting or generating human consciousness must *pre-exist* that consciousness. The first chapter stressed (as will the next) that it is an *animal* that makes the world which *then* makes *humanity* possible. (For Marx, the world *qua* a concatenation of tools/'human' activity is created by an animal that labours, for Nietzsche, the world *qua* a great, intertwined conglomeration of errors is created by an animal that speaks). The labouring animal creates the objective world, and then in its relations with this world it becomes human. The speaking animal forces being under the skin of all things, eventually convincing itself that the errors of ego and being are true, and only then is humanity a possibility. It is a kind of animal that makes the world that then reshapes that same animal into a human being. For Kant, the opposite is true, as the (apparent) world cannot logically pre-exist the being that generates/is capable of generating(/experiencing) the world. In short, for Marx and for Nietzsche, the world comes first, and then 'man'. Though at the same time, each is unthinkable without the other, the world without 'man' or 'man' without world. For Kant—while he too

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid. p. 225.

understands that a ‘man’ without a ‘world’ is unthinkable<sup>388</sup>—in the final analysis, as argued above, ‘man’ and his categories and schematism must come first. For Kant, even so basic a concept as ‘endurance’, as the endurance of some substance *in time*, relies on a certain modality of experiencing.<sup>389</sup> The ‘man’ that for Marx and Nietzsche appears only at the end of a long process as a late, ripe fruit, for Kant instead stands at the beginning of time: indeed, in the Kantian paradigm, time cannot start without him.

For Kant, all of this *pre-experiential* labour that ‘man’ engages in 1) *allows a thing to be experienced* and 2) *means that it can never be experienced as it is, ‘in itself’*. Both of these points assume that the idea of unmediated knowing is nonsense. There is a paradox of sorts at play here, in that any possible means of approaching the thing, of apperceiving it, must alter it through the attempted act of ‘knowing’ it. But the unknowability of the thing as it is in itself does not render it irrelevant. On the contrary, the thing in itself is for Kant above all a duty. His message—the message of the Copernican Revolution<sup>390</sup>—is: stop trying to get closer to the thing in itself via the senses which can say nothing about ‘how things are’, but only about ‘how they appear’.<sup>391</sup> The gap between the thing and us is not and has never been *sensual*. It is not a failure of sensuous intuiting that can be remedied by better—more objective or methodical—sensuous intuiting. The ambit of the gap between the thing in itself and the appearance of this thing is determined by the specific content/nature of *a priori* cognitive processes that precede even the *possibility* of any *material sensuous intuiting*.<sup>392</sup> The royal road to the truth—the truth of things—lies in understanding how experience is possible, and perhaps in altering *a priori* cognitive processes to

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid. p. 216.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid. p. 302.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid. p. 110.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid. p. 352. Certain modes of abstract thinking also have this claim laid against them: most frequently, mathematics, which Kant often argues is a science of the *phenomenal*, inferior to philosophy. Ibid. p. 751.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid. pp. 225; 434–6.

make the appearances of things closer to the way that they ‘are’. In sum, it lies not in perfecting sensibility, but in combining understanding and sensibility, and altering our understanding of what is meant by ‘empirical’.<sup>393</sup> Real things (which are neither real nor things, this being the paradox of *das ding an-sich*) are beyond us. Our world will never be populated by ‘real things’, because configuring things so that they appear *as a world* is an active process—the process that makes ‘real things’ unknowable in the first place. But despite all this, for Kant, we have a duty to make our world touch (as far as possible) the real world, the ‘real world’ that does not exist, is not real, and is not a world. This is Kant’s idealism in very broad strokes (as interpreted by this thesis) in relation to his idea of the thing in itself. We make *our world*, for Kant, and we make it alone. But we must not make it as we choose: it must touch the untouchable real. One can see why Nietzsche wants to make *this* real world a myth,<sup>394</sup> as does this thesis, for only then can we celebrate our own created world as being real, as being ‘objective’ not *despite*, but *because of* its ‘subjective’ origins. Only then can we finally get rid of the idea that the ‘supreme cause’<sup>395</sup> of our reality—which we cannot know—is what is real. For this idea, above all others, must forever rob the world we live in (and that we can under the right circumstances know) of the status of ‘the real’.<sup>396</sup> The ‘in-itself’ from a Marxian and a Nietzschean perspective is a myth, and has always been a myth. There is only *created* objectivity. Once it stands alone (more or less), or appears to stand alone, it is foolish—as Nietzsche stresses—to try to imagine an external cause/model for the world: a world that is becoming can have no such cause/model.<sup>397</sup> The cause of the thing,

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid. p. 352.

<sup>394</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*. Penguin Edition. p. 49.

<sup>395</sup> Op. cit. p. 302.

<sup>396</sup> As argued in the introduction and the Nietzsche chapter, postmodernism fails Nietzsche in that it denies ‘supreme causes’ as he desired and makes of Kant’s real world a myth, but does not take the next step of affirming the reality of what had hitherto been called phenomenal. Instead, it insists that any possible real world is a myth, continuing the idealist tradition of fleeing reality.

<sup>397</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. pp. 19–20.



Marx would say, is self-activity.<sup>398</sup> The cause of the thing, Nietzsche would say, is language, time, and other errors.<sup>399</sup> To deny its reality on this charge is to misunderstand what reality is. We will return to Marx and Nietzsche on the thing in itself at the end of this discussion.

After Kant, the next thinker of relevance here to deeply contemplate the thing in itself was Fichte, and contra Kant, he believed that the cause of any *phenomenal* thing is *not* strictly speaking *noumenal*. Fichte's basic message is: let us forget about the thing in itself and the *noumenal*.<sup>400</sup> According to Fichte, the thing in itself does 'exist', but it is less of a *cause* and more of a *shock*. The thing in itself is a bump or a jolt that precipitates the human creation of reality, a creation that is by and large *active and imaginary*. In Kant, the X is very important while in Fichte, it is not.<sup>401</sup> It appears that he would like to do away with it completely, but he cannot. If there was not already something external to the self—the self which is another self-positing self<sup>402</sup> as in the work of Kant—the self would create neither itself nor a world. In Fichte's works, the X that he tries to suppress thus keeps returning. In Kant, the thing in itself is a duty. In Fichte, it is a problem and he therefore emerges as 'more idealist' than Kant. Returning to Kant momentarily to illuminate Fichte, the difference between Kant and Fichte is primarily one of attitude. Kant is made nervous by the idea that there is a necessary gap between things as they are in themselves and things as they appear to us. The presence of this gap is a danger for Kant, and the thing that makes Kant most uncomfortable is that the human imagination has a role—the size of this role varies with Kant's anxiety—to play in bridging this gap.

Synthesis in general is, as we shall subsequently see, the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of

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<sup>398</sup> Marx & Engels, *German Ideology*. p. 91.

<sup>399</sup> Owen, *Maturity and Modernity, Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the ambivalence of reason*. p. 19.

<sup>400</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*. p. 13

<sup>401</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid. pp. 60; 99; 129; 176.

which we are seldom even conscious. Yet to bring this synthesis to concepts is a function that pertains to the understanding, and by means of which it first provides cognition in the proper sense.<sup>403</sup>

Without the imagination, there can be no relation—in the case of ‘objects’—between how things are and how they appear to us. However, the imagination that makes ‘experience’ possible also introduces the possibly of appearance drifting away from ‘reality’, rendering our apparent world absurd and meaningless. The imagination is an uncanny translator: in translating the *noumenal* into the *phenomenal*, it is the force that can make a ‘stone’ (which is not a ‘stone’ *qua das ding an-sich*) thinkable by stripping it of its matter. The essence of *experience* is—ironically from the commonsense perspective—abstraction, upon which apperception rests. We have *senses*, of course, but as quoted above: ‘what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility’.

Kant is never comfortable with the power that this uncanny translator holds. If it began to lie or make mistakes, we would never know, which is the perennial danger of relying on translations. Kant’s terror, which is behind the much discussed reduction of the role of the imagination in the A and B editions of *The Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>404</sup> in the final analysis lies in the

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<sup>403</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. p. 211.

<sup>404</sup> See: Heidegger, *Kant and the problem of Metaphysics*, Indiana University Press: USA, 1990. pp. 117–118: ‘Will not the *Critique of Pure Reason* have deprived itself of its own theme if pure reason reverts to the transcendental power of imagination? Does not this ground-laying lead us to an abyss? In the radicalism of his questions, Kant brought the “possibility” of metaphysics to this abyss. He saw the unknown. He had to shrink back. It was not just that the transcendental power of imagination frightened him, but rather that in between [the two editions] pure reason as reason drew him increasingly under its spell.’ Castoriadis makes reference to this in ‘The Discovery of the Imagination’, in *World in Fragments*; ‘Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary’, in *Rethinking Imagination*, G. Robinson & J. Rundell (eds.), Routledge: London, 1994; and ‘The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy’, in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*, D. Curtis (ed.), Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1991. Rundell writes on this in ‘Creativity and Judgement: Kant on reason and imagination’, in

fact that nature is created, is a product, *and* it is also the only thing between us and an abyss of meaninglessness, in which both ‘experience’ and meaning are impossible. On nature being a product, Kant writes that: ‘[t]hus we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call nature, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there.’<sup>405</sup> On the importance of this product nature, he writes that only in the realm of nature can we can ‘stride with confidence’, ‘within the bounds of reason’, and avoid indifference, ‘chaos and night in the sciences’, ‘[e]arth that cannot be stood upon, water that cannot be swum in’.<sup>406</sup>

The imagination makes both cognition and ‘experience’ itself possible,<sup>407</sup> and beyond this, it opens a dialogue between sense and understanding so that we are not trapped in a situation of having ‘intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions ...’.<sup>408</sup> But the imagination also makes *absurd* and *uncertain* experience possible, as the imagination, for Kant, is *subjective*, and it can be *spontaneous*, which means that it can create a ‘thing’ that has no cause, a ‘thing’ that has no ground.<sup>409</sup> Reason touches to some extent *das ding an-sich* (we are no longer speaking of ‘objects’); it is universal, it touches what things are and generates meaning and stability. It engages in *Finden*, not *Erfinden*,<sup>410</sup> discovery, not pure invention, and its fruits therefore cannot be *groundless/spontaneous*.<sup>411</sup> But it *cannot generate ‘experience’*—its use *qua* pure reason in fact requires the concentrated *repudiation of experience*. Thus we need the imagination,

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*Rethinking Imagination*, G. Robinson & J. Rundell (eds.), Routledge: London, 1994; and in Rundell, ‘The Hermeneutic Imagination and Imaginary Creation: Ourselves, others, and Autonomy’, in *Divinatio*, Vol. 8, Autumn-Winter, 1998.

<sup>405</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. p. 241.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid. p. 636.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid. p. 211.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid. p. 352.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid. p. 256; 302.

<sup>410</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. pp. 15–16.

<sup>411</sup> The discovery of nature by reason is a ‘grounded creation’, as is the discovery of the categorical imperative.

and yet, this same imagination can undo the work both of reason and of higher forms of sensibility, of intuition guided by concepts: the imagination can darken and destabilise the ‘experience’ that it itself makes possible. Kant can subsequently neither celebrate nor repudiate this force, and appears to compromise by reducing it to the role of ordering and synthesising, and by telling himself (for example in the *Anthropology*<sup>412</sup>) that it is not *really* creative. Kant desires solid ground and boundaries, but is haunted by the knowledge that we must create such things in order for them to be. The thing in itself is an anchor for Kant. He knows that we will never ‘know’ it, but he also knows<sup>413</sup> that it is a model for the *phenomenal* things that we know: it is the cause of them.<sup>414</sup> We cannot reach *das ding an-sich*, but it is our duty to remember that it is *out there* and to try to find a means of making our apparent world conform, as best as we can, to the way things are. In other words, we must create the world we live in, for Kant, but we have a duty to create it in the image of the thing in itself, as best as we are able. The thing cannot appear unless we create the adequate means for its appearance, and that this creation necessarily conveys clearly that it is impossible (for Kant) for the thing in itself to appear. The appearance thus conceals the thing, as already noted. But we must also limit the scope of our creation, so that what does appear, *as far as possible*, is in fact the thing in itself and *not* something random, chaotic, meaningless and imaginary.

We can now turn back to Fichte who does not share the above fears in the least. The problem for Fichte is rather that in the Kantian paradigm the human imagination does not get its full dues. For Fichte, Kant’s thing in itself *qua* anchor takes too much credit for what the human imagination creates. Fichte does not fear the ‘drifting apart’ of the apparent and the real that is

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<sup>412</sup> Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. p. 61.

<sup>413</sup> Adorno suggests—perhaps overly cynically—that such knowledge is a matter of good manners, or ‘tact’. That is, that before Marx and Nietzsche, one was too polite to ‘know’ anything contrary to good sense and human dignity. *Minima Moralia*. p. 36.

<sup>414</sup> Allison, ‘Nietzsche Knows no Noumenon’. pp. 295–310.

Kant's recurring nightmare. For Fichte, in a sense, this has always already occurred anyway. On this, he writes:

The thing-in-itself, which is the fundamental principle of the dogmatist, is nothing and has no reality, as even its exponents must concede, apart from what it is alleged to acquire through the circumstance that experience can be explained only on its basis.<sup>415</sup> In terms of its chosen route, the Kantian system may have need in this fashion to shut out the thing-in-itself; the *Science of Knowledge* has disposed of it by other means; we recognize it to be the uttermost perversion of reason, and a concept perfectly absurd; all existence, for us, is necessarily *sensory* in character, for we first derive the entire concept of existence from the form of sensibility; and are thus completely protected against the claim to any connection with the thing-in-itself. Intellectual intuition in the Kantian sense is a wraith which fades in our grasp when we try to think it, and deserves not even a name.<sup>416</sup> And this is the business of the *creative imagination*, a faculty that all men are quite certainly endowed with, since without it they would have no presentations at all.<sup>417</sup>

Fichte does not need the thing in itself, except as a shock to get human creation started. He rejects the premise that experience is based in abstraction, and shifts his emphasis from a (for him) fictional cause of things and towards the things that we have made, things that can be experienced with the senses. Thus, the creative imagination *qua* uncanny translator that Kant tries to minimise erupts to the surface in Fichte's works *qua* the *creator* of the phenomenal world.

Our doctrine here is therefore that all reality—for *us* being understood, as it cannot be otherwise understood in a system of transcendental philosophy—is brought forth solely by the imagination.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*. p. 13.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid. pp. 45–46.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid. p. 250.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid. p. 202.

The manner in which the imagination begets reality is complex, and can only be touched upon here.

Imagination is a faculty that wavers in the middle between determination and nondetermination, between finite and infinite; and hence it does indeed determine  $A + B$ , both through the determinate  $A$ , and also through the indeterminate  $B$ , which is that very synthesis of imagination of which we were speaking just now. —This wavering is characteristic of imagination even in its product; in the course of its wavering, so to speak, and by means thereof it brings the latter to birth.<sup>419</sup>

What is relevant to this thesis is that the imagination is again called upon to mediate between parties with no common ground, the finite and the infinite, the self and the not-self. The result of this (again, uncanny) translation is experience, the experience that is for Fichte reality. When Fichte says reality ‘for us’, this is not quite what Kant means by the same. The ‘for us’ does not mean the world that we bring order to (for Kant, of course, we do not bring order/nature to the real world) in opposition to the world that we approach but cannot touch. But the ‘for us’ contains an implication that the ‘not for us’ does not bear thinking about—indeed, that it cannot be thought about. And here, theorising on the imagination peaks and the stage is set, to some extent, for Marx and Nietzsche—especially for Nietzsche, who goes beyond *not thinking* about the  $X$  by *laughing* at the  $X$ , by denying the reality of the  $X$ . Fichte denied that the  $X$  represented ‘how things are’, as opposed to ‘how things appear’. Nietzsche denied altogether that there was an  $X$ . It is fashionable to deny that the  $X$  ‘means anything’, or has any bearing on ‘our world’. A bold postmodernist today will go so far as Fichte did early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and say, ‘I will go farther than to say that our world is a distortion of the real world: I will say that our world has

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid. p. 194.

nothing to do with the real world'.<sup>420</sup> But it is not common to do as Nietzsche did in utterly denying the X, and laughing at the ideas of 'for us', 'our world', the 'real world', and 'leaning on'.

But before we get to Marx and to Nietzsche, the thesis wishes to pass through Hegel as it was Hegel, in fairness, who denied the X long before Nietzsche, and who did so in a manner greatly influential to Marx. This thesis has little to say regarding Hegel and the imagination, for Hegel (apart from some youthful exceptions) follows *Kant* in either minimising the imagination or recoiling from it.<sup>421</sup> Thus, though Hegel follows Fichte chronologically, Hegel's work on the imagination for this thesis represents a regression. However, there is still a relevant *development* in Hegel regarding the thing in itself. Fichte only *desired* to get rid of it. Hegel actually managed to do so.

For Hegel, Kant and Fichte are both wrong to position themselves on the side of subjectivity and ponder the objective *qua* the thing in itself. Hegel, reading Schelling, concluded that the thing in itself is neither an unreachable duty nor an external prompt/problem, *because*

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<sup>420</sup> Again, this thesis finds this position frustrating, as it denies that the real world is real and that it is a world. And yet it still insists on having it occupy the position of 'the Real', obstructing the positive outcome of this thought (the Nietzschean thought) that the real world is dead, long live the real world—i.e., the world we live in.

<sup>421</sup> Castoriadis, 'The Discovery of the Imagination'. p. 215: 'In his youthful writings, Hegel pursued and, at times radicalised the movement initiated by Kant and Fichte: the imagination, he writes in *Faith and Knowledge*, is not a "middle term", but that which is first and original ... Later on, Hegel will switch the emphasis from imagination to *memory*, to which he will transfer the "objectifiable" words of the imagination (reproaching the Ancients for having lowered memory to the rank of imagination ...) cf: Rundell, 'Imaginary Turns in Critical Theory'. p. 320, who quotes Hegel on the imagination *qua* abyss. "This image belongs to Spirit. Spirit is in possession of the image, is master of it. It is stored in the Spirit's treasury, in its Night. The image is unconscious; that is, it is not displayed as an object for representation. The human being is this Night, this empty nothing which contains everything in its simplicity—a wealth of infinitely many representations, images, none of which occur to it directly, and none of which are not present. This is the Night, the interior of human nature, existing here—pure Self—and in the phantasmagoric representations it is everywhere ... we see this Night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a Night that turns terrifying ... Into the Night the being has returned.'

*there is no thing in itself.* That which has the ‘quality’ of being *in itself* is by nature no-thing: pure being signifies nothingness.<sup>422</sup> *Das ding an-sich*, in its reinterpretation as pure *Sein an-sich*, is dissolved.<sup>423</sup> Hegel wrote: ‘nothing carries the root of its own being in itself.’<sup>424</sup> The ‘in itself’ only *becomes* ‘an object’ in relation to the ‘for itself’—and the ‘for itself’ only *becomes* a ‘subject’ in relation to the ‘in itself’.<sup>425</sup> But there are two formulations in Hegel on this topic. In the weaker formulation, the ‘in-itself’ needs to be negated to leave its pure state, it needs to become, its undifferentiatedness must be nihilated by a ‘for itself’ who must say no to the ‘in-itself’ and grant it determinate being.<sup>426</sup> In the stronger formulation, the ‘human being’ and the ‘thing’ are *the same thing* in different moments/modalities.

It was Schelling, finally, who made the most important, or, from a philosophic point of view, the only important advance upon the philosophy of Fichte ... At the same time Schelling makes Jacobi's principle of the unity of thought and Being fundamental, although he begins to determine it more closely. To him concrete unity is this, that the finite is no more true than the infinite, the subjective idea no more than objectivity, and that combinations in which both untruths are brought together in their independence in relation to one another, are likewise combinations of untruths merely. Concrete unity can only be comprehended as process and as the living movement in a proposition. This inseparability is in God alone; the finite, on the other hand, is that which has this separability within it. In so far as it is a truth it is likewise this unity, but in a limited sphere, and for that reason in the separability of both moments ... The Absolute is the absolute identity of subjective and objective, the

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<sup>422</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*, A. Miller (trans.), Humanity Books: UK, 1969. p. 82.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid. pp. 120–121.

<sup>424</sup> Judith Butler: ‘To sense what is living in the other Hegel’s early love’, in *Senses of the Subject*, Fordham University Press: New York, 2015. p. 98. cf: Marx, ‘To be radical is to grasp things by the root, but for man the root is man himself.’ Cited in Heller, *Theory of Need in Marx*. p. 88.

<sup>425</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford University Press: USA, 1977. pp. 104–138.

<sup>426</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*. pp. 105–106; 157. Marx of course takes note of this, that the self creates itself by creating ‘an object’, as will be discussed below.



absolute indifference of real and ideal, of form and essence, of universal and particular; in this identity of the two there is neither the one nor the other.<sup>427</sup>

In short, to be ‘in itself’, from the standpoint of the Absolute, is to *not* be a thing. Things are only things in relation, and that is the point. For Hegel, one cannot get to the truth via the subjective (starting from the false premise of an autonomous ego and peering ‘outwards’) or the objective (suppressing the ego to see ‘what is left’): for both assume a false autonomy of the subject and the object in relation to one another. The truth is Absolute and encompasses both in their interaction/unfolding/reciprocal co-creation/fundamental identity. Hegel thinks, in disclosing the Absolute relation, that the work of philosophy is done. All that is now left is for the self-actualisation that he theorised to (self-)actualise, for the process to generate a being who can understand the process, and thus complete itself.

And yet, more is done. Marx comes along, and says: Hegel understands that the human being, nature, history and reality, are all products of human activity: human labour.

The outstanding thing in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and of its final outcome—that is, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle—is thus first that Hegel conceives the self-genesis of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of *labour* and comprehends objective man—true, because real man—as the outcome of man’s *own labour*. [However] ... The only labour which Hegel knows and recognises is *abstractly mental* labour. Therefore, that which constitutes the essence of philosophy—the *alienation of man in his knowing of himself*, or *alienated science thinking itself*—Hegel grasps as its essence; he is therefore able *vis-à-vis* preceding philosophy to gather together its elements and phases, and to present his philosophy as *the* philosophy. What the other philosophers did—that they grasped separate phases of nature and of human life as phases of self-consciousness, and indeed of

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<sup>427</sup> Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Section Three: Recent German Philosophy, D: Schelling.  
<<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hp/hpschell.htm>>.

abstract self-consciousness—is *known* to Hegel as the *doings* of philosophy. Hence his science is absolute.<sup>428</sup>

Hegel understands that there is no thing in itself. There are only created things. That is what it means to be a thing. And to be created, to be material and objective, means to be embedded in *relations*. Hegel got past the idea of reality as a *representation*. For Hegel, Kant essentially had it backwards. For Kant, *first* there is a thing in itself, there is a ‘how things are’, with nobody trying to know it. Then a subject pulls itself out of its own ‘figurative synthesis’ and from this point onwards we have a ‘how things appear’: there is no longer just *das ding an-sich*, but there is *das ding an-sich* and there is an apparent representation/manifestation *of it*—one that conceals the actual, unknowable form of the thing. With the birth of the subject, the second world is born alongside of the real world, the *phenomenal* world that is created by experience.

For Hegel, on the contrary, *first* there is *no thing*, an ‘in itself’ that can *become* a thing if its no-thing-ness is negated. In a relation with a ‘for itself’, this no thing becomes a thing, no longer *pure* being in itself, but *determined* being in itself. Because the *relation* is the ‘cause’ of the thing, *the thing cannot be the cause of the appearance*, as is the situation for Kant. Hegel thus obliterates the thing in itself, and with it, the idea of reality *qua* representation. This is, to this thesis, Hegel’s greatest achievement. However, as Wellmer notes, Hegel’s world history is mystical and metaphysical.<sup>429</sup> He *wants* to make ‘man’ the measure of all things, but in the end he does the opposite; he converts the cosmos into brutally unfolding clockworks and makes ‘man’ into a tool of this unfolding. To demystify the dialectical process, it needs (as Marx understood) to be made

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<sup>428</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. pp. 140–141. cf: Rundell, ‘Imaginary Turns in Critical Theory’. p. 322: ‘The dialectical play of the categories, which is laid out in the *Logic*, for example, denudes the significance of humankind as a plurality of actors who form the world through their actions.’

<sup>429</sup> Wellmer, ‘Communications and Emancipation’. p. 236.

materialist. *Geist* has to be excised and the sensuous activity of concrete human beings needs to be made the moving principle.<sup>430</sup> It is Marx who manages to achieve this—an achievement to some extent retarded by his friend Engels. ‘While Marx’s historical materialism represents a demystification of dialects, Engels’ dialectic materialism represents a re-mystification of materialism: materialism has become metaphysical again.’<sup>431</sup>

Marx reads Hegel and watches all of the development from Kant to Hegel, deciding that he supports the idea of the becoming world. He likes the idea that there are only created things and that the activity of human beings is the wellspring of reality.

Labour has become bound up in its object: labour has been objectified, the object has been worked on. What on the side of the worker appeared in the form of unrest [*Unruhe*] now appears, on the side of the product, in the form of being [*Sein*], as a fixed, immobile characteristic. The worker has spun, and the product is a spinning.<sup>432</sup>

But Marx also mistrusts some things in this *idealist* development. He dislikes that in Hegel, the activity that creates reality is converted into an abstract and independent process, over and above concrete human beings—an activity that is conceived in heaven and *then* enacted on earth.

In direct contrast to German philosophy ... which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, or imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. *We set out from real, active men and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process.*<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*. p. 10.

<sup>431</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit.

<sup>432</sup> Marx. *Capital*. p. 287.

<sup>433</sup> Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*. p. 10.

Secondly, he rejects Hegel's conception that the activity that creates reality is *thinking*. As quoted above: '[t]he only labour which Hegel knows and recognises is *abstractly mental* labour.'<sup>434</sup> In response, Marx says: 1) the activity that creates reality is not an abstract and independent process, it *begins* on earth, it is the daily activity of concrete human beings as they create the means of their own subsistence; and 2) this activity is sensuous, it is material.

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism ... is that the thing ... reality, sensuousness [is not conceived as] *human sensuous activity, practice* ... [materialism] does not conceive human activity itself as objective ... activity.<sup>435</sup>

The labour that begets objectivity is the sensuous activity of a concrete human being, the daily motions of her body—and in particular, as discussed in chapter one, the activity that bestows 'value' upon things: *labour*.<sup>436</sup> This is what is generative of reality and the telos of 'man'. Marx abandons the idea that materialism has to be *passive* or about the contemplation, understanding, and circumscribed physical manipulation of things.<sup>437</sup> He likewise rejects the trope of idealism that the body and the activity of the body are not relevant—that the activity of the mind is all that counts.<sup>438</sup> In its place, Marx creates an *active materialism* in which the world, or objective

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<sup>434</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 141. This, and all that is about to be said, can of course be challenged by what Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* on the dialectic of recognition. The slave has *two* covert advantages over the master: 1) the recognition of the master is the recognition of a free consciousness and not a servile one, and what is relevant here, 2) that the slave objectifies his own activity in his forced labour—labour that is *not* immersed in life, because the slave has survived (albeit as a loser) a confrontation risking death—and in encountering this objectified activity he finds proof of his existence as being superior to the existence of a thing. This is discussed in these terms in: Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'male' and 'female' in Western philosophy*, Routledge: London, 1993. pp. 87–96.

<sup>435</sup> Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach'. p. 283.

<sup>436</sup> Marx. *Capital*. pp. 296; 287.

<sup>437</sup> Op. cit. Loc. cit.

<sup>438</sup> Loc. cit.

materiality, is sensuous activity: a real social life process. In his works post-1845 this is especially clear.

In Marx's materialism, as in Hegel's idealism, the thing itself is gone and in its place lies the objective, created thing: the thing that has not been found, but spun. Yet now, in Marx, it is not produced by *Geist* or 'Universal History' working *through us*—but cunningly, in that we serve it by following (what we think are) private, internal cues. Rather, it is *corporeally* produced, though (for now) unconsciously, *by us*. Marx keeps the basic form of the dialectic, but he discards the metaphysical props:

The mystification which the dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general forms of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be inverted, in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.<sup>439</sup>

We do not act freely, of course. We are only free from *Geist* for a moment before we are saddled with the strict laws of the materialist conception of history, in which the exigencies of our own material life-process bear down on us. But unlike *Geist*, as argued at length in the Marx chapter above, these laws are socially/immanently generated: they are our own past activity. The telos is thus not set. What can be made actual is not circumscribed, as in Hegel, but is up to us. Making history is not easy and we cannot do it as we choose. But this is only because of our alienation, because today we are drowned by dead voices and the living (if they can even be said to live) are mute. This situation is not eternal—as in dialectal materialism and all philosophies that are

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<sup>439</sup> Marx, *Capital*. p. 103.

apologists for dialectal materialism—and it is overcome when alienation is routed and autonomy is achieved.

In short, Marx says to Hegel that real, material, objective, created things are not a product of human activity *qua* thought (*qua* ‘the Idea’<sup>440</sup>). Rather, they are the product of human activity *qua* human activity: reality is hypostatised human activity—not *actualised thought*. The thing in itself, in Marx as in Hegel, becomes a fiction—though not because Marx too replaces *das Ding an-sich* with *Sein an-sich*. Lenin told all Marxists to read *The Science of Logic*: but this was a mistake. If one listens to Marx, he directs us to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There is no thing in itself for Marx because the real essence of things is *relations*. Marx takes this from Hegel and leaves behind the Hegelian tropes of becoming via the nihilation of nothing. The ‘rational kernel’ of Hegel’s work that Marx develops is that the essence of things is relations—the work in the Marx chapter demonstrated that this is true for Marx. The ‘mystical shell’ is the *Genesis*-style story that one finds in the *Logic*. Marx does not start at the beginning of time and space, as is the wont of idealism. He starts with the commodity. He starts *in media res*. Marx begins with made objects because these are what reality is made of, and he writes about labour because labour *qua* sensuous activity is both an element of reality and the source of it.

And so, Marx follows Hegel, but he *does not just follow Hegel* and he *does not just flip him*, as Engels does. Marx demystifies Hegel, and—in the reading of this thesis—the process of becoming in Marx’s hands is purified twice. On the one hand, it is no longer a baffling ordeal to understand, as it is when one totals the sum of Hegel’s contradictory statements and trains oneself to digest it as a whole. On the other hand, becoming becomes innocent, and though we do not become free, we are at least freed from the diabolical cunning of reason. ‘Instead of Hegel’s “nothing accidental,” the rubric now is: the innocence of Becoming.’<sup>441</sup> Engels simplifies

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<sup>440</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

<sup>441</sup> Krell, ‘The Mole: Philosophic Burrowings in Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche’. p. 178.

Hegel, and thus the first element is present but the second and most important element is not present in his own theory. Substituting matter for spirit only means substituting one master for another. History is not made into the battle of living humans against dead humans, as in Marx,<sup>442</sup> and the telos of ‘man’ is again made none of the business of ‘man’, as non-human actors are dragged back into the dialectal process and we are covertly nudged off the path of Enlightenment once more, again convinced that we are the tools of inhuman powers. For Hegel, *Geist* is depersonalised thought. The relation of concrete human beings to *Geist*, whether it thinks them, or they think it, or both, or neither (*or both and neither*, which is perhaps the response most true to Hegel) is for Marx (despite his Gothic fancies about werewolves and vampires) too mystical, too far divorced from *bon sens*. This is especially the case if one concludes—as Marx and Nietzsche did regarding Hegel—that in the final analysis, *Geist* does come first and the human labour of self-creation is *forced labour*, as we are frog-marched to freedom by a sentient Universe that ‘works through’ us.<sup>443</sup>

For Marx, reality is depersonalised labour. Real, objective, created things are sensuous, encounterable (products of) human activity. They are an objective, twofold product. They are a substance of value and a magnitude of value—the element that can be seen today and the component that we cannot yet see, but that will finally become visible under conditions of

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<sup>442</sup> The talk of capital *qua* zombie may seem to have been overplayed in this thesis. The author directs the reader to two passages in *Capital*, where Marx describes capital as *werewolf- and vampire-like* respectively. p. 353: ‘So far, we have observed the drive towards the extension of the working day, and the werewolf-like hunger for surplus labour ...’ Ibid. p. 342: ‘Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.’ It is clear that in Marx the dead and the living share the earth. Ibid. p. 994. ‘The two kinds of labour are distinguished only by the fact that the one is already objectified in use-values while the other is in the process of being so objectified. The one is in the past, the other in the present; the one dead, the other living; the one objectified in the past, the other objectifying itself in the present.’

<sup>443</sup> We have recognised that for both Marx and Nietzsche, history begins in this way. We have also recognised that we become properly human for both figures by ending this state of affairs.

communism.<sup>444</sup> In Marx, the idea of ‘appearance’ makes no sense, which is how we know we have crossed the line into materialism.<sup>445</sup> Marx is not looking for the cause of the things in our world outside of our world. For Marx and for Nietzsche such seeking is nonsense, as their only ‘cause’ is human activity. If Marx is read correctly, *Geist* is not present *qua* the laws of history, as matter substituted for spirit. If he is read *incorrectly*, *Geist* is not excised, but is reborn/resignified as laws of nature or natural laws of history, and the result is Hegel, standing on his feet, yes, but *still Hegel* (all too Hegel), Hegel with a new coat (red for grey) of paint. The consequence (in other words) of misreading Marx is a return to Hegel and idealism under the banner of science and materialism, as Wellmer argues explicitly.<sup>446</sup> To get to Marx’s actual materialism, one must understand what he actually did to/with Hegel. One must understand what Marx valued in Hegel and what he despised. Among the latter, he despised the idea of an understanding of history in which something other than human beings directed history. Whenever we are unfree, for Marx, some past human activity is pretending to be something other than past human activity, something that we think we ought to defer to—and this of course includes ‘iron laws of history’ as well as God and the market. In short, Marx rejected *Geist* whereas Engels resignified it.

As for what Marx respected in Hegel: chief is the idea that human beings make themselves via a labour process—with two changes: 1) the labour of ‘man’ that directly creates reality and indirectly creates the *eidos* of ‘man’ is *labour*, not thinking; and 2) the labour of ‘man’ that directly creates reality and indirectly creates the *eidos* of ‘man’ is limited/determined *only* by the already objectified labour of ‘man’—objectified labour that, under conditions of alienation, presents itself some god or another that we are meant to blindly follow. We are not, for Marx,

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<sup>444</sup> Ibid. p. 125.

<sup>445</sup> Fichte almost crossed this line himself. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*. p. 189: ‘It will at once be apparent that this mode of explanation is a realistic one; only it rests upon a realism far more abstract than any put forward earlier ...’

<sup>446</sup> Wellmer, ‘Communications and Emancipation’. pp. 235–236.



the tools of *Geist*.<sup>447</sup> We are servants of past human activity, but we do not (any longer) need to be. If this point has been ‘laboured’, it is because there is a history of Marx’s name being attached to Engels’ ideas, and a history of the violent suppression of opposition to this association, despite the fact that it is clear that on the question of the nature of reality, the two figures were not in agreement.

We have reached the point where we can say that, as regards the thing in itself in Marx, there is *no* thing in itself for Marx. Rather, all things are made and the fundamental feature of their very thinghood is that they are human activity objectified. As already cited: ‘[t]he product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour. Labour’s realization is its objectification’.<sup>448</sup> Without objectification, there is no objectivity. Where there was ‘man’ and ‘world’, there is now, in that excellent phrase, the two sides of the social individual,<sup>449</sup> labour in motion and labour at rest. There is no real world ‘outside’ of this world. Anything ‘outside’ is not *das ding an-sich*. How things are is how they are in the objective world, provided that they are understood as they are—as essential *relations*. In Marx’s understanding, what is ‘outside’ the world human beings have made is not real or objective; what is ‘outside’ has nothing to do with us and certainly has no special claim to ‘truth’. That which is ‘outside’ does not become a representation when we encounter it: the encounter with the ‘real’ (or the attempt at least) does not create the apparent, as in Kant. It is not the case that something becomes (a thing) when no-thing has its no-thing-ness nihilated through the labour of the Idea, as in Hegel. For Marx, this ‘thing in itself’ is matter, as discussed at length in the Marx chapter, but it is not real. Human beings enfold it into reality and make it real. They make what is ‘outside’ a thing by *working* on it—at the same time making themselves human.

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<sup>447</sup> Márkus, *Marxism and Anthropology*. Van Gorkum Edition. p. 84.

<sup>448</sup> Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 66.

<sup>449</sup> Op. cit. p. 78.

Finally, we come to Nietzsche, for whom there is no ‘outside’ of any kind. What has been called appearance is real, it lives and it unfolds. It has no model, and it leans on nothing. Nietzsche below calls it a dream, but one should not doubt that for Nietzsche it is real: that which has been called appearance is the only kind of reality that is possible. The *Twilight of the Idols* will be cited at length on this point, though he does write on this theme elsewhere.

What is ‘appearance’ to me now! Certainly not the opposite of some essence—what could I say about any essence except name the predicates of its appearance! Certainly not a dead mask that one could put on an unknown X and probably also take off X! To me, appearance is the active and living itself, which goes so far in its self-mockery that it makes me feel that here there is appearance and a will-o’-the-wisp and a dance of spirits and nothing else—that among all these dreamers, even I, the ‘knower’, am dancing my dance; that the one who comes to know is a means of prolonging the earthly dance and thus is one of the masters of ceremony of existence, and that the sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge may be and will be the highest means to sustain the universality of dreaming, the mutual comprehension of all dreamers, and thereby also the duration of the dream.<sup>450</sup>

For Nietzsche, though he never read Marx (that we know of) and precisely how much Hegel he read is not known, Kant’s thing in itself is worthy of Homeric laughter. ‘Perhaps we shall then recognize that the thing in itself is worthy of Homeric laughter: that it appeared to be so much, indeed everything, and is actually empty, that is to say empty of significance.’<sup>451</sup> For Nietzsche, the idea of the ‘things’ that we experience being an appearance that conceals is nonsense—as

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<sup>450</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. pp. 63–64.

<sup>451</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. pp. 19–20. See also: ‘[W]hat appears in appearance is precisely not the thing in itself, and no conclusion can be drawn from the former as to the nature of the latter. Both parties, however, overlook the possibility that this painting—that which we humans call life and experience—has gradually become, is indeed still fully in course of becoming, and should thus not be regarded as a fixed object on the basis of which a conclusion as to the nature of its originator (the sufficient reason) may either be drawn or pronounced undrawable.’ Loc. cit.

foolish as the idea of a self-positing self. But for Nietzsche, unlike Marx, there is a thing in itself that can exist at the ‘end’ of the process, the unending process whereby errors become a reality that never stops becoming.<sup>452</sup> One can say that for both Marx and Nietzsche objective reality is semi-autonomous, but in Nietzsche, this ‘semi’ means something different in that the object that is produced is far more stable. ‘What kind of a fool would believe that it is enough to point to this origin and this misty shroud of delusion in order to *destroy* the world that counts as “real”, so called “reality”!’<sup>453</sup>

The Marxian object is a pulsating thing: two unlike substances that hold together but that threaten to separate at any moment. The Nietzschean object is more unwavering. It has become (is still becoming) a *real* thing in itself. ‘What started as appearance in the end nearly always becomes essence and *effectively acts* as its essence!’<sup>454</sup> Its erroneous, conventional meaning has

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<sup>452</sup> This thesis acknowledges the passage: ‘[t]here are still harmless self-observers who believe in the existence of “immediate certainties,” such as “I think,” or the “I will” that was Schopenhauer’s superstition: just as if knowledge had been given an object here to seize, stark naked, as a “thing-in-itself,” and no falsification took place from either the side of the subject or the side of the object. But I will say this a hundred times: “immediate certainty,” like “absolute knowledge” and the “thing in itself” contains a *contradictio in adjecto*.’ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. 16. The idea of *becoming* for this thesis is a precaution that it uses to avoid reproducing the kind of ‘thing in itself’ that Nietzsche labels a joke and a contradiction.

<sup>453</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*. p. 70.

<sup>454</sup> Loc. cit. This thesis recognises that Nietzsche *directly* negates this reading at times, previously noting in the introduction quotes in which Nietzsche starkly differentiates between perspective and reality. To those already listed, we can now add the part of the essay ‘On truth and lie’ (pp. 260–261.), where Nietzsche states that what we inherit as ‘humans’ is *not* a real world of being and value that we have made. Rather, he writes, it is a very old and fixed *method of perceiving/experiencing as if* things have value and being, one that is reserved for the human beings who have learned it and that is different from the mode of perceiving by a worm or a bird, without being more or less ‘correct’, for ‘correct perception’ is a ‘non-existent standard’, a ‘contradictory absurdity’. Ibid. p. 260. This thesis therefore perhaps overplays things when it states that for Nietzsche, our errors have become real and are real creations that are accessible. However, one can in the end say nothing about Nietzsche if one refuses to ascribe to him a position that he does not contradict somewhere else, for Nietzsche frequently contradicted himself and made sure to do so, for he reversed the normal manner of thinking here, seeing a *lack* of contradiction as being a weakness. Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*. p. 179: ‘Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.’ cf. pp. 388–389: ‘Opinions and fish.—One

become its essence and actual (but not final) material form. Thus, Nietzsche's materialism is likewise not the 'pure' or abstract physicalist materialism that Marx found vulgar and unscientific. Nietzsche's materialism is the culmination and overcoming of idealism: idealist becoming made innocent, made materialist, shed of the Hegelian shackle of the 'nothing accidental'. There are things that are real and objective. They are also the product of human activity and human imagination. As for Marx they are congealed labour, for Nietzsche (it could be said) they are congealed errors. There is a Fichtean sentiment in Nietzsche when he says: we are not proud enough of ourselves when we look at the world:

It is we, the thinking-sensing ones, who really and continually *make* something that is not yet there: the whole perpetually growing world of valuations, colours, weights, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations. This poem that we have invented is constantly internalized, drilled, translated into flesh and reality, indeed, into the commonplace, by the so-called practical human beings (our actors). Whatever has *value* in the present world has it not in itself, according to its nature—nature is always value-less [cf: Marx]—but has rather been given, granted value, and we were the givers and granters! Only we have created the world *that concerns human beings*! But precisely this knowledge we lack, and when we catch it for a moment we have forgotten it the next: we misjudge our best power and underestimate ourselves just a bit, we contemplative ones. We are *neither as proud nor as happy* as we could be.<sup>455</sup>

The world is real and our product, and the sea is open. We have killed God, and this murder will be forever unredeemed if we do not ourselves become gods.<sup>456</sup> The earth was created by us.

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possesses one's opinions in the way one possesses fish—insofar, that is, that one possesses a fishpond. One has to go fishing and be lucky—then one has one's own fish, one's own opinions. I am speaking here of living opinions, of living fish. Others are content to possess a cabinet of fossils—and, in their heads, "convictions". ' This thesis acknowledges all this and has weighed the pros and cons of ascribing this (or any) position to Nietzsche.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid. p. 171.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

Unlike God, we are determined by that which we create—but not utterly so. This is what the innocence of becoming means, and this is why a materialist theory of the imagination is needed.

In short, the development of the thing in itself from being a joke to becoming true/real, is as follows: from (in Kant) being a duty, to (in Fichte) being a problem, to (in Hegel) becoming no-thing, to (in Marx) becoming the irreal material. In Nietzsche, the thing in itself—as the ‘end’ of a process and not as a chimera that lies at the beginning of experience—has to some extent *become*. In Nietzsche, we do not have the same situation as in Marx in that if we stop generating reality, it will (in less than a year) turn to soup around us. It is an error that one can no longer refute. It can stand alone, to some extent. But it is not for all that unchangeable. If we recall what gave Nietzsche the greatest trouble (in a life not without troubles), it was that how we think about a thing—what we call a thing, our estimation of it—in the end determines what that thing is.<sup>457</sup> Thus, given enough time and imagination, we can change the world, the real world. For Marx and Nietzsche, the objective world is a product. One can say here, however, that it has only truly become *objective* in the works of Nietzsche. We are now ready, after a backwards glance, to move forward.

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<sup>457</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, ‘Only as Creators’. pp. 69–70.