On Marx’s three formulations of labour and the human being

Lachlan Ross
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Lachlan Ross

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Abstract:

This thesis is a study of the *oeuvre* of Karl Marx that explores the basic concept that Marx’s experiments with different modes of material production were all born of his belief that humanity is a highly mutable thing, yet literally impossible to change except via an alteration of the technique of production. This thesis breaks down the *oeuvre* of Marx into three paradigms of labour and the human being: one in which ‘life’ and ‘work’ are combined; one in which ‘work’ is overcome; and one in which ‘life’ and ‘work’ are institutionally separated into distinct spheres. Each paradigm of labour is expected to engender a different genus of human being: the human being as a whole, profoundly connected to the earth; as a cultural being rich in time; and as a free master of itself and its world. This thesis is a critique of the last paradigm of labour (*qua* ‘work’) as *poiesis*, something purely technical, the goal of which (‘life’ *qua* freedom) is external to itself; and it is an argument for the first paradigm of labour (*qua* ‘work’/*life’) as *praxis*, in which the goal—the high quality/individuality of the human being formed by labouring in this particular manner—is internal to, or realised within, the homogenised labour process.
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 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 …¹

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Introduction:

If one is to sit and read the entire body of works of Karl Marx, in order, it becomes impossible to deny that this man did change his mind about a great many things. However, it is highly inadequate to state, as is the custom, that Marx ‘developed’ from a humanist philosopher into a social scientist—with one or the other being the ‘best’ or ‘right’ one, depending on one’s taste.\(^2\) The most offensive thing about this statement, for this thesis, is the assumption of linearality, and the concomitant assumption that the formula for the greatest theoretical distance between two points in the body of works of Marx is purely temporal, in that the youngest Marx exists at the greatest distance to the oldest Marx.

However, this metamorphosis thesis is folly: firstly, because it requires a definite and dogged blindness to be able to miss the ‘philosophy/humanism’ in *Capital* or the ‘science’ in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*,\(^3\) and secondly, because Marx does not ‘develop’ in a linear fashion, an anti-Orpheus who marches from the underworld of philosophy up to the bright world of science, without ever looking back. There is a distinct curve in Marx’s path, one that traces a horseshoe shape if not a circle, and thus for this thesis, the beginning and the end are both significantly closer to one another than they are to the highly radical but seldom


\(^3\) Hereafter this text will be referred to as *The 1844 Manuscripts.*
studied ‘middle Marx’, who is viewed more often than not as a liminal figure in transition between two fixed and distinct antipodal points. The problem is neither to state that Marx changed, nor to state that his emphasis shifted somewhat from philosophy towards science. The problem is rather to state that the ‘young’ and the ‘mature’ Marx have nothing in common but a body. This statement is a failure of the reader to see that although there is a good chance that Marx himself desired a coupure epistémologique with himself, he was too much of a ‘hoarder’ to do so. He could let nothing go: leave nothing behind, and his antinomies are the source of his greatness and dynamism, not a blight on them.

If one takes the time to wade through the voluminous secondary literature on Marx, one would think that there are only two ways to ‘interpret’ him. The first, as mentioned above, is the ‘rupture’ reading. The paradigm of this interpretation is that of Louis Althusser, who fundamentally situates the break as occurring in 1845, when Marx became a ‘scientist’ by letting go of the ‘humanistic’ concept of a human essence. The second is the ‘continuity’ reading. The paradigm of this interpretation is Erich Fromm, who fundamentally states that Marx changes his terminology over time, but that the same ideas dwell under the different signifiers, only in a more or less ‘developed’ form. The first interpretation explains the differences between Marx’s later and early works; the second explains the similarities. This thesis will posit a third interpretation that can explain both, a more flexible reading that states that Marx changes, yes, but never really from one distinct entity into another.

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4 Althusser, *For Marx*. p. 35.
5 Ibid. p. 227.
This thesis will suggest that the Marx of *Capital* is not a ‘going forward’ from the Marx of the *Grundrisse* but rather a ‘turning back’. However, as we all know, all returns are impossible, and so Marx does not end up where he began, but rather at a point adjacent to it with all of his signs reversed. This thesis will thus suggest that there are three competing versions of Marx: the Marx of *The 1844 Manuscripts* and *The German Ideology*, 1844–46, who desired to heal the rift between work/technique and life/sociability — the dual elements of human labour — that capitalism had engendered; the Marx of the *Grundrisse*, 1857–58, who believed that work/technique would become automatic, relegating all human existence into the realm of life/sociability; and the Marx of *Capital*, 1867 onward, who decided that both elements of human labour should be a part of a truly human existence, however, in a sequential manner, so that both autonomous spheres could be rationally controlled. In other words, the rift between work and life should not be healed but rather recut with greater finality and precision.\(^7\)

The texts listed above will be paradigmatic for the particular paradigms, however, they will not be exclusive. It should be made clear that the three ‘versions’ of Marx are not distinct in space and time, but overlap, and ebb and flow in salience: thus, if the ‘third’ Marx is best explored through the texts of *Capital*, this does not mean that the ‘first’ Marx does not show his head here and there, though clearly not as prominently as he does in *The 1844 Manuscripts*. Likewise, the middle Marx is presaged in *The German Ideology*, and thus, the individual chapters will not be limited to set texts, although the abovementioned texts will predominate.

As long as it is clear that this thesis does not believe in the absolute autonomy of the three

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versions of Marx, it is harmless enough to abstract them for the sake of clarification. Once one
has, however, viewed each Marx in isolation, each with his particular desires and prescriptions,
they must be recombined in order to understand the actual/historical man. In order to
understand the theory, however, given that there are multiple theories, abstraction is helpful
and necessary, providing that one is mindful that it is always partly empirical and partly
artificial.

In all three paradigms, ‘labour’ is something completely different. In the first, labour is a
synthesis of its component parts, in that work and life, the two halves of human labour, become
indistinguishable. Relations between human beings and relations between human beings and
external sensuous nature are not separated from one another, and the concepts of intellectual
and menial labour become meaningless, for labour is homogenised and universalised. In this
first paradigm, labour is praxis, for the end of labour is labour itself, it is consummated within
the process of labouring as the production/enactment of a certain kind of whole, content and
fully human being, the details of which will be the primary focus of the first chapter.

In the second paradigm, ‘labour’ is something else again, for the technical element of
human labour is displaced from ‘man’ into machines. In a process that has all the force of a
natural necessity, the human being is squeezed out of the process of material
production/reproduction—in its specific form of the factory—to an ever greater extent, until it
has no place there whatsoever. Labour becomes purely relations between human beings,
life/sociability, the end of which is the development of human powers—the accumulation of
social/collective knowledge/power—as an end-in-itself. Labour no longer contains the process
of metabolism with the earth—which is no longer a human concern—but is now a process of (scientific) invention/discovery and (artistic) creation/production, of both practical and cultural objects (or perhaps practico-cultural objects), as well as the political labour of self-rule. Labour is again praxis, for the goal of the development of human powers as an end-in-itself is realised within/as the act of this development.

In the third paradigm, ‘labour’ attempts a step back towards the first paradigm, in that the execution of technique—though the means of production must remain mechanical—is given back into human hands. The means of material production/reproduction—as instrumentalised science/rationality—is no longer automatic but again becomes a human tool. However, the two halves of labour, work and life, metabolism with nature and relations between human beings, labelled here the ‘realm of necessity’ and the ‘realm of freedom’, are institutionally separated. Everybody must work and live, each giving to and taking from the accumulated social wealth according to his needs and abilities. The separation will mean that domination—of human products over human beings, and subsequently, of human beings over human beings along class lines—will be ‘overcome’ in that the form of one’s ‘work’ will no longer have a social/life role attached of either mastery or subordination, and there will additionally be no confusion as regards relations between people and things, as human beings will have material relations with their environment during work, and social relations with their peers, during life, instead of the material things having the social existence and the people existing as if they were things.

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Labour is split, and the technical element becomes *poiesis*, as the goal of ‘work’ reduced to pure technique is external to itself, the creation of a ‘realm of freedom’.

This thesis will express a preference for the first of these three paradigms, which is not to say a preference for the ‘young philosopher’ Marx, but rather a preference for a version of Marx—wherever he may appear—who is more interested in increasing the spiritual stature of the human being than in bringing about a grey world of social engineering, opposite a grey world of menial labour performed in committee-run factories. This thesis would not think to express a preference for the middle paradigm; partly because its automatic technical basis is impossible, and partly because it is inferior to the other two paradigms in that half of what it means to be human is left in the dust. Whether the two halves of labour are lived simultaneously or successively, at least they are both lived in the other two paradigms.

Fundamentally, this thesis will explore what it will present as Marx’s three theories of communism, the three competing paradigms that he created as possible alternatives to capitalism. They should not, however, be thought of as three different ‘social systems’, a thought which suffers from a chronic lack of imagination. To read Marx in this manner is to miss most of what is there. In order to fully elucidate what Marx is theorising in his three paradigms, one must think of each paradigm as a model of life, work, the world, and the human being, none of which have a fixed, natural/objective form, but each of which are rather the product/process of living human activity, of labour, which is nothing but world creation/work/technique and self creation/life/sociability, whether these elements are imperfectly separated (as in the present), tied together (as in the past/possible future of the first
paradigm), reduced to the latter only (as in the necessary future of the second paradigm), or perfectly separated (as in the possible future of the third paradigm). For if one understands Marx at all, one understands that to change the mode of production is to change the reality that is not pre-given, but rather is formed by our daily activity, to forcibly bring about a new world, a new manner or life, and a new genus of the human being. One primary purpose of this thesis is to provide a sharp reminder that Marx did not posit one fixed design for communism, but rather designed loose paradigms or points of origin, the details of which would be filled in by the altered beings of the future. There is no one thing called communism, but rather many potentialities for forms of post-capitalism. This thesis will be a study of three of them: three formulations of labour and the human being.

Additionally, this thesis will be an argument with and against two (former) members of what is sometimes known as the ‘Budapest School’: Gyorgy Markus and Agnes Heller. The most difficult aspect of ‘Marx scholarship’ is recognising just how hesitant and ‘backward-looking’

11 Markus, Language and Production: A Critique of the Paradigms (Also published as ‘Practical-Social Rationality in Marx: A Dialectical Critique’, and existant in an unpublished form as ‘The Human Use of Man-Made Objects’). ‘... the history of Marxist thought constantly seems to reproduce an antinomistic decomposition of the original dialectic relationship ... [into] the notion of “labour” as a technological process between man and nature, and on the other hand ... the concept of “praxis” as the activity of unlimited human self-creation.’ pp. 48-49.

the great man is: that the elements of his vast theory that appear most antipodal are actually very close in space, if not in time. Theoretical artefacts that appear to be opposites can in fact be posited as being the same object surviving into a different epoch. But this does not mean that the ‘continuity’ interpretation is correct, for if an object is pulled inside out, it is both the same object that it was—as far as substance is concerned—and at the same time—due to its physical reconfiguration—a new form.

Both Markus and Heller avoid the interpretations that this thesis is engaged against, the so-called ‘rupture’ and ‘continuity’ paradigms. They both understand the paradoxical sameness/difference of the ‘young’ and the ‘mature’ Marx, and their respective interpretations have heavily influenced the interpretation of this thesis. However, both theorists (perhaps because of the influence of Lukács—whose interpretation of the ‘mature’ Marx resembles the Budapest School interpretation of the ‘young’ Marx13) interpret estrangement in the early Marx in such a manner so that they cannot see its return, in an inverted form, in the ‘mature’ Marx. To be very clear, this is not to accuse Markus or Heller of being unable to see the theory of ‘alienation’ in the ‘mature’ Marx. Markus states explicitly that one of the best exegeses on alienation can be found in the ‘lost’ chapter of Capital.14 What is being argued is that for both theorists, the largest (‘practical utopic’) component of estrangement is ‘killed off’ by Marx in his ‘development’ and that only a peripheral element of the original theory survives and is distilled over time into the dual (more precise) theories of alienation and reification. It is this general idea that this thesis will

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13 Lukács based his text History and Class Consciousness on Capital, The 1844 Manuscripts not yet being readily available at this time.

argue against, suggesting that a misunderstanding of the early theory leads both theorists to miss the fact that a very large part of the early (admittedly somewhat homogenised) theory of estrangement returns in the later theories, but inverted both in content and in emphasis. It is this return, this thesis will argue, that is behind Marx’s odd reconciliation with the hell of the nineteenth-century factory floor, which is otherwise inexplicable. This thought will be returned to in detail in the final section of the final chapter—after the particular interpretation of this thesis of estrangement in the early Marx has been fully elucidated.

A final note on terminology. Given that the concept ‘alienation’ has two distinct elements, and that one cannot rightly say the ‘primary element’ and the ‘secondary element’, given that for Marx that which is primary and that which is secondary changes over time, this thesis will methodically signify ‘estrangement’ as the divorce of human essence and material (human) existence, and will signify ‘alienation’ as the practice of seeing the human/social elements of material (and purely imaginary) objects as being indigenous to the objects. This thesis will argue (against Markus and Heller) that there is a significant element of estrangement in the theory of the mature Marx. As has been made clear above, however, the fact that the one word is being used for a concept of both the ‘young’ and the ‘mature’ Marx implies only kinship, not identity.
Chapter I: The marriage of ‘life’ and ‘work’: on labour as an end-in-itself and not as a means to existence; or, the ‘re-entry’ of the human being-become-whole into a humanised world

I: On the illusion of the Objective world: (a) Revolution

Taken superficially, the materialist conception of history is tautologous: that the human being cannot change its manner of existing without changing its manner of existing. If, to be clearer, the goal of a ‘revolution of ideas’ is to change material life, then why not simply change material life directly into what is desired? The revolution of ideas will take care of itself; it can only follow the change of the mode or manner of practical, material being, it cannot be its impetus. This simple idea explains why Marx wrote about labour, the activity of daily life, and why he chose the largest segment of capitalist society as his audience, the real people of the world, and not the philosophers who withdraw from it. Fundamentally, the only way for the worker to cease being exploited is for him to actively stop being exploited, by

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16 Ibid. ‘Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things.’ pp. 56-57.
17 Ibid. p. 37.
picking up a weapon, and refusing to be a wage-labourer any more. For all the complexity of his thought as a ‘whole’, this particular thought is as simple and as practical as can be. It is childlike, in the sense that children have different ideas about what is possible to adults, who take the existence of anything as automatic proof of its validity, as if the cosmos is just and right, and all things must and do find their best possible form. However, one must be very careful with this simple thought, this bare skeleton of the materialist conception of history, for it is disastrous if accompanied with the assumption that Marx actually cared about the plight of the workers, and that his final goal was their emancipation. This is about the worst misreading of Marx that could be imagined, for Marx was no ‘bleeding heart’.

Suffering in itself is not a terrible thing for Marx, it is more the case that needless suffering is illogical, a hated signpost that the human being has not yet ‘mastered his mastery of nature’. It could also be argued that Marx’s primary motivation for publishing statistics out of factory-inspector reports and the like was to expose the idiocy or duplicity of the primary proposition of the political economists of Marx’s time, a proposition that has long since concretised into common sense, despite Marx’s best efforts: that capitalism is the best system for everyone, that the market should rule us, not we it, and that it will wreak horrible

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19 Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, B. Fowkes (trans.), NLB: UK, 1971. ‘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.’ p. 7. Marx is quoted, from his ‘Speech at the Anniversary of the People’s Paper’, April 1856. This speech also quoted in: Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts in Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Verso: London & New York, 1983. p. 20.

vengeance upon us if we dare to attempt to control it.\textsuperscript{21} Worker emancipation, to be clear, is not Marx’s final goal, but one element of a means to a greater end. Marx did want this class to be freed, but it must be understood that for Marx this process of freeing was simultaneously a process of obliteration. When inciting revolution, he attempted to facilitate self-overcoming. Marx did not want a plebocracy, he rather desired the end of human beings as we know them.\textsuperscript{22}

Marx shared with Friedrich Nietzsche an acute feeling of nausea at the sight of swarming humankind, the obstinate philistinism and mediocrity of individual human beings, no matter how much ‘objective’ knowledge, power, and art were accumulated.\textsuperscript{23} The height of the contradiction of capitalism for Marx is that the greater become the powers of the human being as a species, the less each human being as an individual becomes.\textsuperscript{24} The great symbol of this is the factory. All of the science and craft and the human being, his greatest achievements,

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. p. 302.

\textsuperscript{22} Marx and Engels, \textit{The Communist Manifesto}, Haymarket Books: USA, 2005. p. 71. (Section II, paragraphs 73 and 74.)


\textsuperscript{24} Marx, \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. ‘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.’ pp. 67-68.
all combined, and to what end? The factory is a machine in which dead labour extracts living labour from human beings. And to what end? That the greatest part of the product should become dead labour destined to suck living labour from human beings! Human beings in potential become ever greater in power, and yet in actuality they continue to misplace this power, to displace this power into an ever growing Objective universe, while each human ‘subject’ becomes ever smaller, ever wearier, ever more crushed and trampled by powers that are by rights his. Human powers in capitalism exist not in human beings, but in ‘man-made’ objects, which in combination loom over real human beings, into whom no human powers have been invested—for the less these real human beings are, the less they will need to be paid, and thus the better they will perform in their function, which is to valorise their given master’s capital.

Marx was understandably unhappy with this situation, and wanted to bring about a new form of life and humanity. He desired a form of the human being who would direct his accumulated powers into himself and his peers, and not into an external and hostile world. He desired a form of the human being who would not use his significant powers directly and indirectly against himself. At the core here is a desire, for a human being whose powers and

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27 Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. ‘It is only to be expected that a living, natural being equipped and endowed with objective (i.e., material) essential powers should have real natural objects of his essence; as in the fact that his self-alienation should lead to the establishing of a real objective world—but a world in the form of externality—a world, therefore, not belonging to his own essential being, and an overpowering world.’ p. 143.
energies could be used towards self-enrichment and not self-diminishment, so that ‘development’ does not turn into its contrary.\textsuperscript{29}

The crux of this is that the more knowledge regarding its environment that the human being accumulates and the more power of transformation/control of this environment that this knowledge grants it, the ‘greater’ becomes not the human being, either as a species or as its component individuals, but rather, the ‘greater’ and more awesome becomes an imaginary, seemingly eternal and autonomous, Objective world.\textsuperscript{30} The human being, in other words, puts her achievements and energies into the world, in two senses, firstly, in the conventional sense of transforming matter from a natural form into a form that can be consumed—by which Marx meant used, in that a coat is consumed by one who wears it, or a house is consumed by one who lives in it—and secondly, in a more holistic sense, in applying categories of significance to both the article created and to the whole environment, as a concatenation of such materio-social objects.\textsuperscript{31}

In this first paradigm, this process is labour; this is self/world creation, as the transformation/humanisation of one’s environment. The essence of the human being is to act in this manner consciously, and thus, the human being is estranged because it does not do so.\textsuperscript{32} It does create self and world through its labours; however, it does so in ignorance of the nature

\textsuperscript{29} Loc. Cit.
\textsuperscript{30} Marx, \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. p. 68-69.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. p. 71.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid. pp. 70-71.
of its own activity: ‘it does not regard the effects of its deeds as its own deeds ...’.\(^{33}\) Because it is estranged in this manner, the human being comes to see both the world and the self that it has artificially created as being natural and eternal.\(^{34}\) That both are creations of the human being is inconceivable to an estranged being, because such a being does not know what it is, nor what it does. To return to the point, it is in this way that development turns into its contrary, for if the human being develops magnificent energies, and day after day applies them to its environment, making the world ever more awesome, but does not know what it does, then the result is a world that becomes ever more terrible, and a humanity that becomes ever more meek.\(^{35}\) The estranged human being, estranged from his own activity, sees the world as being naturally great, and ‘man’ as being naturally weak and infirm. He does not understand that the Objective world no longer exists.\(^{36}\) Human beings have transformed it into something else, through their collective-practical activity, and likewise they have transformed themselves.\(^{37}\) If the world is awesome and formidable, then this is because it has been made so


\(^{34}\) Marx & Engels, *The German Ideology*. ‘Feuerbach’s “conception” of the sensuous world is confined on the one hand mere contemplation of it, and on the other to mere feeling; he says “Man” instead of “real historical man” ... He 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 intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs.’ p. 62.

\(^{35}\) Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*. p. 143.


by awesome and formidable human beings. If human beings appear meek and weary, then this is only because they grow pale in their own long shadow.

Immutable ‘man’, at odds with an immutable and hostile environment, living always outside of nature: these two opposites do not exist for Marx. There are no categories in the oeuvre of Marx of Ego Cogito and Res Extensia. The human being can only ‘understand’ the world because he has humanised it, transformed it, made it sufficient for the particular purposes of his own use/need. This process of transformation is twofold, in that physical matter is rearranged, and at the same time it is granted a social significance: matter is imbued with humanity. The connection between the physical and the social transformation of things will be returned to in detail in the final section of this chapter: however, for now, the focus is thus: that there is no need for human beings to lose the elements of themselves that are absorbed by the world. They remain elements of human beings, whether the human beings in question know it or not. The awesome nature of the universe as we know it is the awesome nature of the human being, only we do not recognise this.

Elements of the human being detach, pretend autonomy, and then estranged human beings foolishly kneel to them. The greater the human beings’ powers, the greater become

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41 Marx & Engels, The German Ideology. ‘The 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
these chimeras, and the more enslaved becomes the human being. The Young Hegelians understood this, and this attracted Marx to them. Their proposed solution to this problem, however, repelled him.

Let us liberate them ['the people'] 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.

Marx proposes a very different solution. For Marx, the proletariat exists in an odd position. It is in and of the world. It is the proletarians’ energies that are extracted daily from it as a whole class, and congeal as dead labour in a fictional Objective world that exists as ‘an immense collection of commodities’, as a concatenation of things. The proletariat is awed and broken under the power of this world. It feels powerless and separate from the world, in exile.

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42 The ‘Young Hegelians’ were a group of young intellectuals who existed in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, including Bruno and Edgar Bauer, Cieszkowsiki, Feuerbach, Stirner, Hess, Ruge, and Marx and Engels. They ‘radicalised’ the philosophy of Hegel, and believed that a revolution relating to the ‘continual unfolding of reason’ was imminent. Marx became contemptuous of their ‘speculative rationalism’ mainly because it believed in an awesome efficacy of the power of ideas. For a good introduction see David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, Macmillan: London, Melbourne, Toronto, 1969. pp. 6-9.


44 Marx, Capital Volume I. p. 125.
impotent, owning nothing but its skin, brain, and muscles.\textsuperscript{45} And yet, the power of this world is the proletariats’ power. This class exists in the world because it bleeds itself into the world every single day.\textsuperscript{46} An individual proletarian may feel as if his actions could not possibly change the world, but this is precisely what happens every single time he steps into the factory. It is he that is awesome, if he could only see that the greatness of the world is not inherent, but rather, is his own greatness, displaced out of his own ignorance, his own estrangement. He is self/world creator, but through brute labour, he creates and recreates himself as a brute.\textsuperscript{47}

Marx does not, like the Young Hegelians, propose to lecture the proletariat, and tell this class ‘how it is’. Marx rather proposes to the proletariat that it take back the displaced pieces of itself with its own two hands. Just as it makes the world through its own collective, practical-social activity—which is to say, not in thought—so must it change the world in this manner. No special activity is required in order to change the world; this commonsense thought assumes that the form of the world is natural and not historical.\textsuperscript{48} The world, our environment, is not Objective, it is not immutable, but has been transformed into what it is, not by great leaders and politicians, but by masses producing and reproducing themselves

\textsuperscript{45} Marx, ‘Estranged Labour’, in \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. pp. 64-78.

\textsuperscript{46} Marx & Engels, \textit{The German Ideology}. pp. 42-43.

\textsuperscript{47} Op. Cit. pp. 64-78.

materially, and thus it could indeed be transformed into something entirely other, but only by
the people who make and remake it every day, through their practical, collective, labour.\footnote{Loc. Cit.}

The world is saturated with humanity— with the best elements of humanity—and Marx, through his early critique of private property, fundamentally states that it is better to be
the world than to ‘own’ pieces of it.\footnote{Marx, \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. ‘... Crude, Equalitarian Communism and Communism as Socialism Coinciding with Humaneness.’ pp. 92-106.} Marx wants the proletariat to ‘re-enter’ the world it has
never left, and to do so actively, to take back the lost elements of itself by taking back the
objects in which the lost parts of itself exist, which in total are the world, not as a finished
object, but as a process, a process composed of both matter and living activity.\footnote{Ibid. p. 64.}

Revolution means taking back the factories and subsequently having the right to
consume a part of what is produced without having to ‘buy’ it. The factories do not become
the property of the associated producers. Rather, they come to be seen as the powers of the
associated producers congealed into a material form. There is an extension between the
producers and the means of production that is more profound than ownership.\footnote{Marx, \textit{Grundrisse}. pp. 471-473; 475; 497.} They use
these factories as one uses one’s own left and right hands, as simply more powerful versions of
these organs. In the products of these apparatuses they have added themselves liberally and
see themselves in the product, thus there is no question of their automatic right to take part in
the consumption of the whole.\footnote{Op. Cit. p. 143.}
Also, in changing this manner of production, the proletariat ceases to create and recreate himself as a brute. Just as he does not have to ‘buy’ the product of his labour but has an automatic right to consume his ‘share’ of it, he also sees the products of more intellectual labour as being his. Perhaps he did not or even could not draw up the engineering schematic of the machine he now works on, but the power of the machine is still his power, for it is the power of his community, and he is a member of this community, and thus has a share in all of its produce, be it the product of thought or of sweat. Community—but not the limiting orthodoxy of tradition—is instaurated through the obliteration of private property and the return of the practice of a community working a (non-external) means of production in common.\(^{54}\)

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to feed himself and his family and when he is working to feed his lord.\textsuperscript{57} In the factory, nobody is sure where this line is drawn, especially if the capitalist works under the illusion that he makes his profit in the sphere of circulation by selling his produce at a price greater than its value.\textsuperscript{58} Almost the entire argument of \textit{Capital} is about making clear these lines, and explaining that—in general—that capitalist sells his product at exactly its value, but produces it for less, by paying the worker a sum that is smaller than the sum of the value that he adds through his labour (or, in other words, by receiving a quantity of value for which he has exchanged no equivalent).\textsuperscript{59} The worker accepts this situation because he must, but also because he does not understand that he adds value to the product at all.

This confusion (which Marx himself would be infected by in the second paradigm) will be returned to in the second chapter, in a discussion of the relegation of the human being from the centre to the periphery of the material production process. However, to return to the immediate focus of this particular chapter, the primary difference of capitalism as opposed to the systems of production that preceded it is that the dominant class ceases to take from the worker the surplus of produce over the level of his bare subsistence, and instead takes the entire means of material production, the subordinate’s very home and communally shared environment, his world, and states that now this is private property.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. p. 170.


\textsuperscript{59} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}. p. 302.

\textsuperscript{60} Marx, \textit{Grundrisse}. pp. 471-473; 475; 497.
A bond is severed between the master and the subordinate, the basic contract that stated that the subordinate had been for his entire life purchasing his personal protection with the surplus of his labour and its products. In this way, the worker becomes ‘free’. There is no longer a hereditary debt of service on either side; all relationships of reciprocal dependence are changed from being permanent to being transitory, negotiated for a week or month at a time. As the means of production become the property of the master the subordinate becomes his own property, for the simple reason that his bare bones are all that are left to him. This is the twofold sense of freedom of which Marx writes, freedom to dispose of one’s own labour power, and freedom of property, which is to say, freedom from possessions, freedom from the world. (This is of course for Marx not really freedom for the worker but rather his entry into a genus of forced labour in which the new genus of master is freed from the burden of having to feed and house/imprison his slaves. The old genus of master additionally is limited to the use of a crude and heavy means of production, for the reason that no amount of whipping and coercion can make a slave work gently on a complex machine. For this one needs a wage-

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62 Marx, *Capital Volume I*. ‘For the transformation of money into capital, therefore, the owner of money must find the free worker available on the commodity-market; and this worker must be free in the double sense that as a free individual he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity, and that, on the other hand, he has no other commodity for sale, i.e. he is rid of them, he is free of all the objects needed for the realization [Verwirklichung] of his labour-power.’ pp. 272-273. Cf: Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 507.

63 Loc. Cit.
labourer. The capitalist pseudo-freedom is only potential freedom, which the worker must himself make actual.\textsuperscript{64)

However, the abovementioned exile from the world is only apparent. For to labour is to create self and world, and the wage-labourer does not cease to labour, he does not cease to flow out beyond the borders of himself, into the world, transforming it and himself. However, he is no longer allowed to labour as he pleases; he now must ask for permission to labour. The means to labour exist in the hands of the capitalist class, and so to the capitalist he must make his petition. An odd situation now comes about in which work and life become separate spheres. Work is the time in which a given capitalist grants a given worker permission to use the means of production, and life is the time in which the capitalist forbids this use. The wage-labourer will find no opportunity to metabolise with nature outside of ‘work’ as it is now defined, for the existence of any given capitalist relies on the fact that no means to do so can be found that are not ‘owned’ by other capitalists.\textsuperscript{65} Likewise, the wage-labourer will find no opportunity to ‘live’ while he labours. The slave may sing, but the wage-labourer certainly may not. He is there for one purpose only, to ‘work’, which is basically human labour from which all skill, joy, humanity and dignity have been extracted.\textsuperscript{66}

This is the death of the productive community, where every man and woman purchases both membership in the said community and a share in the possession of both one’s

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid. pp. 303-304.

\textsuperscript{65} Thus capitalists have a great deal of trouble in the colonies where land is cheap and freely available. See Chapter 33 of \textit{Capital Volume I}. pp. 931-940.

\textsuperscript{66} Marx, \textit{Grundrisse}. p. 714.
environment and its product by virtue of their active place within the said productive community. In capitalism, social labour now appears as its opposite, private labour, and both the means of material production and its produce exist in the eyes of the wage-labourer as an external and overpowering, alien world. In exchange for creating this world, the wage-labourer is ‘paid’ a sum that graciously allows him to ‘buy’ just so much of the means of subsistence as will keep him alive and labouring. All of the energy that is expended is lost, and the worker does not even understand that with the sum he is paid for his exertions a fraction of his own lost expenditure is returned to him. The power and greatness of the modern world is not seen to be his power and greatness. Just as fixed capital passes value to the product as it wears away to nothing, the proletariat expends itself, passes its energies into an ever-expanding, apparently Objective world, and shrinks away, in skill, in stature, in confidence, in being. For the Marx of this paradigm, this is modernity, where the ‘greatness’ of the epoch is not the greatness of the people, but is, as ‘external, mindless … wealth’, rather their poverty.

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67 Ibid. pp. 471-473; 475; 497.
68 Marx, Capital Volume I. p.165.
69 Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. p. 143.
70 Ibid. pp. 67-68.
71 Ibid. p. 88.
II: On the overcoming of the illusion of the Objective world: the communist identity of 'life' and 'work'

To reformulate the primary problem for Marx of this first paradigm of labour and the human being, estrangement is construed as the fact that human beings create themselves and their world through their practical, sensuous activity, but they do not do so consciously, they do not know what they do. Further, because this activity is estranged, and because any given human being is only allowed to enact it as the living property—leased, not sold, for a fixed period—of another, labour, the performance/enactment of the human essence—when degraded to the capitalist form of 'work'—is the most hated activity in the inhuman or barley human life. Human beings only feel alive when they are released from 'work', and because capitalists are so hungry for surplus value, the wage-labourer is only released to eat, sleep, and procreate, and these three functions—as animalistic ends in themselves—become the meaning of 'life'.

The truly human activity, the ability to transform and create, becomes but a means to achieve the bare ability to maintain this end, bare life, or life as vice. In this paradigm, best propounded in *The 1844 Manuscripts*, life becomes the means to life. Marx desires, instead, to make life the end of life. This is achieved through the transcendence of estrangement, where the human character as a species, the general character or essence, becomes the individual character of

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72 Ibid. ‘Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague.’ p. 69.
73 Loc. Cit.
74 Loc. Cit.
75 Ibid. p. 71.
each and every individual human being. To do so, each individual must come to understand what
the human being is, and become a physical manifestation of it.\textsuperscript{76}

On this topic, the fact that this thesis will present three visions of the human being might
suggest a reading of Marx that believes that there is no human essence, no one true way of being.
This brings us to a central paradox in the work of Marx, that the essential nature of the human
being, its unalterable core, is to be an animal that has no essential nature, that is infinitely alterable.
It is a paradox, for what this means in practice is that the human being is only truly an immanent
manifestation of its transcendent essence when it follows its nature by rejecting its instinct. A truly
human being, in other words, must be two things, that are both opposite and identical. For the
human being, to be truly human, must have a constructed manner of being that is generated by his
immanent, sensuous activity. This \textit{eidos} must be a product of his practical action, it must be
artificial. However, in effecting this artificial form the human being acts in accordance with his
nature. The crux of the paradox is that the human being is the only animal that must be unnatural
to be natural. For Marx, to live as an animal, by the instincts, is unnatural for the human being.\textsuperscript{77}

This central paradox can be expressed in countless ways, however, the final formulation
that will be expressed here is that the human being has a transcendent nature, and this nature is to
generate a second nature through its immanent activity. Marx’s dream in this first paradigm is thus
also a paradox, in that he desired for the human being to transcend estrangement, which is to say,
to bring its material being into alignment with its essence—to become natural—by becoming the

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. ‘Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole’. pp. 151-153.

most unnatural animal of all, the animal who not only creates its own nature—which it has always
done—but who learns to do so consciously.78 For it is one thing to generate one’s own nature in
ignorance that one is doing so, as an unconscious by product of one’s practical activity, and it is
another thing entirely to generate one’s nature consciously, and to know that one is human—and
thus to become human—because one engages in the task of creating one’s very eidos through the
creation of one’s world.79

For Marx, in the first paradigm of labour and the human being, the truly human being is the
being that consciously creates its own identity through the practical transformation or
humanisation of its world.80 In order to act in this manner, in this paradigm, the human being must
heal the division between work and life; it must merge free- and necessary labour-time.81 It must
make work life and life work, and it can only do so by overcoming the capitalist mode of
production. This is achieved via the seizing by the worker of the means of production and the
creation of productive communities of associated producers. Communism is not the extension of
the form of private property to everyone, but the obliteration of private property.82 Likewise, this
obliteration of private property is not the beginning of dispossession, but rather its end, for it

78 Ibid. pp. 72; 151-153.
79 Ibid. ‘The whole character of a species—its species character—is contained in the character of its life-activity;
and free, conscious activity is man’s species character.’ p. 71. To jump ahead prematurely for a moment, it is also
on this precise point that it can be argued that the ‘first’ and ‘third’ versions of Marx are highly kindred spirits, no
matter how different the means to chase this end might become.
80 Loc. Cit.
82 John Rundell, Origins of Modernity: The Origins of Modern Social Theory from Kant to Hegel to Marx, Polity Press:
heralds the ‘re-entry’ of the human being into the world that it in truth never left, for it would cease to create the world as something seemingly external and overpowering.\textsuperscript{83}

This thought will be returned to in the final section of this chapter. However, before that, two things must be addressed. The first is to expressly state that this is no romantic paradigm. A great part of the disenchantment of capitalistic modernity is the feeling of the insignificance of the human being against the vastness of an infinite universe, something that the inhabitants of a finite cosmos knew very little about. Even in this first paradigm, Marx did not want to return to the security of a fixed and finite cosmos, to pull apart the complex machines until naught was left but the crude means for the production of subsistence that had preceded them. For an important thought of Marx is that limited means of production produce and reproduce limited human beings.\textsuperscript{84}

What Marx desired here was for all of the awesome character of the expanded universe to be returned to its rightful place, within actual, individual, human beings. Marx saw labour as a creative act, a transformative act, and he desired for it to be made the pride and centre of human life, to make it into human life itself, life as the end of life.\textsuperscript{85} This is the transcendence of estrangement as this thesis has defined it—the bringing into alignment of essence and existence\textsuperscript{86}—and in this sense it cannot but also be the transcendence of alienation as this thesis has defined it—no longer seeing the human/social traits of things, the traits added by human beings, as inherent

\textsuperscript{83} Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. p. 143.


\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. p. 95.
traits of the things themselves. In a narrow sense this is what Marx called fetishism, but in a broader sense, it can be applied to deities and ideas, it is relevant wherever a human power or attribute pretends independence and autonomy.\textsuperscript{87}

These are the desires of Marx in this first paradigm, not a return to agrarian pastoralism, not a return to anything that has been, for every past version of the human being has been estranged. This first paradigm is a leap into the future, not back into the past, as are all of his paradigms of life and the human being. Talk of unity may confuse a reader into believing that this paradigm is romantic, but it most certainly is not. Tradition for Marx is bondage, and all returns impossible. The only way free of estrangement and alienation is forward, and its basis is the technology that already exists around us, not that of the past.\textsuperscript{88}

The second point that must be made before going on is that the transcendence of estrangement is not the achievement of equality, as the utter equalisation of development, the making of all human beings equal to the ‘objective’ level of development of the species.\textsuperscript{89} Marx fiercely desired a rich and complex individuality of human beings, and knew that equality and

\textsuperscript{87} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I.} p. 165.

\textsuperscript{88} Marx & Engels, \textit{The German Ideology}. ‘Nor will we explain to them that it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employment 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.’ p. 61.

\textsuperscript{89} Markus is a proponent of this belief: Markus, ‘Four Forms of Critical Theory — Some Theses on Marx’s Development’. p. 87.
individuality were mutually exclusive. For Marx, all equality is artificial and undesirable. In *The 1844 Manuscripts* Marx critiques egalitarian communism as crude communism, with the negation of private property here being the negation of culture, and not the rising of the many to the spiritual heights that historically have only been achieved by a few, but rather the regression of all to a ‘poor and undemanding’ state. Further, in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* he states that all equal rights are unequal, for they do not take the real, innate differences between distinct human beings into account.

Equality means that all people must be the same, and it is nonsensical to speak of a community of identical individuals. Equality is possible but not desirable, and can only be the result of extreme orthodoxy and dogmatism; it can only be the result of ‘levelling-down’, which is the last thing that Marx desired. And to think of the more pragmatic version of equality as getting an ‘equal share’: for Marx this kind of thought belongs to the unstable dichotomy of wealth of poverty that he wanted to overcome: replacing it with ‘the rich human being’ who is rich in ‘human need.’ This human being is not a levelled-down component of a homogonous mass, but an

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93 Op. Cit. ‘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 in so far 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.’ p. 160.
95 Ibid. p. 104.
individual who is unique, yet whose individuality rich in individual need is an expression of his common humanity.

It is best to think of the transcendence of estrangement, Marx’s primary concern in this first paradigm, not as the forced conformity of every human being to the fixed level of social or objective development, but rather as the becoming human of each and every human being, and to become human, in this paradigm, each need not be equal, but must simply embody the human essence, which is to, through one’s immanent, collective, sensuous activity, transform/create the world, and to transform/create the concept of the human, or, to generate one’s artificial nature. This is to live to create, not to create merely in order to live. This is human life as an end-in-itself, a free and conscious manifestation of the human essence, and not the activity that is the enactment of this essence degraded or distorted into a hated means to sustain one’s bare life in a minimal fashion. It is to live a human life as knowing what one is and what one does, and accordingly, to joyously and voluntarily do it. It is to be a self/world creator.

Because labour is here praxis, the form of the material means of production is not prescribed in advance—except that Marx believes even here that machines are the presupposition of human freedom. What this means of material production does or makes materially will be a secondary concern to how it is used, and how great this use makes the user. The quality of human beings

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96 Ibid. p. 71.
98 Marx, The Grundrisse. ‘Thus the old view, in which the human being appears as the aim of production, regardless of his limited national, religious, political character, seems to be very lofty when contrasted to the modern world, where production appears as the aim of mankind and wealth as the aim of production.’ pp. 487-488.
will be the sole concern of ‘labour’, so that the greatness of this first paradigm of communism would be nothing but the greatness of the individuals out of which the society is composed: utterly subjective/embodied and not objective/social greatness is here the goal.  

III: On the ‘re-entry’ of the human being into the world: the unified human being

Perhaps not enough has yet been said here on just what the world-creating element of labour is for Marx, the metabolism between the human being and nature, or, her technical relationship with her sensuous environment, for this is the key to understanding why the modern worker, the proletariat, lives in the world but feels as if it lives outside of it. To discuss this world-creating or technical element of labour is to explore a statement that this thesis has made a few times now, regarding the ‘humanisation’ of the world, of its absorption of human labour which becomes objectified as a ‘social substance’, which is rather confusingly for Marx objective, or real, but also immaterial. It should be made clear that to speak of the illusion of the Objective world does not deny the fact of matter; it is more a statement that our material environment is a product, it is synthetic, in that it is composed of both matter and of ‘congealed’ human labour or essence. To deny the social substance of labour embedded in our world can have some strange outcomes, one

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99 Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. p. 88. There is, of course, a potential strain between the two imperatives mentioned above: that the means of production must remain mechanical, and that its use must make the user great. If the two were to prove to be mutually exclusive, the second must prevail.

100 Ibid. pp. 64-78.

of which Marx makes a great deal of, in that things begin to have social relationships and people begin to take on the appearance of mere things.\textsuperscript{102}

It was mentioned in the first section that the material world in the present is a concatenation of commodities, each of which are a dual product of material and immaterial substance, matter and labour.\textsuperscript{103} Marx uses some highly ambiguous terminology when discussing this, especially later in his life, describing the social substance in terms like ‘congealed labour’, or ‘crystals of labour’.\textsuperscript{104} One must be very careful with these terms, for they can easily mislead one into a poor reading of a text like \textit{Capital}, if one believes that the reality of each component of the commodity is equal. This is far from the case. When one performs ‘work’—the technical component of human labour—there is no literal transferral of any physical/material substance, either from a tool of production or from a human being—though with circulating capital as ‘raw material’ the case is clearly different. Value is transferred from both living labour and fixed capital into the commodity, this is true, and in a sense it does ‘congeal’ in the commodity; it is objective, and has a true existence.\textsuperscript{105} But one must remember what Marx says about value not being a part of the material composition of the commodity, and how it will depart from a commodity if one puts it in isolation.\textsuperscript{106} The social substance of ‘congealed labour’ in commodities is only granted reality through living convention,

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid. p. 166.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. p. 165.

\textsuperscript{104} Castoriadis, ‘Value, Equality, Justice, Politics: From Marx to Aristotle and from Aristotle to Ourselves’. pp. 263; 265.

\textsuperscript{105} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}. p. 166.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid. pp. 176-177.
through how objects are *used and perceived*, whereas its actual substance is granted reality by its simple corporeality.

A rabbit can change the face of the world by digging a hole in it, however, the change here is strictly material. When a human being builds a cottage, the world is transformed in a twofold manner, in that it is both rearranged materially, but also changed in nature, in that something else is added to it, something of the character of its maker. It is also the nature of the human being to turn his labours not just onto the elements of sensuous external nature around him that must be rearranged in order that he may survive, but onto everything. Human labour is universal in character.\(^{107}\) Thus all of the elements of the human beings’ surroundings, when put together, are more than the mere sum of the parts. The elements of the human being that have been sowed into nature begin to interact, the gaps between them close, and before the human being knows it, he is existing in a synthetic environment, of the material and the immaterial, even though he believes that what he does in the technical side of the labour process is only *quantitatively* grander than what the rabbit does.

For Marx this is not the case, for human labour is qualitatively different to the labour of the other animals. The rearranging of matter is only a part of what occurs, the other part, the truly human part, is to grant a form that is material and social, the sculpting of the actual mass and the granting of significance to the thing created.\(^{108}\) For Marx it is a problem

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\(^{108}\) Marx, *Capital Volume I*. ‘But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax … Man not only effects a change of form in the material of nature; he also realises … his own purpose in those materials.’ p. 284.
that the human being does not understand the latter element of world creation, does not understand that he does it, and does not understand that he does it because it is his nature to do so.\textsuperscript{109} For Marx it is odd that the human being can look at the beauty and mystery of the world and not feel the pride of joy of a creator, for the reason that it cannot understand that the world that it gazes on is not the world that existed at the ‘dawn of creation’, not the world that (proto-)human beings were born into.\textsuperscript{110}

It is also highly misleading when Marx writes that the realm of ideas is naught but the realm of the material reflected in the mind of man.\textsuperscript{111} If one reads this without keeping in mind all that was written before it, one will imagine that Marx is writing of this mythical Objective world that this chapter has militated against. When Marx speaks of the material world in this sense he is speaking of the world as a product of labour, as objective material and social substance combined. It is the humanised world that is the human environment, which is a product, but also a process, for the product would lapse back into dead rock if the process were to cease.\textsuperscript{112}

However, this ‘social substance’ is not one thing for Marx. Various texts have been referenced in this last section, all regarding the fact that when a human being rearranges the physical form of matter, something occurs beyond this material change that more radically alters the form of the thing.

\textsuperscript{109} Op. Cit. Here can be found another discussion about the quality of human labour as ‘creating an objective world by his practical activity ...’ pp. 71-72.

\textsuperscript{110} Marx & Engels, \textit{The German Ideology}. p. 62.

\textsuperscript{111} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}. ‘For Hegel, the process of thinking, which he even transforms into an independent subject, under the name of ‘the Idea’, is the creator of the real world, and the real world is only the external appearance of the idea. With me the reverse is true: the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought.’ p. 102.

\textsuperscript{112} Marx & Engels, \textit{The German Ideology}. pp. 56-57.
that has been worked upon than the material sculpting. Labour is the creation of materio-cultural objects, not material objects; in Marx’s own words: ‘sensuous things that are at the same time supra-sensible or social.’\textsuperscript{113} The later Marx would ‘sterilise’ this idea of the social substance ‘value’. He would state, fundamentally, that the value of an object is added by its producer: it is the congealed human labour in the product.\textsuperscript{114}

This is not as metaphysical as it sounds, and it is not a metaphor that one should take literally, especially as in capitalism the value of a commodity is not equal to the value actually contained in it, but rather is equal to the value that is on average contained in all similar commodities produced at a given time.\textsuperscript{115} This simply means that the objects required for human need-fulfilment do not exist ready-made in nature: thus, the material that is potentially a commodity is without value, whereas the commodity, after the application of labour, has value. The matter involved is identical, from the point of view of physics—though not always from the point of view of chemistry. The difference, thus, is the labour objectified in the product, and the author of this value is the human being that effects the transformation.\textsuperscript{116} It is his labour that went in, in order that this piece of the world be made fit for human consumption, and thus, he is the value adder.

The above is the paradigm of the ‘mature’ or final Marx. In the paradigm to follow, the situation is very different, and will be discussed shortly in the coming chapter. In the present

\textsuperscript{113} Op. Cit. p. 165.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid. p. 143.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid. p. 168.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid. p. 143.
paradigm, the process of transforming one’s environment is not a sterile ‘value-adding’ action but a rich, human and humanising action. Value in the above limited sense is added, that is true, however, humanity is added also, in that human beings and the earth in a profound sense become consubstantial.117 For now, for Marx, in this first paradigm, the question of the absolute mastery of nature, of both human nature and the world itself, is not so great.118 Marx is more concerned here with estrangement than alienation as the dictatorship of convention: of the ‘problem’ of the social form of material things occulting their ‘neutral’, objective form, which is allowed to contain ‘value’, but which may not under any circumstances contain personality, which smacks of non-enlightened superstition.119 Here, in the first paradigm, the problem of seeing things as they ‘really’ are so that they can be rationally mastered — processes of production being mastered by ‘man’ rather than mastering him — is existent, but is not yet the obsession that it would become for the later Marx.120

Here, in this first paradigm, the primary problem is that the human being does not see that the earth is ‘man-made’, a synthesis of social and sensuous material, and that the essential nature of ‘man’ is to make the world and himself ever greater through the activity of imbuing the sensuous with the social. To be very clear, the social/human element in the material world, for the ‘first’ or early Marx, is not a problem; the problem is that this social element is lost when the world becomes ‘private property’, and the potential greatness of the human being becomes the actual greatness of

117 Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. p. 72.

118 Cf: Marx, Grundrisse. p. 488.


120 Marx, Capital Volume I. pp. 174-175.
a god, or a law, or a market, at the feet of which diminished human beings kneel.\footnote{Marx & Engels, \textit{The German Ideology}. p. 53.} In the first paradigm the emphasis is \textit{lack}, that the human being is empty, an odd being that lives in awe and fear of an environment that is a living extension of itself.\footnote{Marx, \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. p. 143.} Human beings are to become whole in the sense that they assimilate back into themselves all their scattered pieces, which is at the same time the process of ‘re-entry’ into the world, of each single individual becoming as great as the world.\footnote{Ibid. p. 88.}

\textit{The total human environment is the combination of living labour as human beings and dead labour as matter that has absorbed living labour at an earlier time, it is the process of, and manner of the interaction between these two elements.} To restate the above in slightly different terms, Marx desires to overcome the boundary between living and dead labour, which is but a historical convention. The ‘re-entry’ of the human being into the world is the making of all labour living, so that all things are one, whether more—in the case of a person—or less—in the case of a thing—animated and enriched by labour, by humanity.
Chapter II: ‘Life’ that has overcome ‘work’: on the automation of the means of production; or, the definitive exit of the human being from a world made trivial

I: On the ‘necessary’ direction of the technical ‘development’ of the means of production

In the Grundrisse, terminology is very important. Marx speaks of the exponential ‘development’ of human powers as end-in-itself, and thus the fact that this ‘development’ — and not its application, not the ‘performance’ of power or its fruits — is unambiguously its own goal means that in Marx’s second paradigm of labour and the human being, it is wrong to believe that this universal human development is identical with the technical development of the means of material production — though both are interconnected elements of a nebulous beast that he calls the ‘social individual’. ‘Human powers’ should be here read primarily as power over nature, or perhaps knowledge/power, and this is the ethereal ‘wealth’ that Marx wants to accumulate. In this paradigm, material wealth is a non-category. The capitalist goal is turned inside out, in that the technology designed to churn out ever more material wealth is mastered and mobilised to

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124 Marx, Grundrisse. p. 488.
125 Ibid. p. 706.
126 Ibid. pp. 694; 714; and especially: ‘Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will over nature, or of human participation in nature. They are organs of the human brain, created by the human hand; the power of knowledge, objectified.’ p. 706.
engender something more ethereal: ‘free time’ or ‘not-labour’ time.\textsuperscript{127} Speaking very carefully, one may say that because the development of human powers as an end-in-itself is the goal, the only valid application of this power is to use it in order to engender more time in which to better peruse this autonomous goal, not more ‘things’, which would become an external goal of the development of human powers—would, in other words, turn the accumulation of this power over nature (knowledge/power) into a means, which is the problem—for this particular Marx—of ‘scientific’ development under capitalism.\textsuperscript{128}

If one does, in this paradigm, devote time to the development of material technique, this is only because the more sophisticated (which is here identical with productive) that one makes the means of material production, the less one is distracted or diverted from his true goals, the less one has to think of ‘mundane’ considerations like food or housing in general. It must be made clear that to speak of the magnitude of the development of human powers in this paradigm is primarily to speak of the extent of the human beings’ knowledge/power, and not of the level of his ability to transform hunks of sensuous nature into raw material by the cubic ton, and then in turn to ‘work up’ this raw material into finished commodity.

The two elements—here called ‘social relations’ and ‘forces of production’\textsuperscript{129}—are separate here for the simple reason that masses of commodities are a boon in capitalism, but are of little interest to the communist human being of the second paradigm.\textsuperscript{130} This human being is only

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid. p. 708.
  \item \textsuperscript{128} Ibid. pp. 694; 708.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid. p. 706.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Ibid. p. 714.
\end{itemize}
interested in developing his knowledge/power as an end-in-itself; if he does improve upon material technique, it is only to test his theoretical ingenuity and increase his pride, or to produce yet more free time, which is the true wealth that should follow the development of technique, for Marx, or for this particular version of Marx.\textsuperscript{131} The other variant of wealth, mammon, squanders productivity, engendering a greed that demands illogically that \textit{more} work should accompany every increase in the productive forces.

This brings the thesis to the ‘necessary’ direction of the technical ‘development’ of the means of material production in this second paradigm, in which, for this Marx, the above contradiction is pregnant with its own logical overcoming. Here, the very illogic of capitalism gives birth to a specific genus of rational communism.

There is for Marx a very simple definition of the machine, one that appears to hold—in its generalities if not its specificities—for the whole of his life. A machine is, fundamentally, an element of the means of production of a community that does not have a human being as its motive force.\textsuperscript{132} If the human being is not at the centre of a given act of production, with a tool in hand, applying it to a piece of nature by the force of his own bodily energy, then this act of production is mechanical.\textsuperscript{133} Thus a windmill or a waterwheel are machines, or even a plough pulled by a draught horse. To be ‘powered’ by steam is not the definition of a machine, but rather

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. p. 712.

\textsuperscript{132} This definition fundamentally holds, even though Marx critiques it in pp. 493-494 of \textit{Capital Volume I}, stating that his tripartite definition of ‘fully developed machinery’ is much more sophisticated.

\textsuperscript{133} Op. Cit. pp. 692-693; 705.
the paradigm of the machine, its ‘optimal’ form. The reasons for this are twofold: the first being uniformity, regularity, and reliability of action—something that wind, water and especially beasts are not renowned for— and the second being mobility, for coal can be transported to any location with great ease, which means that one can build a steam powered factory anywhere, whereas one must build a water mill on a river, or a windmill on a certain kind of windy plain.

Machines are thus not unique to capitalism, but can be said to have existed as a prominent element of any given means of production at least since Roman times. However, the kinds of labour performed by the earliest kind of machine only replaced the worst kind of toil. A mill wheel grinds corn or wheat. A sail replaces a slave galley. An aqueduct (with the motive force here being gravity) to some extent reduces the labour of carting water. A machine of this kind can only replace the simplest kinds of labour, labours that require no skill whatsoever. As a rule of thumb, the more simple the task, the more easily it is ‘mechanised’, which is to say, the more easily the expenditure of human energy can be replaced by a ‘mechanical’ motive force.

Looking at the current sophistication of machines, it is tempting to conject that the impetus of the spread of machines must have been in the realm of ‘technique’. Human ingenuity means that machines became better and better, and thus became applicable to ‘replace’ ever more human labour functions. This is of course untrue. However, it is difficult to discuss the impetus of the

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134 Marx, Capital Volume I. p. 497.
135 Ibid. ‘Machinery and Large-Scale Industry’. p 499.
136 Ibid. p. 468.
137 Marx, Grundrisse. p. 704.
Industrial Revolution ‘in general’ for Marx. To elucidate the uniqueness of this impetus in the second paradigm, this thesis will for a moment leap ahead to the later Marx.

By the time that Marx was writing Capital, he had developed a highly complex model of the Industrial Revolution, one that oddly enough puts more emphasis on human agency than on objective laws—oddly in that in other respects this final Marx is by far the most deterministic.

There are three distinct moments of this revolution, and each is indispensable: the invention of the steam engine late in the seventeenth century; its technical improvement, three quarters of a century later; and finally, the real implementation of previously existing labour laws on the factory floor midway through the nineteenth century. For the later Marx of Capital, the mere co-existence of machines and human greed is not enough to ensure the explosion into large-scale industry, for if one is able to work human beings to death, this is preferable, as it does not require the huge initial outlay to purchase one’s fixed capital, which may or may not return its full value to the buyer over time. Capitalists are in this version of Marx the unwilling champions of large-scale industry. They fight and fight for their right to work human beings to death, and only under

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139 Ibid. p. 499.
141 Ibid. ‘The steam engine itself, such as it was at its invention during the manufacturing period at the close of the seventeenth century, and such as it continued to be down to 1780, did not give rise to any industrial revolution.’ pp. 496-497.
great duress do they begin to moderate their consumption of living labour via a supplement of dead labour.\(^{143}\)

Only when absolute surplus value is removed as an option towards the valorisation of capital—as, for example, with the ‘winning’ of the twelve- and then the ten-hour working day—will the ‘captains of industry’ experiment with relative surplus value, and find that this despised compromise is actually good for business, especially if one can design a machine that will allow workers to produce commodities in less time than the average or socially necessary time—which will of course become the new average as soon as those who have not been bankrupted by underselling in the meantime ‘catch up’.\(^{144}\)

In other words, capitalists in the beginning only used machines as a last resort after losing a bitter ‘civil war’, and then once machines became commonplace, the desires of individual capitalists to secure the ‘ethereal profit’—which is fundamentally free money—that one procures directly after initiating a technical ‘advance’, became the main force of ‘technical development’.\(^{145}\)

However, in the *Grundrisse*, Marx presents a less complex history of the Industrial Revolution, where capitalists are more or less willing participants in the furthering of large-scale industry, at first through an insatiable hunger for surplus value, and later through the very fact of being caught within a self-propelling logic of development that ‘progresses’ with all the force of a


\(^{145}\) Ibid. p. 530.
‘natural’ necessity. Here, for the ‘middle’ Marx, once put into place, the logic of technical development gains an impetus that is independent of all human agency. ‘Progress’ then does not require labour laws, or greed for profit, or anything else to keep it moving.

It simply must follow its own logic, and this logic is to remove human beings to the greatest extent possible from the technical side of the labour process—the production process—to replace all human motive force with mechanical motive force. Here, in the Grundrisse, human beings are swept along on the waves of progress, from inside production to alongside it, and then eventually out of it all together.

However, even for this particular Marx, the logic of technical development, though it becomes a juggernaut once set into place, cannot be the logic of its own genesis. To return to the earlier statement, though it is tempting to state that the impetus of the spread of machines was the technical development or ‘improvement’ of machines, it is also false. Machines can only replace labour that is simple, and thus, if labour had in the main remained ‘art’, the practice of the Master or artisan, skilled and whole, then there would have remained an obstinate barrier to technical development. Machines could take the place of galley slaves or water carriers, but they could not replace the man whose labour was to practice a craft, whose labour was a synthesis of intellectual and menial labour, the exercise of mind and body. Even when Aristotle became the first man to imagine a robot, he did not dream of a mechanical politician or philosopher, but of course

146 Marx, Grundrisse. pp. 692-693; 709.
149 Ibid. p. 704.
theorised a mechanical slave.\textsuperscript{150} There is a gap that technical development cannot leap, unless, of course, labour journeys some of the way to meet it.\textsuperscript{151}

The \textit{sine qua non} for the coming into being of the factory in the \textit{Grundrisse} is the \textit{manufactory}, in which production is not mechanical, for the motive force of the production process in any given case is a human being. However, the labour of these human beings has changed in nature. The skilled labour of one man has become the unskilled work of many, each of whom performs a fraction of the former whole, again and again—and who each, thus, in Marx’s mind, become a fraction of what the human being used to be. Before the machine can rise and conquer the act of production, the human being must first be transformed into a very poor kind of machine.\textsuperscript{152} Only then can his labour be taken over by a machine that cannot think, a machine better at this kind of drudgery than he.\textsuperscript{153}

This sounds a great deal like the later Marx of \textit{Capital}, for the reason that in this case, in the argument that the embryo of the factory is the manufactory, both versions of Marx are in accordance.\textsuperscript{154} Here is one of the few cases where one can rightfully say that the later idea is simply a more richly developed version of an earlier one. It additionally must be said that in his writings

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{150} Castoriadis, ‘Technique’. p. 244.
\item \textsuperscript{151} Op. Cit. ‘This road is, rather, dissection … through the division of labour, which gradually transforms the workers’ operations into more and more mechanical ones, so that at a certain point a mechanism can step into their places.’ p. 704.
\item \textsuperscript{152} Ibid. p. 711.
\item \textsuperscript{153} Ibid. p. 704.
\item \textsuperscript{154} Loc. Cit.; & Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}, Chapter 14: The Division of Labour in Manufacture. pp. 455- 491.
\end{itemize}
on the machine in the *Grundrisse*,\(^{155}\) his later work: the so-called lost chapter of *Capital*, “The Results of the Immediate Process of Production”\(^{156}\) is presaged, for one is reminded of his categories of the real and the formal subsumption of labour under capital.

The formal subsumption is the liminal phase in which proto-capitalists begin to extract surplus value from human beings, however, they do so on the basis of the existing mode of production, which is non-mechanical. This is linked to what Marx calls absolute surplus value, through which one profits mainly by extending the duration of a working day, *not* its productivity.\(^{157}\)

Then, in the manufactory, the nature of labour begins to change, towards the real subsumption of labour under capital, through the changing of the nature of the production process via a division of any given labour process so that skilled labour is reduced into its component parts until it becomes simple or menial labour.\(^{158}\) After a certain amount of time has passed, for Marx, the process took about two hundred years, ending late in the eighteenth century (between 1770 and 1780), virtually all labour becomes simple, and then the real subsumption of labour under capital explodes, as the alteration of the technique of production from the most divided genus of non-mechanical labour into so-called mechanised production proper—from the manufactory to the factory.\(^{159}\)

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\(^{156}\) Marx, *Capital Volume I* pp. 1019-1038.

\(^{157}\) Loc. Cit.

\(^{158}\) Marx, *Grundrisse* p. 704.

\(^{159}\) Ibid. pp. 692-693; p. 705.
This phase is linked to the attainment of what Marx calls relative surplus value. This is the phase of development that is still contradictory, in that the means that are created to reduce the duration of necessary labour time are not created to reduce the actual time that real people spend performing labour, but are instead mobilised to produce something called surplus value that exists in the products produced during something called surplus labour time, which is exactly what it sounds like: labour that is not necessary for the subsistence of the people performing the labour, producing products that are thus not required for any immediate purpose.\textsuperscript{160}

However, here, in the \textit{Grundrisse}, this contradiction is temporary, and the impetus of development contains both the contraction and its own necessary solution, for the drive to create ever more surplus value, and then the building momentum which means that technical development becomes an end-in-itself—something good in itself—means that necessary labour time is perpetually reduced, which means that labour must be made ever more productive, and the result of this is ever fewer people on any given factory floor, working up ever more raw material, through ever more autonomous machines.\textsuperscript{161}

It is because we of the present are products of the victorious logic of development/progress as an end-in-itself that we are tempted to posit it as the impetus of its own genesis, forgetting that machines can only perform simple labour, and thus that they can only become prominent in a system of production after the artisan is done away with. Once in place, however, this logic of development, for the ‘middle’ Marx, becomes unstoppable, and the inevitable result is the

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid. p. 708.

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid. pp. 692-693; 709.
automatic atelier, where finally the contradiction is undone, and labour saving technology can finally save labour for real human beings.\textsuperscript{162}

\textit{II: On wealth as time, once the reduction of necessary labour-time is no longer the accretion of surplus value, and the problem with this concept}

This is a pretty scenario. Because development becomes its own impetus, divorced from its origin—for the ‘middle’ Marx, the insatiable hunger for surplus value which pushed the formal subsumption of labour into the real—autonomous technical development can overcome its own contradictions.\textsuperscript{163} Because the necessary outcome of the direction of technical development is automation, this is self-evident, for as soon as human beings have been relieved of all need to engage in metabolism with external sensuous nature, then clearly, the technology that reduces necessary labour time finally begins to reduce necessary labour time, eventually to nothing.\textsuperscript{164} The result is ‘higher’ wealth: universal free time, which is to say that nobody is excluded from the bounty of the ‘social individual’, its knowledge/power, its abundance of time. Aristotle’s mechanical slaves now exist, so there is no longer a requirement for human ones.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid. pp. 711-712.

\textsuperscript{163} Loc. Cit.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid. pp. 692-693; 709.

\textsuperscript{165} Castoriadis, ‘Technique’. ‘In Plato’s Republic, the genesis of the city parallels the diversification and division of labour; and a famous remark of Aristotle’s (according to which the non-existence of mechanical slaves is the condition of the slavery of men) has rightly been seen as among the first formulations of historical materialism.’ p. 244.
The benefit of the making of all labour simple, a force that has been stunting human beings since the beginning of the era of the manufactory in the sixteenth century, is finally attained, for now simple or menial labour is no longer a part of the daily labour or activity of the human being. This is what is meant by the proposition that in this second paradigm all labour becomes intellectual. To speak the crude language of historical materialism, human beings exit the ‘base’ and take up camp in an autonomous ‘superstructure’, the realm of self creation and sociability—though historically, of course, this realm has been non-autonomous, rigidly determined by the eidos of the base, a phenomena overcome—in this paradigm—by the automation of the base, its delegation to machines.

It was mentioned above that this description of technical development is related to but not as complex as the one that would follow. It is, however, perhaps a mistake to read it as a ‘draft version’, for, as mentioned in the introduction, for this thesis, this version of Marx is in a profound sense not a middle, but rather a high-water mark, in that it is perhaps the furthest that Marx gets from his beginnings before turning back towards them. It is true this paradigm is based on an erroneous extrapolation. There are now tractors that drive themselves, steered via satellite, and now, non-productive labour is being automated as productive labour had been before it.

The result, however, of the automation that has occurred is not the resolution of the contradiction of the technical development or mechanisation of the means of production, for labour

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166 Ibid. p. 714.

167 Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*. It is in this text that Heller expounds the great insight that in the *Grundrisse* Marx desires all labour to become intellectual, whereas in *Capital* he desires all labour to be made menial. This insight has inspired this thesis to a very large extent. p. 76.

saving technology is still, in the twenty-first century, not producing free time. And even though the majority of human beings in Western nations now no longer have to expend energy through the exercise of their bodies, human beings are working longer hours than ever. Marx scorned this fact, a century and a half ago, that the modern with his machines labours longer than a ‘savage’ with bow and flint, and nothing has in this regard changed. And so, Marx was right and wrong. He was right in that the direction of the ‘development’ of the technique of material production continues to squeeze human beings from the centre to the periphery. He was wrong in his shortly held assumption that they would be squeezed out completely, and that the result would be the production of wealth as free time for all.

Marx however did himself come to see that the absolute automation he predicted was not possible, and the reason is not simply that the state of technical advancement is not yet great enough, but rather that it can never be great enough. If one reads the Grundrisse closely, one will note Marx’s emphasis on the machine as the motive force of production, with the human being as its attendant or ‘watchman’. Even when the human being works in conjunction with a machine, it is still the machine that labours, with the human being outside of the labour process even when within it. Because this statement appears somewhat tenuous, perhaps due to the fact that as a student one at first learns the ideas of the later Marx so well, this thesis will now quote at length.

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169 Marx, Grundrisse. ‘The most developed machinery thus forces the worker to work longer than the savage does, or than himself did with the simplest, crudest tools.’ pp. 708-709.

170 Ibid. p. 692.

171 Ibid. p. 705.
In no way does the machine appear as the individual worker’s means to labour. Its distinguishing characteristic is not in the least, as with the means of labour, to transmit the worker’s activity to the object; this activity, rather, is posited in such a way that it merely transmits the machine’s work, the machine’s action, on to the raw material—supervises it and guards against interruptions. Not as with the instrument, which the worker animates and makes into his organ with his skill and strength, and whose handling therefore depends on his virtuosity. Rather, it is the machine which possess skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso, with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it …\(^{172}\)

And a few pages later:

No longer does the worker insert a modified natural thing … as the middle link between the object … and himself; rather, he inserts the process of nature, transformed into an industrial process, as a means between himself and inorganic nature, mastering it. He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor.\(^{173}\)

It is the belief of this thesis that this theoretical externality of the human being within the industrialised labour process is the primary problem that the ‘middle’ Marx would come to have with his second paradigm, his science fiction paradigm.

For, by the time that Marx was writing *Capital* his emphasis had changed significantly, had become (in the main) the position of the third paradigm. Here, the human being, even in a ‘mechanised’ factory, still exists fully within the labour process. The difference is that instead of the

\(^{172}\) Ibid. pp. 692-693.

\(^{173}\) Ibid. p. 705.
machine being the progenitor of labour (as in the second/Grundrisse paradigm), here (in the third/Capital version), the machine is in general a tool that simply spreads human labour further than does a hand-held, non-mechanical tool. The machine is a tool that allows human will and energy to be applied to a greater magnitude of raw material. Something definitive has shifted, in that it is no longer the machine that labours, but again it is the human being.\textsuperscript{174}

The Marx of Capital wants the worker to know that a part of the value of a machine-made product is value that the said worker has himself added, even if he was only standing at a conveyer belt, attaching one part to a product that as a whole he cannot understand. The change, which is perhaps also the reason that Marx ‘moved on’, is that Marx came to see that the difference between working with mechanical and non-mechanical tools was not as great as he had imagined. This is the reason that production cannot become an autonomous, automatic sphere: that it is still and always human beings that labour in factories, not machines, and thus human beings cannot be made redundant, although perhaps both capitalist and worker would desire nothing more, the worker to be freed from toil, the capitalist to be freed from having to pay wages. This is a major contributing factor behind the replacement of the middle paradigm of the overcoming of necessity with the more moderate, later paradigm of its reduction.\textsuperscript{175}

It is a subtle but significant difference that for the middle Marx, in the production process, human beings exist alongside the machines that labour, and that for the later Marx, machines take

\textsuperscript{174} Marx, Capital Volume I. ‘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.’ p. 285. (emphasis mine.)

\textsuperscript{175} Marx, Capital Volume III. pp. 958-959.
human labour and spread it far and wide, which is fundamentally how this final Marx defines productivity. The further difference between what a machine does in the latter case and its role in the paradigm of the first chapter is a highly complex one, the difference between the humanisation and the dehumanisation of the world. However, here, in the second paradigm, the world is simply made trivial, in that human daily survival becomes so securely assured, with so little expenditure of effort, as to become irrelevant.\footnote{Marx, Theories of Surplus Value: Part III. p. 257; Bertel Ollman, Alienation: Marx’s Conception of Man in Capitalist Society, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983. p. 117. Cf: Immanuel Kant, Critique of the Power of Judgment, P. Guyer & E. Matthews (trans.), Cambridge University Press: USA, 2008. p. 145.} The planet earth and its laws is of course an object of intense interest to these supra-human beings, but only in a detached manner. Super-abundant curiosity must be the impetus of exploration for these beings, not a pressing physical need to force out of a groaning earth ever more means of subsistence, which of course now includes ‘energy’. And this detachment is, in its way, for Marx, a kind of freedom in itself. To leave the Grundrisse for a moment in order to illuminate the concepts that this text propounds:

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.\footnote{Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. pp. 71-72. Cf: Marx, Capital Volume III. ‘The realm of freedom really begins only where labour determined by necessity and external expedience ends; it lies by its very nature beyond the sphere of material production proper.’ pp. 958-959.}

Of all the potential human beings that Marx concocts, these of the second paradigm are the least human, or the least ‘animal’. Because machines can in this paradigm perform the element of labour
that involves communion with the earth—‘material production’—human beings no longer need to, and in this way depart from the earth, from necessity, and become free.

III: On the exit of the human being from the (mundane) world, the emancipation from toil: the profound or cultured ‘human’ being

Remembering the logic of the first paradigm of labour and the human being for a moment, something becomes apparent. If the human being ‘enters’ the world by humanising it, through the twofold process of both rearranging matter and imbuing it with socially coherent meaning, making it sufficient for human use/need\(^{178}\) (but at the same time alien to what it is in-itself), then in this second paradigm of ‘life’ that has overcome ‘work’, it could be said that the human being exits a world that has become trivial, for the humanising process is the labour process as defined in the previous chapter, labour as the synthesis of its component parts. However, now, labour is different. Labour is not a synthesis, but one of its halves attempting to exist as a whole. Human beings no longer metabolise with nature as a part of their daily activity, they no longer spill out over their own boundaries and into their environment. As mentioned in the closing of the section above, the mundane world becomes irrelevant to the human being, as well as all mundane labour that produces the means of satisfying the bare needs of the human organism.\(^{179}\)

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The human world is now the social world, an ethereal world. Human labour is now life’s ‘prime want’, and it is the labour of ‘life’, of sociability, of invention and self creation. This realm is not ‘play’: even here, in the paradigm of freedom as time, there is too much of the ascetic in Marx for that. This realm is, in his own words, the realm of ‘the development of all human powers as such [as] the end in itself’. Time is ‘free’, but this freedom has a particular meaning. It means that labour will no longer be ‘dominated by the pressure of an extraneous purpose which must be fulfilled’. It will be free in that what is done need not necessarily have been done. It means freedom from constraint, in the sense that no needs will be engendered towards which the means cannot be created to fulfil.

It does not, however, mean freedom to do nothing, or freedom to do whatever one likes. Marx still wants people and labour to be active, and wants people to be contributing daily to the accumulated social wealth, which is not a mass of ‘things’, but a mass of ‘universalised’ needs and abilities, of science and knowledge, of art and play. Play for Marx is fine as long as it is balanced with seriousness, just as art must be balanced with science, and leisure with discipline. When he states that labour cannot be play he means that it cannot be solely play. There will still be duty, but

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182 Ibid. p. 488.
183 Ibid. p. 257. Cf: Ollman, *Alienation*. ‘… only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane consideration ceases.’ p. 117.
185 Ibid. ‘Free time … is both idle time and time for higher activity …’. p. 712.
because labour (minus toil, which is taken care of by mechanical slaves) is life’s prime want, this duty will be identical with inclination.\footnote{Phillip J. Kain, \textit{Schiller, Hegel and Marx: State, Society, and The Aesthetic Ideal of Ancient Greece}, McGill-Queens University Press: Canada, 1982. pp. 7-8.}

This is a noble dream, and it cannot be denied that it is a more logical application of labour-saving devices than the capitalist one, in that they are actually used to ‘save’ labour, which is to say that they are used to produce time. However, it also becomes for Marx an impossible dream, when he changes his mind about what machines actually do in the production process, whether they perform labour or enhance a given human being’s ability to perform labour. Once Marx came to believe the latter, it became impossible for him to believe that a world of automatic factories as the basis of a human world of absolute freedom was viable as a paradigm of communism.\footnote{Heller, ‘The Legacy of Marxian Ethics’ in, \textit{The Grandeur and Twilight of Radical Universalism}. p. 121.}

However, this is not necessarily the only reason that Marx ‘moved on’ or resumed his experimentation. Connected to this thought is the concept of the human essence held by the earlier Marx, which is a problem here, for in the first paradigm, the human being that has transcended estrangement is a conscious self and world creator.\footnote{Marx, \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. p. 71.} For the earlier Marx, both elements of human labour were a part of the human beings’ essential nature, and so the ‘human’ being for whom ‘life’ has overcome ‘work’ is still estranged, if one is to hold onto the original concept of the human essence or species-being, and so perhaps Marx felt that it was a travesty to delegate to dumb machines a full half of the human essence.
For whatever reason, Marx turned back towards himself, and this second paradigm would not be his last. He would engender a third, which is not a departure beyond this middle Marx, but in many ways an uneasy covenant between this version of Marx and his earlier self. Apart from the impossibility of the technical basis of this middle paradigm, it also seems that Marx was not content with a version of the human being who had in a profound sense departed from the world, but neither was he content with his first paradigm of the ‘re-entry’ of the human being into the world via the humanisation of the world. The humanisation of the world had by this stage become a problem for Marx, for it allowed for material things to have social relations behind the backs of human beings, allowed for the objects—which put together make up the world—that ‘man’ created through his labour to have the power to master him, instead of ‘man’ being the master of his own creation.\footnote{Marx, Capital Volume I. pp. 174-175.} It was no longer enough, as in the first paradigm, to state that this social element of things was human in origin. Taking atheism as far as it will go, Marx would demand that the earth be seen as void of personality, as nothing more than laws that can be mastered through observation and study.

Marx had already begun to change his idea of the human essence in the middle paradigm, experimenting with a version of the human being that performed no ‘work’ at all. The next experiment would be different again. ‘Work’ as technique would be brought back into the daily activity of human beings, and thus Marx steps back towards his beginnings. However, as already stated, all returns are impossible, for in Marx’s final paradigm, that which is ‘human’ in labour in the first paradigm, the humanisation of the world, the pouring forth of human qualities into the
world, is prohibited, as ‘work’ becomes pure technique, as the ‘personal’ is scoured from the ‘technical’.  

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Chapter III: The definitive divorce of ‘life’ and ‘work’: on the conscious
disenchantment/dehumanisation of the world; or, the schizophrenic entry of the
human being into a true modernity

I: On the altered emphasis of the goal of the appropriation of the means of production; from the merging to the
separation of free- and labour-time

‘Labour’ as a concept has by now undergone many changes. In the first paradigm, Marx desired
that the human being should stop creating a world external to itself. He believed that the
externality of the world in relation to the human being was the direct result of the private
ownership of the means of material production, and the concurrent deprivation of the producer of
his product.\footnote{Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. pp. 70; 72; 143.} Wage-labourers create the world piece by alien piece, forced to haemorrhage the
best of themselves into this illusion believed to be the Objective world. ‘Work’ and ‘life’ are
separated. ‘Work’ becomes toil; ‘life’ becomes existence: one toils in order to exist.\footnote{Ibid. p. 71.} This is modern
existence. Marx saw the problem as the separation, and desired to heal it. The cause of the
separation, as discussed in Chapter I of this thesis, is the fact that capitalists, instead of taking
surplus product from vassals or peasants, instead take the world. They steal the world, piece by
piece, until there is nothing left.\textsuperscript{193} Then, once they have all the leverage, they enter into ‘free’ negotiations with the dispossessed, regarding just how many hours per week a person will have to ‘work’ if they desire to ‘live’.\textsuperscript{194}

Marx’s advice, of course, in this first scenario, was to band together with one’s peers, bear arms, and take back one’s environment, take back the means of material production, and, working it in common, cease to create and recreate the world as external to oneself. As an identity of sorts is created between the means of production and the associated producers—which is what it means to say that the world is no longer external to human beings—the separation between work and life is necessarily halted. One does not cease to live when one works, and one does not cease to work while one lives. There is no longer ‘free’ time, because there is no longer ‘work’ time; free and labour time are merged. All time is the same, and it is living life as an end-in-itself, not as a means to existence.\textsuperscript{195}

This all seems very sound, theoretically. However, Marx ‘moves on’. In the prior paradigm we saw that Marx came to desire a form of ‘life’ that had overcome ‘work’. Here, again, all time is the same, it is \textit{all} ‘free time’, and it is also living life as an end-in-itself: the development of human powers as an end-in-itself.\textsuperscript{196} This is not so sound, theoretically, for reasons discussed in the prior chapter. Marx again ‘moves on’.

\textsuperscript{195} Marx, \textit{1844 Manuscripts}. p. 71.
\textsuperscript{196} Marx, \textit{Grundrisse}. p. 488.
In the final paradigm, Marx again prescribes revolution, he again prescribes bearing arms. Marx again demands that wage-labourers take back the stolen means of material production: take back the world. However, the goal this time is very different. As mentioned in the introduction, it is the reverse or inverse of his beginnings, for this time, the goal of the appropriation of the means of production is not the homogenisation of labour, the making of all time the same. This time, the goal is the splitting of time, and the splitting of human existence.197

Fundamentally: Marx no longer complains that capitalism demarcates ‘work’ and ‘life’, his complaint becomes that the separation is not distinct enough. The goal of the appropriation of the means of material production, in other words, ceases to be the merging of free and necessary-labour-time, and becomes the inverse, their institutionalised, definitive separation. For this thesis, this separate or schizophrenic existence cannot be seen as an end-in-itself, which is to say, Marx does not prescribe it because he believed that such a life would make people ‘happy’, or—to emulate the popular trend of ascribing to Marx the distilled voice of the slave morality198—that this form of life would be ‘fairer’. As discussed in the first chapter, Marx does not hate domination in itself. He did not desire to quell the will to power in others because he himself was too weak to embody it—which is what Nietzsche saw as the motivation behind all socialism and democracy.199

199 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: A prelude to a philosophy of the future, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), Penguin Books: UK, 1990. Aphorism 201. ‘... the democratic movement inherits the Christian. But that the tempo of this movement is much too slow and somnolent for the more impatient, for the sick and suffering of the said instinct, is attested by the ever more frantic baying, the ever more undisguised fang-baring of the anarchist dogs which now rove the streets of European culture: apparently the reverse of the placidly industrious democrats and revolutionary
This critique is well founded when directed at many ‘Marxists’, but is not when it is aimed at Marx himself. This is certainly not to say that Marx was an ‘aristocratic’ thinker like Nietzsche: Marx is a democratic thinker, and did not see ‘modern’ values as swamp weeds that thrive in the swamp of modernity. Marx hates domination because the domination of ‘man’ over ‘man’ is a shadow of the domination of the powers of ‘man’ over ‘man’: thus, to reiterate a vital point, domination is not ‘immoral’, is not hated for what it is, but is hated for what it indicates: which is of course the mastery of the world that human beings have created over the human creators themselves. Thus Leo Strauss’ ‘observation’—and it is by no means his alone—that Marx desired the suppression of all human aggression is not necessarily correct. One must see what Marx is actually writing to understand that the ‘Total Man’ is not necessarily a human being without teeth. She is, first and foremost, the human being as master of all that she is, makes, and does. These potential human beings are ‘the authors and actors of their history’. However, ‘actor’ can have more meanings than one. This leads the thesis into a discussion of Marx’s ‘determinism’.

ideologists, and even more so of the stupid philosphasters and brotherhood fanatics who call themselves socialists and want a ‘free society’, they are in fact at one with them in their total and instinctive hostility towards every form of society other than that of the autonomous herd (to the point of repudiating even the concepts ‘master’ and ‘servant’ … at one in their tenacious opposition to every special claim, every special right and privilege … but equally at one in the religion of pity, in sympathy with whatever feels, lives, suffers … the extravagance of ‘pity for God’ belongs in a democratic era …’ pp. 124-125.

203 Fromm, Marx’s Concept of Man. p. 13.
The next two sections of this chapter will discuss the reasons that Marx desired the separation between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom: the external end of this enforced rupture between ‘work’ and ‘life’.

II: On the role of the materialist conception of history in this paradigm: means and ends

In order to discuss Marx’s materialist conception of history lucidly, one must acknowledge two distinct strains: labour \textit{qua} action, and labour \textit{qua} teleology. In both cases, the manner in which bodily existence is materially perpetuated ‘determines’ the \textit{eidos} of the producers’ humanity. The difference between the two is ontological, in that in the first strain, labour in the character of action precedes its effect, which is born of the action. In the second strain, labour in the character of teleology, the effect exists prior to the cause, as potential, as something that is \textit{not yet} but \textit{must be}. The necessary end exerts itself as law, which acts upon people, who are \textit{moved} so that the end achieves actuality through their (unfree) movements.\footnote{Dick Howard writes of a ‘voluntarist’ and a ‘deterministic’ strain in Marx. Dick Howard, \textit{From Marx to Kant}, State University of New York Press: USA: 1895. p. 37. This thesis prefers the phrases ‘labour \textit{qua} action’ and labour \textit{qua} teleology, for this allows us to speak of that which is deterministic in both strains. Cf: Castoriadis, ‘On the History of the Workers’ Movement’, in \textit{Telos}, No. 30 Winter 1976-77. Castoriadis uses the terms ‘class struggle’ and ‘historical materialism’ to discuss similar themes. p. 14.}

The first strain is primarily the theory of the first Marx, whereas the second strain is proper to the third paradigm. Thus for the first Marx, communism is something that human beings \textit{create} by actively becoming individual manifestations of the human essence—conscious self/world creators.
For the final Marx, communism (redefined as rationality granted flesh and breath) is the necessary terminus of the human journey. Human beings can either make it to this end—at times this is postulated as inevitable—205—or destroy themselves _en route_.206 There are no other alternatives here. This thought will be returned to momentarily, after a discussion of how capitalism came into being from the viewpoint of the first strain: labour _qua_ action.

Like Max Weber, Marx is interested in the Occidental city of the late twelfth- and early thirteenth-centuries, for it was here that the burgher class of proto-capitalists—through labour _qua_ action—dragged themselves into being by effecting two main changes.207

Firstly, they refused to be guild masters, for within the logic of the guild, expansion of the scope of production beyond a certain point is just not possible. The guild is a part of a greater logic of simple reproduction:208 there are prohibitions on the numbers of journeymen a single guild master may have, as well as prohibitions on who may run a guild and possess the means of production for the given speciality.209 In short, one must be a master of a craft, one must have himself already been a journeyman, and not simply that, but the best of all journeymen, in order to

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205 Marx and Engels, _The Communist Manifesto_. ‘What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.’ p. 57.


209 Marx, _Grundrisse_. p. 505.
have the opportunity to be a guild master and possess the tools of one’s own trade. This logic is unbreakable, and thus, the proto-capitalists could do naught but compete *adjacently* to the guilds.

Secondly, these burghers or proto-capitalists freed bondsmen and the like who came into their ‘free towns’, by granting them the rights of citizenship. And so here, very nearly a thousand years ago, we have the prehistory of capitalism, where proto-bourgeoisie and proto-proletariat meet.\(^ {210} \)

What is important here, however, is the manner in which change was effected. Clearly, for Marx, the revolution of 1789 was very important, regarding the final blooming of capitalism, as well as the efforts of Napoleon to conquer Europe and lay down the material conditions for the spread of ‘liberty’, ‘fraternity’ and ‘equality’ with musket and bayonet. However, it is wrongheaded to see these ‘heroes’ and events as being causes of major changes. They are rather the *effects* of the changes that took place in medieval Occidental cities, where the burghers, oppressed by the fetters of feudal logic regarding the means of production, became radical, and began producing in new ways that better served their expansionist desires. This is the true cause, for Marx, the material cause of the shift into capitalism; the real manner in which these real men and women began to produce and re-produce themselves was the impetus of the changes in the way

\(^ {210} \) Max Weber, ‘Concepts and Categories of the City’, in *Economy and Society Volume II*, University of California Press: USA, 1978. ‘… the urban citizenry therefore usurped the right to dissolve the bonds of seigneurial domination; this was the great—in fact, the *revolutionary*—innovation which differentiated the medieval Occident cities from all others.’ p. 1239.
that ‘men’ began to think. For Marx, the ideal of human equality is a product of capitalistic production; it is not the other way around.\textsuperscript{211}

This is how the world was changed (in this version) for Marx, from feudalism to capitalism. Not by the storming of the Bastille, not by the sword of Napoleon, but rather via the actions of the radical bourgeoisie, who became impatient with the current form of the means of production, which had developed as far as it could within its own logic, and thus had to be abandoned, smashed, and started again.\textsuperscript{212} The latter events are but a shadow of this primal scene, for Marx, and this belief is the basis of his particular prescription to revolt. For Marx, the bourgeoisie are thus ancient and fundamentally feudal creatures. The wheel has now turned a full circle, and now it is the capitalist manner of production that has become a fetter.\textsuperscript{213}

A radical need is a need that a system of production can give birth to but cannot satisfy.\textsuperscript{214} The radical bourgeoisie had a radical need for accumulation, something that cannot be fulfilled in a system of simple reproduction, even if this system has become advanced. Thus, they had to create a system in which their need could be fulfilled. During the nineteenth century, the proletariat had a radical need, to live a human life, but capitalism could not fulfil this, and offered them only inhumanity and degradation. The bourgeoisie were too old to change; they had stepped into the

\textsuperscript{211} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}. ‘This relation has no basis in natural history, nor does it have a social basis common to all periods of human history. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older formations of social production.’ p. 273; cf: Marx, \textit{A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy} in Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy, William Collins Sons & Co: UK, 1969. Preface. p. 84.

\textsuperscript{212} Marx, \textit{A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy}. pp. 84-85.


\textsuperscript{214} Heller, \textit{The Theory of Need in Marx}. p. 69.
shoes of the rigid feudal lords and kings that they had long ago displaced, and thus lost their radicality: they could not keep up with the implications and very potential of their own creations.\textsuperscript{215} However, the proletariat was a child of modernity, it \textit{could} master the unleashed forces and inherit their potential bounty, but not within the existing logic of production, and not in its (which is to say the proletariats’) current, immature/estranged form. For Marx, as the bourgeoisie had once acted, so must the proletariat act now. A radical need can only be fulfilled by the violent destruction of the current means of production, and its creation anew—surpassing the old limitations—out of the ashes.\textsuperscript{216}

Marx is nothing if not a practical man. He desired change, and so went back in history and analysed how change had been brought about the last time it had occurred. This method has the boon of having worked at least once already. The only problem, for Marx at least, is that there is an inversion, in that the events that appear to be the biggest and most important (1789 etc.) are but shadows of primordial events clouded in obscurity. The bourgeoisie would never put the story of their origins into their own history books, for this would be to admit that they had had to claw their way into existence, that they had shed much blood, and that they had faced hard odds, and could just as easily have failed as succeeded. In short, they would have to admit that they were

\textsuperscript{215} Op. Cit. ‘Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the power of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.’ p. 47.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid. pp. 39-57.
historical creations. It is too ignoble for them to admit that at one time they had been weak, and disparate, existing ‘in the pores of the old society’ with no clear ground of their own.\footnote{Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I.} pp. 172; 873-876.}

Thus it is better for them to tell their story as they do, that the way that they live is free and natural. Old kings attempted to suppress natural freedom and equality, and thus were swept away, had their heads cut off, so that what was right and natural could bloom.

The above approach is for this thesis a highly positive element of the materialist conception of history, or, this version of it. It empowers everyday people, and makes them into the motive force of history. As already discussed in the first chapter, the commonsense view of history situates immutable ‘man’ as being separate from an immutable and eternal world. In this view, heroic efforts of skill and daring by unique human beings such as Napoleon are required if the course of history is to be altered even the smallest amount. Marx says, to the contrary, that no special activity is required to change the world, for the \textit{normal} activity of the human being is to change the world: this is what she does every single day. The difference is that on most days the change is merely the maintenance of what is\footnote{Ibid. pp. 1019-1038.}—or, the process of transforming the world from what it is into what we believe it to be. When a radical need comes into being, this is when change becomes radical, when transformation shifts \textit{from} changing the world from what it is into what we believe it to be \textit{to} changing the world from what we believe it to be into what we believe it \textit{ought} to be. (Or, when we believe that our world is a distortion of what \textit{is}, and that the proposed change is not \textit{to} what we \textit{desire}, but rather an instauration of ‘reality’. Marx’s early and late variant of this theme is interesting
in that in both cases he states that revolution—the overcoming of illusion—is not an instauration, for in the first case because human beings have never yet physically made manifest their essence but have always rather distorted it; in the second because human beings have never yet fully enacted the separation of ‘work’ of and ‘life’, and thus have never yet seen the planet earth as it is, without the imposition of foreign human traits.)

However, it is still the everyday activity of the human being that effects the change, even if this becomes violent for a period of time, as in the case of the radical bourgeoisie.\footnote{Marx, ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ in Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy, William Collins Sons & Co: UK, 1969. See Theses I, VIII, X, XI. pp. 283-286.} This version of the materialist conception of history makes voluntary change possible, in that people can bring about that which they desire,\footnote{Howard, From Marx to Kant. p. 37.} rather than being forced to bring about that which must be, as in the second version of the materialist conception of history, which will now be discussed.

Nothing really changes as far as events are concerned; however, the abovementioned events are interpreted very differently. Radical need turns into its opposite: objective laws of history. In this version, in the Occidental medieval city the proto-bourgeoisie became radical because it was imperative that they do so: their own inherent nature as a class and the forces of history compelled them.\footnote{Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. pp. 84-85.} As for the nineteenth century, the law of the sinking rate of profit meant that the proletariat would have to struggle ever more to obtain even bare subsistence wages for its labour.\footnote{Marx, ‘The Law of the Tendential Fall in the Rate of Profit’ Capital Volume III. Pp. 317-348.} Thus, he also will seize the means of production because he must, because he is impelled.
This second strain of the materialist conception of history—labour *qua* teleology—undoes a great deal of its own good work. The common person is still the maker of the world and of himself, but now he is tossed about on waves of history, and this history has goals of its own that are independent of humanity, and yet, somehow, fortuitously, these objective goal encompass the emancipation of humankind.\(^{223}\) The irony is of course that free human agency, the goal of the objective forces of history, is annulled by the fact that volition is taken out of human hands, for people become mere actors, reading lines written by ‘History’, secretly guided by the ‘cunning of Reason’.\(^{224}\)

However, Marx is a very stubborn man, and though his own theory backs him into a corner, he attempts to make the best of it. If the autonomous goal of independent and objective forces of history is communism, then all that precedes communism can be viewed as unfree pre-history, whereas communism can be viewed as free history.\(^{225}\) Once the goal is achieved, the waves of history cease to crash and toss the human being, for he has reached his destination, and can therefore be finally granted his free agency, as he has finally earned it.

However, there is still a problem here, in that this agency will be hamstrung if the manner of producing and reproducing oneself materially still has the power to involuntarily determine and limit the *eidos* of one’s humanity. It seems that without some kind of distance regarding the manner or technique of reproducing oneself, reification as the concrescence of ‘forces’ and ‘relations’ of production becomes inevitable, with its subsequent ‘immanent limits’ due to the ‘ritualization’ of


the uses of various instruments of labour … the traditional-social limits of their development’. If one is to follow the deterministic mindset to its logical conclusion, as the final Marx did, to where it becomes determinism/rationalism, one simply must separate free and labour time, ‘work’ and ‘life’. In the final paradox of Marx that this thesis will introduce, this move of Marx’s overcomes determinism—not as teleology, but as this thesis has defined it—while remaining trapped within its logic.

Determinism is often viewed rather simply. Emile Durkhiem reduces it almost entirely to the fact that for Marx, the economic sphere has supreme ontological primacy, and Durkheim thus critiques him on the dual grounds that on the one hand: to determine in this manner, this sphere would have to be immune from being affected by any of the spheres that it engenders, which is for Durkheim impossible. On the other hand, if any sphere was to be seen as even approaching this kind of ontological primacy, it would have to be (for Durkheim) the religious sphere. For Durkheim’s Marx, human beings are ‘moved’ by economic forces, and when the actors tell themselves that they are acting for ‘political’ reasons, they are deluded. In other words, the reasons for which they think they act are not the reasons for which they act.

However, although nothing in this analysis is incorrect as such, it incomplete, in that determinism goes beyond this fact that for Marx human beings (prior to the institution of

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228 Loc. Cit.
communism) cannot transparently view their own motivations.\textsuperscript{229} Taken further, it means that designing ‘finished’ social ends or systems like castles is the sky is a redundant exercise, in that the ideal cannot displace the real—and thus, one must directly change that which is real. This is what Marx meant when he said that it was futile to write recipes for the socialist cookbooks of the future,\textsuperscript{230} and this is why Marx rarely states his own ends in his writings, and instead devotes his time to engineering/designing the material basis most likely to generate a ‘life’ for the human being worth living.

However, this does not mean that Marx did not have ends in mind. It is more the case that he saw the connections and relations as being clear and self-evident. For example: Marx only desired an exponentially expanding base of material production \textit{in order that} the relations between ‘men’ should not be limited by a limited relation between ‘men’ and ‘nature’.\textsuperscript{231} The overly-literal should not read Marx, for they will suppose that if Marx desired an exponentially expanding material base,\textsuperscript{232} then he \textit{must} have desired that human being should have ever more material things. (The reverse is rather true, and that Marx wanted human beings to \textit{have} less and to \textit{be/embody} more.)\textsuperscript{233}

We live in an epoch almost totally void of imagination, and this is another reason that this thesis has abstracted three different ends, three ‘recipes’ for potential humanity \textit{out of} the works of Marx, to make them prominent enough for those who cannot properly read to see. Some fault of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{229} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I.} p. 172.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I.} p. 173.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume III.} p 959.
\item \textsuperscript{233} Heller, \textit{The Theory of Need in Marx}. p 96.
\end{itemize}
course also lies with Marx himself, who on the one hand believed that the interpretation of the actor of his own action is subordinate to the absolute efficacy of action itself, and who on the other hand believed that his ends would automatically achieve actuality if his prescriptions were carefully followed. Thus there was for him no particularly pressing need to write explicitly of his ends, or for the proletariat to even understand them—especially when labour becomes teleology and volition is removed from a foregone equation.

However, teleology is rarely the whole story of Marx, even in this third paradigm, for he was a man who wrote theories of revolution to be read and understood, a vocation that he would have considered to be spurious and thus would have quit if he truly had seen communism as being unequivocally inevitable. There is another element, even of the final or third Marx, who believes that what people do and how they do it is important: the Marx who believes that a desired or willed effect can be brought about via the careful orchestration of its calculable cause. It is the oddest element of this particular Marx that to bring about freedom, one need not speak the word, or even fashion a desire for it in the masses; one must simply create the conditions where freedom cannot but be. History, however, has taught us that it is folly to believe that one can determine the shape and size of an oak tree by placing the acorn in the ground just so and walking away. One can neither assume that what one desires is necessary, and must come to be, nor that one can engender it ‘from the ground up’, so to speak. If one desires freedom, one must bring freedom into


being, not the most probable causes of freedom. The universe is not that rational/predictable/mechanical.

Cornelius Castoriadis notes, from the viewpoint of anthropology, that one can walk into ten villages with an identical means of production and view ten different modes of sociability.\textsuperscript{237} Perhaps one cannot change the ideas of a given society without changing the manner in which they reproduce themselves materially, but this does not mean that all attempts to change the ideas of people directly should be abandoned—though of course this is \textit{exactly} what it means for Marx, and especially the Marx of this final paradigm. Here, Marx was guilty of being a zealot of his own ideas.

In the third paradigm, the true end of the separation of the forces and the relations of production is a genus of humanity that voluntarily and consciously, in an unhindered manner, creates, guides and enriches its own humanity.\textsuperscript{238} Still within the logic of determinism, he believes that the manner of material reproduction must determine the manner of self creation, therefore,


\textsuperscript{238} Markus, ‘Four Forms of Critical Theory — Some theses on Marx’s Development’. ‘In Capital, however, bourgeois society becomes that stage in historical development which prepares all the objective and subjective preconditions not for the final \textit{elimination} of this antinomy, but for adequate and final socio-institutional \textit{separation} of its contradictory moments, for the reduction of it to its real basis, to the relation of man to nature as the sphere of necessity \textit{versus} the relations between men as the sphere of freedom …The domination of men over men can be practically overcome only if man’s dependence on nature, his subjugation to its laws, always demanding some form of rational authority in the organisation of material productive life, can be radically reduced to that which it is, to a mere technical necessity, if the “self management of men” can be intuitionally separated from the “management of things”. p. 93. As already stated, however, this thesis does not believe that the domination of ‘men’ over ‘men’ is the real issue. What must be practically overcome is the domination of the present human forms over unhindered potential forms.
one manner of material reproduction must determine a manner of self creation that is
indeterminate, and that is, of course, material reproduction in a vacuum, where the most rational
application of any given new or existing piece of technology can be determined and implemented
without social, moral, or traditional fetters. The mode of material reproduction both ceases to and
continues to determine the manner of self creation. It ceases to determine because self creation is
now unhindered by constraints such as time, scarcity, and most importantly, tradition and
traditional-limited ways of being human. It continues to determine because this unhindered self
creation is a product of the separated/isolated/rational manner or technique of material
reproduction, and will thus last only as long as does the divorce of ‘life’ and ‘work’.239

This is, for this thesis, Marx at his weakest, theoretically. His best strength is simplicity, and
this is far from simple: that which is determined determining the indeterminate, this is overly
complex and despite that, bad theorising. It is a formula for freedom, but freedom is the absence of
formulae. As always in Marx, this practical prescription for a method of production, production as
institutionally separated relations between human beings and relations between human beings and
sensuous external nature, is a means, not an end. It is, for Marx, a deterministic means of
overcoming or fooling determinism, by creating the necessary distance to overcome reification:
thus removing fetters from the expansion of the means of material production, and in turn,
removing constraints from the development of a free and ‘many-sided’ humanity—as long as the
spheres of human existence are kept separate.240

239 Marx, Capital Volume III. ‘The realm of freedom really begins only where labour determined by necessity and
external expedience ends; it lies by its very nature beyond the sphere of material production proper.’ pp. 958-959.
III: On schizophrenic mastery: the being so deinos as to posit his own form, or, on the true creation of an non-illusory Objective world

It is hard to credit the idea that Marx chose the manner of being of this third paradigm on its own merits, this cold, grey world of schizophrenia, of freedom here, and necessity there, of factory work here, and social engineering there. The prior section discussed the possibility that this manner of being may have been prescribed by Marx in order to ‘overcome’ determinism. However, this is not the sole motivation, and neither is it sufficient to situate this third paradigm simply as a corrected version of the second, in that the impossible but ideal automatic base is replaced with the less ideal but more realistic base of the quarantined realm of necessity. This thesis will instead state a threefold motivation for this final paradigm. One factor is the impossibility of the overcoming of the realm of the necessity. Another factor is the stranglehold that the more strongly deterministic version of the materialist conception of history gained over the mind and works of Marx. The third factor is a magnetic pull, against the strongly deterministic strain, that lures Marx back towards his beginnings. This is the element of the argument of this thesis that causes it to engage polemically against the concept of an epistemological break in Marx—without, of course, cathecting to the opposite theory of continuity which denies evident change.


Keeping in mind the basic premise of this thesis, Marx first departs from his beginnings, and then returns to them in an inverted form. The first section of this final chapter explored the most obvious of these inversions, that the same act—the appropriation by the associated producers of the means of material production—should have an opposite result for the ‘young’ and the ‘mature’ Marx—the separation of free- and necessary labour-time for one, their coalescence for another.²⁴³

A more subtle inversion regards Marx’s ‘return’ to the concept of the transcendence of estrangement—as the realignment of the human essence and existence—in a somewhat secondary manner, and his parallel return to the concept of alienation—that of definite human powers and relations having the appearance of being the definite powers and relations of ‘things’—in a primary or highly visible manner.²⁴⁴

A great deal has been made of this shift in emphasis by a great many authors. Althusser cites the sixth thesis on Feuerbach as if it were the sixth commandment, and states that in 1845, Marx expunged the concept of a human essence from his mind and works, and thus effected his coupure épistémologique.²⁴⁵ Markus and Heller both see the shift as a uptopic element of Marx dying.²⁴⁶ They both misunderstand what the ‘young’ Marx means by the overcoming of estrangement as the

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²⁴⁴ Marx, *Capital Volume I*. ‘The degree to which some economists are misled by the fetishism attached to the world of commodities, or by the objective appearance of the social characteristics of labour, is shown, among other things, by the dull and tedious dispute over the part played by nature in the formation of exchange-value. Since exchange value is a definite social manner of expression the labour bestowed on a thing, it can have no more natural content than has, for example, the rate of exchange.’ p. 176.
realignement of the human essence and existence, and see it as an equalisation of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ development (Markus—in the vein of Georg Simmel); or as the absolute identity of society and individual, so that the human species takes on a fixed form or genus of maximum potential that every individual must embody/enact (Heller—in the vein of Castoriadis). This was never what the young Marx meant by the coalescence of species and individual. This thesis has rather stated that the overcoming of estrangement for the early Marx is the active/creative process of the becoming-human of every potentially human organism. It is labouring as practicing conscious self/world transformation, which is enacting the human essence, creating oneself as a human being while creating the world as living extension of oneself.

For the Budapest School, as for Althusser, the overcoming of estrangement in the early Marx is interpreted in such a manner that it can find no place in the ‘mature’ Marx. Yet this concept does reappear in the ‘third’ Marx—though in a contradictory manner—for Marx, as mentioned, is a hoarder of ideas, and this creates an antinomy in his mind and works between his desire to reduce ‘work’ to nothing, and his desire to consider ‘work’ to be a part of the essential nature of the human being—if only it can be made again noble and stripped of its bourgeois character of degradation.

It is interesting that this later antinomy of Marx is not his own, but is inherited from Andrew Ure. In The Poverty of Philosophy there is a quote by Ure from The Philosophy of Manufactures: or, an Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain,

247 Loc. Cit.
248 Marx, 1844 Manuscripts. p 71.
and in it, we find the antinomy in its original state: two themes intermixed, one regarding machinery ‘superseding human labour altogether’; the second regarding the ‘revolutionary side’ of the factory, the ceasing of ‘special development’ — the obliterating of artistry in labour — and the consequent ‘tendency towards an integral development of the individual … the need of universality’.²⁵⁰

Both sides of this antinomy appear in Marx’s Capital writings.²⁵¹ However, in accordance with the manner in which this thesis has chosen to divide Marx, the first half of the antinomy will be delegated to the Marx of the prior chapter, where the theme of automation is explored at the greatest length, and the second half will be ascribed to the Marx of the current chapter. This second thought is highly interesting and radical, for it declares that the best manner to return nobility to labour is not to look to the past — as the first paradigm is somewhat guilty of — nor to look to the future — as the second paradigm is even more guilty of — but rather to look to the present, to the technical basis of the here and now.

This second thought, of improving rather than overcoming ‘work’ regards the potential of machines as neutral objects, about how they could potentially improve both the quality of the human being and his ‘quality of life’, if only they were to become the tools of ‘man’, rather than ‘man’ being the grist for the factory, so to speak. In this light, the polemics in Capital against large-scale industry can be read as being polemics against the method of application of machinery, not


against the machines as such themselves.\textsuperscript{252} It is a dire testimony to the reification of our current age that it is difficult to distinguish between these two: what something \textit{is} and how it is \textit{used}.\textsuperscript{253} However, one will severely misread \textit{Capital} if one is not very careful to make this distinction. When one is reading this ‘third’ Marx, one must not attach his manifest disgust at the conditions of the ‘working class’ to the mere existence of machinery. It is a mistake to read Marx as a Luddite, always, but especially here. For Marx, here, the problem is in the application of machinery, of changing its use so that its ‘inherent’ potential for making the lives of human beings ‘better’ can be made actual. Not in the science-fiction sense of jettisoning ‘work’ from life, but in a different sense.

When Marx explores this theme, factory work can be made noble, it can be robbed of its pernicious character. The negative side of factory work lies mainly in the fact that duties are not rotated, and that single, monotonous tasks are made the ‘life’ of particular, fragmentary human beings.\textsuperscript{254} However, neither of these negative elements of factory work are \textit{inherent} to the form of machines. The reason that labour-saving devices do not save labour is that they were not designed to save labour, but were designed to increase the portion of the working day during which the wage-labourer labours without remuneration: thus machines perform their allotted task, in the present, flawlessly.\textsuperscript{255} If the task of machines were to be altered, so that their function should be to actually save labour, then there is no reason that they should not function in this task just as well.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{252} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}. pp. 171-172; Castoriadis, ‘Technique’. ‘Technique, here, has become, not just “neutral”, but positive in all its aspects. It has become operative reason, and men need only, and must only, regain control of its operations.’ p. 237; & ‘… capitalist technology appears as rationality incarnate.’ p. 254.
\item \textsuperscript{253} Markus, ‘Alienation and Reification in Marx and Lukács’. pp. 149-154.
\item \textsuperscript{254} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume I}. p. 459.
\item \textsuperscript{255} Ibid. pp. 492-493.
\end{itemize}
Marx reminds us, simply, that it cannot be expected that a machine will save labour if it is not applied with this goal in mind. This would be the manner of application of the associated producers.\textsuperscript{256}

Additionally, there is a positive element to the form of factory work:

It is machines that abolish the role of the handicraftsman as the regulating principle of social production. Thus, on the one hand, the technical reason for the lifelong attachment of the worker to a partial function is swept away.\textsuperscript{257}

Here again we have the radical element of the factory floor noted in \textit{The Poverty of Philosophy},\textsuperscript{258} that special development could become universal development, that using machines could in fact be better for human beings, regarding their quality and growth, than using a non-mechanical (or a fully automatic) means of material production and re-production.

What this means is that Marx here believes that daily human metabolism with nature can be returned to the life of a new, truly modern human being through short stints of factory work: and thus, that the human being can be granted in an improved manner the chance to make manifest its essential nature as a world-creating animal.\textsuperscript{259} Marx did write in 1845 that the human essence is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{256} Ibid. pp. 171-172.
\item \textsuperscript{257} Ibid. p. 491.
\item \textsuperscript{258} Marx, \textit{The Poverty of Philosophy}. p. 157.
\item \textsuperscript{259} Op. Cit. pp. 171-172.
\end{itemize}
practical/immanent, and not an abstraction innate in each human being.\textsuperscript{260} However, what he meant here was the \textit{eidos} of the human being, the artificial character that the human being engenders for itself: which is ‘the ensemble of the social relations’.\textsuperscript{261} As the first chapter elucidated, the paradox is that \textit{under} this artificial form is an innate essence, which is not a concrete \textit{eidos} but a drive to ignore/overcome \textit{all} instinct and fashion a nature that is more rich and complex than the life bare life that would be lived if we were to ignore reason utterly and listen only to the sensuous voice of the organism.

Fundamentally, at this point Marx declares that the simplicity of labour in the factory is detrimental to human beings who labour in this manner all day long; however, this simplicity of labour becomes a boon when the duration of the working day is reduced in magnitude.\textsuperscript{262} It means that labour is non-fatiguing, mentally or physically, and it additionally spells the death of ‘stunting’ specialisation, in that human beings can try their hand at any kind of ‘work’ that they wish, can become ‘many sided’.\textsuperscript{263}

However, it is fairly difficult to be convinced of this scenario after reading Marx’s frequent polemics against the technical division of the labour.\textsuperscript{264} It would be folly to state that in \textit{Capital} Marx is always simply critiquing the mode of \textit{application} of machinery. Sometimes, it may be the first Marx that is writing. More often, it is the second, or even hybrid forms of the second and third,

\textsuperscript{260} Marx, ‘Theses on Feuerbach’. ‘But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual.’ p. 285.
\textsuperscript{261} Loc. Cit.
\textsuperscript{262} Marx, \textit{Capital, Volume I}. pp. 171-172.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid. p. 491.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid. e.g.: pp. 469; 483-485; Cf: Marx, \textit{Grundrisse}, p. 714.
such as when Marx experiments with the concept of a realm of necessity that can approach but can
never reach zero.\footnote{Marx, \textit{Capital Volume III.} pp. 958-959.} As made clear in the introduction of this thesis, the different versions of Marx
here being discussed are \textit{not} distinct in space and time. Yet it is also folly to state that Marx \textit{never}
believes the above, which is, to condense rather crudely, that the current form of machinery is the
most superior form of the means of production in all of human history, and that \textit{all} fault lies in how
it is \textit{used}, not in what it \textit{is}.\footnote{Castoriadis, ‘Technique’. p. 254.} This thesis cannot abide by insinuations such as that of Phil Gapser in
an appendix to a version of \textit{The Communist Manifesto} that he annotated, that Soviet Marxists saw in
Marx that which was not there.\footnote{Marx and Engels, \textit{The Communist Manifesto}. p. 27. Here, in an appendix called ‘Objections and Responses’,
Gasper states that ‘what failed in Eastern Europe was not any kind of socialism, but a variety of bureaucratic state
capitalism.’ This does not mean that it its motivation could not have come from Lenin or Stalin reading Marx. Cf:
p. 24, point 1, where Gasper protects the purity of Marx’s theory, emphasising that one must not blame Marx for
the actions of his followers.} This is not the mistake of the orthodox Soviet interpretation of
Marx: the folly is in taking an existent fragment and calling it the whole.

The Soviets did not misread Marx, but rather read one Marx too well. For this Marx,
fundamentally, the argument is that what is poison in large doses is a tonic in small doses. The fact
that this is true in some cases does not mitigate the risk involved. Marx himself may well have died
through taking arsenic as a curative.\footnote{Frank Manuel, \textit{A Requiem for Karl Marx}, Harvard University Press: USA, 1997. p. 81.} What is a large and a small dose of factory work is highly
relative, especially when those deciding are exempt from this genus of labour. Lenin saw six days on at the assembly line and one day off of ‘Soviet freedom’ as a content and balanced life.269

Thus, to surmise, Marx returns to the concept of the overcoming of estrangement (in the sense of the coalescence of species and individual, the sense that even a theorist such as Markus—who devoted so much time emphasising the fundamental continuity of Marx’s thought—sees as being indigenous only to the ‘young’ Marx), though admittedly in an altered or inverted, antinomic form that is not as central to the ‘mature’ Marx as to his earlier counterpart. *Primarily, this means that he attempts to reinsert metabolism with nature into truly human life, for to transform the world is an essential part of what makes us human. However, the form of this return to ‘work’ is strongly determined by Marx’s more visible ‘return’ to the concept of alienation, which is less prominent than the concept of estrangement in the first paradigm. Here, in the third paradigm, alienation (the concept if not the word) is salient, fundamentally, the thought that if human beings are to add themselves to the earth, then they should not lose this expended element by imagining it to be inherent and autonomous: indigenous to the thing-itself that has been created.*

When reading Chapter I of *Capital*: especially ‘The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret’,270 one cannot help but be struck by the prominence of alienation as a theme here and the

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similarity of this passage to one in *The 1844 Manuscripts*: the passage which contains the infamous line: ‘The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself’.271

However, just as above, where the same prescription for the appropriation of the means of material production means very different things for Marx at different times in his life, in the same way, though the problem of alienation in the ‘mature’ and ‘early’ Marx is articulated in a highly similar way, the manner in which the human being should cease to lose himself into the earth is inverted in the first and third paradigms of labour and the human being. Here, in the third paradigm, instead of recognising what is human in the earth in order to ‘inherit’ the earth—the productive forces ‘developed’ to a high degree—its greatness and its bounty, the inverse occurs. Marx states that to ‘humanise’ the earth is backward and superstitious, it is fundamentally animism, and ‘civilised’ people must cease to act in this manner, they must ‘remove the veil’ and bring material production under their ‘conscious and planned control’.272

In the prior chapter, human beings ceased to humanise the earth by ceasing to ‘work’ altogether. Here, in the third paradigm, Marx effects an odd manoeuvre. He states: in order to become truly human, we must cease to do that which makes us human. We must, like the other animals, return the process of metabolism with sensuous nature to a state of pure technique.273 ‘Work’ must again become a simple rearranging of matter.274 If the planet earth is to become masterable it must become predictable. It must cease to be an anthropomorphised mother or

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father to us and turn into a dead rock governed by knowable laws. As stated in the introduction, relations between human beings and the earth must be purely material.\textsuperscript{275} The (active) human being exerts his knowledge/power onto a (passive) dehumanised/disenchanted word and forces it to yield whatever ‘man’ desires of it. In this potential future, to return to the metaphor of the first chapter, the labour of the human being, reduced to pure technique, is no longer qualitatively different to that of the rabbit digging a hole, but only quantitatively more impressive, due to the level of the human development of his productive forces.\textsuperscript{276}

There is no such thing as an Objective world, has been Marx’s cry thus far. However, potentially, there could be. Marx takes out his scalpel and cuts all that is human out of the world. The place for that which is human is the realm of freedom, which exists beyond the realm of necessity.\textsuperscript{277} However, when Marx cuts the human out of the world, he does not cut out value. The potential Objective world is not purely material, but is still synthetic.\textsuperscript{278} The fact that there is an immaterial but real substance intermixed with the world is not a problem for Marx: it is rather a fact, and a necessary fact for as long as human beings have human needs and thus must transform sensuous nature. The problem is removing the superstition around this immaterial substance.\textsuperscript{279} The problem is seeing it as it is. Objective here does not mean corporal, but it is closer to ‘true’. Marx wants human beings to continue to put ‘labour’ into the earth, through the medium of

\textsuperscript{275} Ibid. p. 173.
\textsuperscript{276} Ibid. pp. 285-286.
\textsuperscript{277} Marx, \textit{Capital Volume III.} p. 959.
\textsuperscript{278} Op. Cit. p. 165.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid. pp. 163-177.
machines, and to see that the ‘value’ of the finished item is a product of their activity.\textsuperscript{280} At the same time, Marx wants human beings to stop putting \textit{humanity} into the earth, to stop seeing the eruption of the volcanoes as being the anger of the gods, or, what is the same thing, to stop seeing financial crises as the anger of the market that human beings were \textit{hubristic} enough to attempt to regulate it, to break the commandment of \textit{laissez-faire}.\textsuperscript{281}

Thus it can be seen that the human essence does not die in the mind of Marx, it is not killed by his ritual uttering of the sixth thesis on Feuerbach, as in the mind of Althusser. Rather, this essence is dissected into its component parts, and each part is granted an autonomous ‘realm’. The element of the human essence ‘work’ is cleansed of superstition, its tendency to result in the domination of human products over human beings—and concurrently to result in the class-domination of ‘man’ over ‘man’—and if it is not rid of its propensity to determine the form of ‘life’, it is at least set up in such a way that it determines it in an indeterminate manner. This is ‘work’ as \textit{poiesis} in the ‘realm of necessity’.

But what is the external goal of labour reduced to pure technique? It is, in broad terms, the creation of the other realm, the ‘realm of freedom’, where the other component of the dissected human essence—‘life’—is given reign. The ‘realm of freedom’ means freedom from all past forms of ‘limited’ humanity, which have been naught but by products of crude/traditional forms of the material production process.\textsuperscript{282} When the material production process is institutionally separated

\textsuperscript{280} Ibid. p. 285.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid. pp. 163-177.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid. pp. 171-172.
from ‘life’, finally, self-creation can become an activity in and for itself. The rational master
becomes an architect in the two realms, designing blueprints for *reshaping* the Objective world via
purely rational principles on the one hand, on the other, engendering new forms of humanity, and
making them manifest in the mutable realm of the social.

This is the final argument of this thesis against those who cathect to the ‘rupture’ reading and
thus insist on splitting Marx in two, seeing the early Marx as the man interested in unlimited self-
creation—often signified as ‘praxis’—and the latter Marx as the man obsessed with scientifically
mastering and transforming ‘reality’—often signified as ‘labour’. It is also the final argument
against those of the ‘continuity’ interpretation, who see only one Marx, reading always with one
eye open and one eye closed. Both propositions are incorrect in isolation, and only become true
through an uneasy synthesis. This is an antinomy that one must not resolve, even if the
contradiction causes us pain and confusion. For the truth is that Marx never resolved his inner
strains. If we resolve them for him posthumously we create a fiction that did not exist historically: a
non-contradictory Marx. It is the hope of this thesis that its approach has mitigated this problem to
some extent, without sacrificing too much in the way of coherence.

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283 Marx, *Capital Volume III*. pp. 958-959
Concluding Remarks:

At this point it should be clear just what the three formulations of labour and the human being are. It should be equally clear that they are each and every one distinct—having in turn a focus on freedom as unity, freedom as time, and freedom as mastery—but also that this distinctness does not mean that Marx magically metamorphosed from one entity into another. It is long past time in Marxist scholarship to cease cleaving Marx in twain: loving the good breast and hating the evil one. It is folly both to deny that Marx changed, and to construct two Marxes, one into which one projects all of the abject, the other which remains untainted. This is mental illness in action, not good reading or theorising. The only way to understand Marx, as mentioned in the introduction, is to effect a partially real and a partially artificial abstraction.

There is a Marx who believes that machines perform labour. There is a Marx who believes that they cannot. There is a Marx who believes in human wholeness, and one who happily divides the nature of ‘man’ into two. There is a Marx who loathes capitalism, and a Marx who loves it. One must abstract, for Marx does change his mind, and his distinct theoretical artifices must be studied on their own merits (and detriments). One must not, however, abstract too completely, for the new position never replaces the old one utterly. One could even look at different texts as different hypotheses being tested. As the frontispiece quote emphasises, Marx is a dialectical thinker, and thus is no advocate of permanence.

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There is a Marx who understands that rapid ‘social’ or ‘objective’ development is the child of specialisation, and thus is harmful to the quality of the (single-sided) individual. This Marx, the first Marx, is the Marx that somehow, inexplicably, so many appear to see as obsessed with equalising these two factors that affect an opposite reaction upon one another. The first Marx is the only one who considered sacrificing social development to individual greatness, for he was the only one who understood the obstinate fact that the two cannot be made identical. In one sense the Budapest School, on this point, have it utterly backwards, for it is the later Marx—despite his polemics against equality—who deludes himself into believing that objective and subjective ‘wealth’ can grow at the same breakneck velocity—can be one and the same, that one need not sacrifice one to the other. If any Marx is utopic, it is he.

For the early Marx, the category of ‘objective’ development is a chimera, a bad joke: ‘external, mindless ... wealth’. This Marx asks a question that one does not often hear: ‘what is the point of objective development past the point that actual/subjective human beings can realistically embody?’ A modern human being says: my objects are sophisticated, therefore, so must I be. What is the future of this thought? It is what the early Marx raged against: smart machines and idiot human beings. It is human beings haemorrhaging the best of themselves into something external to themselves. The modern human being dreams of ‘smarter’ computers: artificial intelligence. She wants, it seems, to fashion a real god to replace the imaginary one that she killed. She does not think to make herself a god, to become mature and surpass the need to be ruled.

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287 Loc. Cit.
288 Ibid. p. 88.
All of the above characters are always present in Marx, in tension/competition with one another, contradicting one another, winning and losing ground over the course of his life and ‘works’. When one reads Marx closely, however, one will notice some versions of Marx that one expects to find that are notably absent. One is the Marx in love with the artisan, wringing his hands in lament over its demise. Another is Marx the Luddite, spurring on the indiscriminate destruction of the machines that have taken both the tools and the skill from the hands of men and women. Those of a romantic bent all too often look so hard for the Romantic in Marx that they eventually find it, and although this thesis has argued that what the Soviets found in Marx really was there, it cannot say the same for the romantic reading.289

Marx did look back to the past, but only for material to build with, not for any complete paradigms to ‘return’ to. Marx was happy that ‘natural’ sub-humans had been frog-marched into an unnatural/historical human form at the point of capital’s sword, had been whipped and herded down a path they would not have followed by their own volition. He did not regret the blood shed, and did not want to undo what had been done. Rather, he saw that humanity had further to go along the same road, but could not until it made some changes. And it was not simply a case of

‘halting progress’ if nothing changed. For Marx, it seems, everything that had been gained under the tyranny of capital would also be lost under that same master, if he was allowed to rule too long.

... human life required private property for its realisation, and ... it now requires the suppression of private property.\(^{290}\)

If any desire to burn machines and return to an agrarian state, then do not cite Karl Marx as an ally. Marx was unhappy with modernity, but not because it was modern. Marx was simply angry that our modernity does not keep its promises. It is a façade. Our modernity promises freedom, and delivers more devious forms of slavery. Our modernity claims rationality, but still has its fingers crossed. It is terrified of transparency: it insists on delegating control to phantoms and ghosts. What Marx desired was a true modernity: rational, free, and unambiguously modern—except in that for Marx, the price of individuality is not the dissolution of community.

However, there are problems. Marx’s final paradigm of labour and the human being is profoundly unMarxist. For Marx, ideas do not matter: what a people thinks about itself does not matter. All that matters is how one lives and materially creates oneself: this is the real; this is reality. Yet if one looks at the mode of material being that is the third paradigm, divorced from all of that which it is supposed to engender—the external and autonomous realm of freedom—all one sees is

grey, cold, schizophrenia. This is the truth of the final paradigm. This is why this thesis has argued that the Soviets did not get it wrong. In many senses they got it just right.

It is here that the first paradigm is superior. This is labour as *praxis*, as an end-in-itself. What it generates is what it is. And if the details are somewhat vague in this paradigm, then this is simply the theory being truly Marxist, and abstaining from writing recipes for the kitchens of the future, renouncing ‘the pleasure of listening today for some strain of this music of a distant future, lest we confuse it with the auditory hallucinations to which our desire might give birth.’\(^{291}\)

And of course there are other problems, the best of which are raised by Nietzsche. The first is a thesis in itself, so can only be mentioned in passing. For Nietzsche, the individual is a product of a non-community. The internal growth that we as moderns have engendered is a product of alienation (in the more generic sense of this term) as the destruction of community. Return community, and limits on internality—and Marx’s much-coveted individuality—return. This is what Nietzsche means in *The Gay Science* when he says that a socialist society would be a construct of ‘wooden iron’.\(^{292}\)

The other primary problem is that the very last version of Marx believes that humanity can be scoured from out of the earth and that law and meaning will remain. This is Marx’s fatal flaw, in that he is an immanent transcendentalist. On the one hand he states that all meaning is the product/process of human labour/existence, on the other hand he believes that rationality and law are indigenous to the planet earth, to our universe. Somehow, Marx is insane or brilliant or


complex enough to believe both at once. The author of this thesis, however, only believes the
former, and if we were able to achieve Marx’s final dream, there would be a rude surprise.

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.\textsuperscript{293}

There is, however, also a problem with the first paradigm, linked to the above. If we were to
understand that this manner of being, this humanity, this earth, consubstantial in this case, was not
‘true’, but was rather the potential form of these things that engenders the ‘greatest’ humanity and
the most ‘profound’ earth possible, then could we still (desire to) live in this way?

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?\textsuperscript{294}

For Marx, of course, there is no such thing as the earth as a thing-in-itself. It has a theoretical
existence, in the pre-human past, but in the present the earth is a product/process. The early Marx
was comfortable with this thought; the later Marx could not abide it. This is why the first Marx
proposed that human existence be socio-sensual, and the last Marx demanded that it be social, then
sensual. He tried to lift the ‘untrue’ human world ‘off’ the ‘true’ world, and build a wall between

\textsuperscript{293} Nietzsche, \textit{Human, all too Human: A Book for Free Spirits}, R. Hollingdale (trans), Cambridge University Press:

\textsuperscript{294} Ibid. Aphorism 34, p. 29.
them. This means that on the one hand we can still have social meaning, but on the other, we can have relations with the earth as it is: and therefore dominate it, rather than the fictional world, animated by rouge elements of lost humanity, dictating to human beings how they must live and worship. He wanted to exorcise the ghost from the machine. However, this is just not possible. Without the ghost there is simply no machine.

Nietzsche has taught us that we have lived with errors as truths for so long that the truth would very literally kill us. However, in our stubbornness and stupidity, we continue to uncover this intolerable truth—that nothing that we believe in has any basis in reality, that our world is not the real world—despite the fact that our natural habitat—the world that we know and can navigate—is error, and that thus this action is detrimental to our physical and spiritual health—in a similar manner to the way that we doggedly insist on eroding the layer of ozone around the earth as if it does not keep the Sun from cooking us.

Marx presents us with some interesting solutions to this problem. He believes that he can cut out that which is untrue from the earth—not including ‘value’, of course, which is ‘real’—and be left with something true and meaningful. As just mentioned, for this thesis, this is impossible, for law is human, and meaning is human, and thus, if one subtracts the human from the earth—which we could not do anyway, no more than we could decide to see sounds and hear sights—one subtracts law and meaning. Or, speaking more carefully, it is possible to set up the imagined presuppositions for this mode of being, but impossible to actually enact a process of metabolism with the ‘Objective’ earth. We simply can never access this object. It is beyond us because of what
we are. The robots of the second paradigm could do so, of course, if not for the fact the technique of their construction is beyond us.

This leaves us with the first paradigm, and leads us back to the hardest of all questions. We know now that the real world is beyond us, and that the very knowledge of this fact is pernicious. The world of the first paradigm, saturated with rich humanity, is thus untrue, and yet, perhaps it would be better for us as human beings for this very reason. Could we consciously reside in this untruth? This Nietzschean question is, for this thesis, identical to the question, ‘whither Marxism’ today. This thesis has suggested that the Marx of Capital cannot be protected from the guilt of those who ‘acted in his name’. This is not a moral condemnation—an unmasking of this Marx as the bad breast—but a caveat, that it is not unlikely that something similar would happen again if those who call themselves ‘Marxists’ today were to be granted power. This is why this thesis has favoured the first paradigm. Not the young, humanist, philosopher Marx, but the Marx who desired to see a better quality of human being inherit this remarkable world that our collective labours have made, not brutes and philistines who can only squander it, making meaningless all the blood that this world has absorbed growing into what it has become.

All versions of Marx shared this desire—for the third Marx, factory work is spectacularly good for you, in moderation—but only one followed the best of his own advice, and attempted to bring about greater individual human beings materially, directly, and logically, and not as an external result of a convoluted system of separation, schizophrenia, and a constantly expanding means of material production and re-production. These are the elements that are supposed to guarantee a constantly expanding internality, individuality, and many-sidedness of ‘man’: to ‘work’ without
skill and to ‘live’ without ‘work’, to metabolise with a sensuous nature that has no meaning or personality, and then to have human relations in a world that hovers autonomously above this dead rock: to live in a Cartesian nightmare where the body has one life, and the *Geist* has another of its own.

This is the version of labour and the human being that the final Marx preferred, the altar on which he sacrificed his first dreams of human wholeness and unity with ‘nature’, with the world, with the means of material production, whatever one wishes to call our environment. This is not to say that Marx ceased to desire any of these things, not at all, and neither is it to say that he definitively ‘moved on’, scorned and disinherited his earlier selves. It is rather to say that he made a choice between his three competing paradigms, choosing not freedom as unity, not freedom as time, but rather, freedom as mastery, understanding that this paradigm, like all the others, is not perfect. If one is to read Marx seriously today, one must think very carefully before following him, in this particular regard.

Perhaps it is the most ‘rational’ choice and the basic logic (somewhat buried under the infantile desire to overcome our mortal helplessness by transforming the world into something easily subjectable) is simple and secure: work rationally, work less, live more. This logic would indeed be easily assimilated into the capitalistic present, perhaps even lauded, if not for the fact that this genus of freedom is purchased with a modicum of unfreedom, as in this mode of production any person could (and realistically would) be called upon at some stage to perform one of the more base tasks of the labour of subsistence. Most of us, it seems, would rather condemn others to permanent toil than to perform our tiny share of it. Thus we who reap without sowing,
feast without killing, have without making, we hold hands in continuity with the past, we revel in being so blasé and asocial, in the glow of exercising our power over another. Only now we are too weak/civilised to enjoy it. The privileges of the old Kings are now extended to many: however, now we know Schuld in enjoying them, and Marx speaks as our (bad) conscience, telling us how to make the guilt go away. We ignore him—we the capitalists, we the communists/socialists, we the moderns—and choose not to renounce our instinctual satisfactions, and suffer on in guilt, while those who are still compelled by necessity to work toil on in just resentment. The voice of the semi-conscious herd (those who still think, or at least make the attempt) bleats that we ignore Marx out of greed—or out of the commonsense that recognises innate human greed—but here one must remember the sage voice of Weber, who reminds us that the spirit of capitalism is asceticism: if greed is the spirit of anything then that is naked plunder, not rational, exponentially increasing profit maximisation! And look at our Occidental present in support of this. Those who do not sweat from their brow to bake their bread do not live in leisure on that account, but instead keep ‘working’ on increasing their wealth as if this were the only possible meaning of existence. And so, nobody enjoys the spoils (the world as a concatenation of ever more poorly made commodities),

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295 Sigmund Freud, ‘The Future of an Illusion’, in The Freud Reader, P. Gay (ed.), Vintage: UK, 1995. ‘If men are taught that there is no almighty and all-just God, no divine world-order and no future life, they will feel exempt from all obligation to obey the precepts of civilisation. Everyone will, without inhibition or fear, follow his asocial, egoistic instincts and seek to exercise his power …’ p. 707.

296 Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, T. Parsons (trans.), George Allen & Unwin Ltd: UK, 1796. ‘Unlimited greed for gain is not in the least identical with capitalism, and is still less its spirit. Capitalism may even be identical with the restraint, or at least a rational tempering, of this irrational impulse. But capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise.’ p. 17.
not the worker who produces and immediately loses the alien product, not the thief who appropriates it, to whom it is also alien, perhaps because none of his labour is crystallised in it, perhaps because he can think of nothing better to do with it than to make more money. But enough of this final diversion. Despite the soundness of the basic logic of the final paradigm, this thesis has made a different choice than Marx himself did (favouring the less rational goal of freedom as unity), yet in doing so, it has stayed true to him. One must after all remember his misquote of Dante: ‘Segui il tuo corso, e lascia dir le genti.’ Go on your way, and let the people talk.

297 Marx, Capital Volume I. p. 93.
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