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**THE ENIGMA OF THE INVERSION:
A STUDY IN THE DIALECTICS
OF HEGEL AND MARX.**

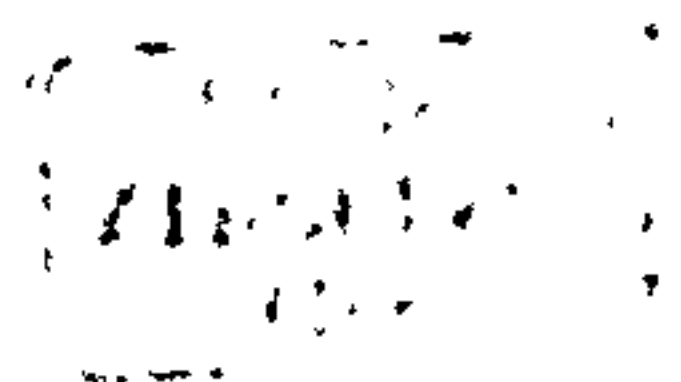
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Abstract:

The thesis is a contribution to the understanding of the relationship of the dialectical thought and method of G.W.F. Hegel and K. Marx. The aim of the thesis is to ascertain what the relation and the difference between the two contrary forms, of the idealist and the materialist dialectic, actually is. The thesis consequently attempts to make sense of Marx's view that his application of the dialectical method was not only different from, but also the "direct opposite" of his idealist predecessor. This theme, itself the source for the enigmatic nature of the inversion, is developed by ascertaining some of the core elements that lie behind and underpin Marx's own comment; that the rational kernel of Hegel's mystical form of dialectic could be discovered if it was "turned right side up again."

The thesis also explores the relationship between the early Marx's critique of Hegel, contained in the 1844 Paris Manuscripts, with the later Marx's comments on his view of the relation of his dialectic to Hegel's. As such, the thesis argues that there is both a continuity and a development in Marx's critical attitude to Hegel's dialectical thought.

The core elements of the rational kernel of Hegel's dialectic for Marx lies, as the thesis will argue, in the Hegelian account of the general form of working of the dialectic, and in Hegel's explication of the laws of dialectics. The thesis thus explores the intimate relation of these two interconnected themes from the point of view of Hegel's systematic idealism, and in Marx's materialist application of these rational elements to his critique of political economy.

This involves endeavouring to elucidate, both the nature of a dialectical account of contradiction, and the related explanation of nomological activity or law from a dialectical perspective. The thesis also attempts to explore the fundamental contrast of the materialist from the idealist elucidation of these core elements. The focus for the summation of this difference is discussed in the final chapter, by developing the materialist view of the fundamental contradiction contained in Hegel's idealist account, that of the open-ended nature of the dialectical method and Hegel's philosophical system.

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**THE ENIGMA OF THE INVERSION:
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**PART ONE:
THE CRITIQUE OF DIALECTICAL MYSTIFICATION.**

CHAPTER ONE.

THE DIALECTIC DE-MYSTIFIED.

1. Introduction: The Enigma Outlined.

*“Aphorism: It is impossible completely to understand Marx’s Capital, and especially the first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel’s Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!”*¹

The general aim of the present thesis is to contribute to an understanding of the intellectual relationship of Marx to Hegel; a relation that, as Lenin noted, had still to be fully understood in all of its complexity. Failure to adequately grasp this relation has, moreover, had deleterious theoretical consequences for the understanding of the nature of dialectics itself.

Marx, more than once, pointed out the need to “divest” or “strip away” the mystical veil that surrounds the rational element contained in Hegel’s philosophical thought. His suggested

method, by which that rational kernel could be discovered from within the idealist mystical shell, was by turning it right side up again.

This problem, which I call the enigma of the inversion, has though to be seriously and critically addressed if any real progress is to be made in deepening our understanding of what, precisely, is the nature of a dialectical method. If the relation of Hegel and Marx's dialectic is poorly appreciated, then consequently a fuller comprehension of the nature of dialectics is too.

That there are problematics involved in understanding the relation of Hegel to Marx is generally accepted by a wide spectrum of opinion. Yet this theoretical question still remains of fundamental importance, for if analysed correctly, it should take us to the heart of what a dialectical account is. Why though is it problematic?

Firstly, Marx himself never fully settled his accounts with Hegel in writing, though his intention to do so, as we shall see, was one that remained with him for a number of years. Secondly, an adequate explanation of what the specific nature of this inversion actually entails is also seen to face great difficulties in being gleaned from Marx's scanty comments on this issue. Marx's suggestion, or clue, has been viewed as not containing either sufficient explanatory power, or content, to afford a coherent strategy for developing a rational account of a dialectical methodology.

Indeed, many commentators hasten to point out the very problematical nature of Marx's suggestion that the dialectic should be "turned right side up again" in order to discover the rational kernel contained in Hegel's dialectical thought.

For example, in the work of L. Althusser, there is no rational kernel to be extracted from the mystical shell; the Hegelian kernel itself is infected with idealist and ideological mystifications. Turning it upside down does not extract any rational content from this

¹ V.I. Lenin. Collected Works. Progress Publishers (1972.) Volume 38. P.180.

process, as there is no fundamental relation between the process of inverting and the process of extracting. “How can an inversion be an extraction” as Althusser puts it?

In his account, there is no working concept behind Marx’s idea of inverting Hegel’s dialectic; the thought of it being turned right side up again being “merely gestural, even metaphorical”. That there is a working concept behind the inversion is, I believe, the case. That concept is the dialectic itself, what other concept could be informing Marx’s observations?²

This critical interpretation of Marx’s comments has also been viewed as being the case by those on the opposite end of the scale from Althusser; that is, by those more sympathetic to a Hegelian interpretation of Marx. Here, C. Arthur raises the following question that challenges Marx’s own clarity on this issue.

“The question of how Marx’s critique of political economy benefited, in its presentation at least, from his appropriation of Hegel’s logic. It is my belief that Marx himself was not clear about the answer to this question; the relatively sketchy and enigmatic remarks in his prefaces may be a sign of this. Although Marx acknowledged the influence of Hegel’s dialectic on his *Capital*, he failed to explain how an idealist logic could assist a materialist science. He left the impression that one could preserve a logic while inverting its ontological presuppositions. This introduces a dichotomy of form and content that is itself undialectical.”³

C. Arthur’s “belief” that Marx himself was not clear how his critique of political economy benefited from his appropriation of Hegel’s Logic seems to me a highly implausible solution

² Louis Althusser. *For Marx*. Penguin Press. (1969.). Althusser’s work is a semi-systematic attempt to rid Marx of any Hegelian influence. As a result, there has to be a widespread revision of the centrality of dialectical contradiction as a form of polarity that is contained in the work of Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, etc. In a nutshell, the classical approach to dialectics, defended in the present thesis, was thrown overboard to meet the requirements of what he regarded as uniting theory with practice. The question is though, which practice did Althusser wish to theoretically underpin?

or, more correctly, explanation to the problem. Similarly, that Marx “failed” to explain how an idealist logic could assist a materialist science is problematic, only if you posit the view that he left the “impression” that this entails that the idealist logical form is preserved while its ontological assumptions are inverted.

In my view, it is not just Marx’s “presentation” of his critique of political economy that is influenced by his appropriation of Hegelian logic. His employment of a dialectical method of treatment of the nature of the substance and form of value is the primary source of his critique of political economy. A method of treatment that is, moreover, the result of his own materialist appropriation and critique of Hegel’s dialectic.

The ontological inversion of Hegel by Marx does, and has to, alter Marx’s view of the Hegelian logical form. The de-mystification of the dialectic by Marx also applies to Hegel’s logical thought content; the critique of Hegel’s logic by Marx will also be exhibited as having a twofold form and content, being both rational and mystical in its nature.

Marx’s failure to fully settle his accounts with Hegel’s dialectic is more plausibly explained by lack of time and pressure of work, rather than lack of clarity in Marx’s thought process. All the evidence from Marx’s comments on this subject points in this direction. Marx expressed, on more than one occasion and spanning a number of years, his desire and intention to settle those accounts if circumstances permitted. Marx did not so much fail; it was more a question that he did not have the time to devote to it, hence the resultant esoteric nature of his comments.

That Marx’s methodological remarks are “relatively sketchy and enigmatic” is undoubtedly the case. However, it is not sufficient evidence to warrant the inference that Marx “himself” lacked clarity in understanding his relation to Hegel’s dialectic. That there are genuine problems inherent in Marx’s inversion of Hegel, and that those problems are fraught with

³ C. J. Arthur. Hegel’s Logic and Marx’s Capital. Contained in Marx’s Method in Capital. A Re-Examination. Edited by F. Moseley. Humanities Press. (1993.) P. 63- 64.

theoretical and intellectual difficulties for a coherent understanding, does not negate the need for both clarity and explanation.

The necessity to do so remains an important and fundamental question that has far reaching theoretical and practical consequences. It is not a luxury of theory, it has never been so; it is, on the contrary, a theoretical imperative. Any argument, from whatever quarter, that points in the direction of closing the door on any possible fruitful outcome of investigation should therefore be rejected.

C. Arthur, unlike Althusser, does offer a positive and partial resolution to the problem of the enigmatic relation of Hegel and Marx's dialectic in the following form. That the relation of Hegel's logic to value theory centres on Hegel's concept of a systematic totality, a systematic totality that Marx employs in his critique of capital. That the Hegelian view of this is an important and central influence on Marx's account of capital as a systematic whole is, in my view, undoubtedly correct.⁴

The question still remains though, in what way does Hegel's account of this systematic totality relate to the wider point of Marx, that of inverting the mystical form of Hegel's dialectic in order to extract the rational kernel? Moreover, how does that, in turn, relate to the question of the apparent undialectical dichotomy of an idealist logical form and a materialist ontological content? Alternatively posed, in what way does the materialist critique of Marx impact on Hegel's account of a logical system itself?

What is central to a fuller answer to this question is Marx's critique, and application of Hegel's account of the laws of motion of dialectical contradiction, the motor force of the development that coheres both Hegel's and Marx's view of a systematic totality. This

⁴ The work of both C. Arthur and T. Smith in this very area, that of the relation between Hegel's logical system and Marx's critique of capital, must be given due credit. Whilst their work is not the last word on the subject, they have both made valuable contributions to our understanding of many of the issues that result from this fundamental relationship. C. J. Arthur. (op. cited.) T. Smith. *The Logic of Marx's Capital*. S.U.N.Y. Press. (1990.)

primary and essential problematic of dialectics, its account of systematic nomological activity, in both or either of its idealist and materialist forms and content, as well as their relationship, has, so far, not been fully, and hence successfully extracted by commentators on the relation of Hegel and Marx's dialectic.

The central question that continues to beset the development of a clear and lucid account of scientific dialectics, and which has therefore been a theoretical problem of human thought that is getting on now for nearly a hundred and fifty years, is the following one. How does one go about successfully divesting or stripping away the mystical form in which Hegel had enveloped the dialectic? Lack of clarity on this central question of the evolution of dialectical method and thought entails the continuation of the enigmatic nature of the dialectical relation and difference of Hegel and Marx.

Consequently, the nature of dialectics itself as a rational and scientific method, remains, like Hegel's own idealist variation, still largely shrouded in mystery. The key here to untangling this dilemma, is to view Hegel and Marx's relation as itself a dialectical one, as the expression of the movement of a contradiction. This is to formulate the relational problem within the classical Hegelian sense of *aufheben*, where the question becomes not only what is cancelled, but also what is preserved or retained in the process of supersession.

Indeed, the solution to the enigma of the inversion hinges, by and large, on developing the analysis and argument along this very conceptual framework of development. This is the essence of the dynamic contained in Marx's supersession of Hegel's thought. The difficulty of the analysis is to work your way through the logic of the relations contained in this process of supersession.

The aim of the thesis is to provide a contribution to what the possible foundations and beginnings of an answer to this problematic of the nature of the inversion of Hegel, contained within Marx's dialectic, actually is. Given that none other than Marx himself

bequeathed this theoretical quandary to us, it cannot be ignored, wished away, or treated as either a non-question or, for that matter, an unanswerable one.

The inversion that Marx suggests applies, in my view, not only to the idealist foundations but also the idealist subject matter of Hegel; a materialist method requires a materialist subject matter as its presupposition. It is necessary to invert not only the ontological presupposition of Hegelian logic, but also its idealist ontological form and content; as the alienated expression of “pure thought” in the guise of a mystical supersensible subject, the absolute.

This was, in my view, the route and journey that was taken by Marx. All the evidence, which will be cited in the present argument, points in this direction. Moreover, this entails that Marx had already traversed his own suggested path of turning Hegel’s idealist method and dialectic upside down. That journey, from the early criticism of Hegel’s speculative dialectic to the later criticism of capital, is a long road. At the same time it is also an interconnected journey that spans the intellectual movement of a single subject, namely Marx himself.

For a full and comprehensive understanding of Marx’s dialectical method can only be generated by working through both his early materialist criticisms of Hegel’s mystical form of dialectic, and his own later critical application to political economy of the materialised form of dialectic. The question is what rational elements of Hegelian dialectics are retained in this process, given that Marx’s characterisation of Hegel’s dialectic itself takes a twofold expression, as itself having both a mystical and a rational form and content?

By understanding the nature of the tensions and contradictions in the relationship between Hegel’s idealist form of dialectic and the dialectic in the real world, in real nature and in real society, is the key to understanding how the inversion of Hegel was initially developed by Marx himself. When this earlier critique of Marx is, as it should be, combined with Marx’s

later application of the dialectic to political economy, then the fuller content of the rational form of dialectics itself can begin to emerge.

At the same time, what still remains of rational use and value in Hegel's method should then be more able to be definitively extracted. This orientation would also avoid or circumvent the "impression" of an undialectical dichotomy of an idealist logical form and a materialist content that Arthur alludes to in Marx.

2. Rational Kernel and Mystical Shell.

The starting point of the present study will aim to show, through analysing Marx's own correspondence and writings, that contrary to some widespread misconceptions, Marx did in fact have a consistent thread to his view of Hegel that spanned his early, mature, and later years. Despite the changes in tone, emphasis, and subject matter of Marx's criticisms and, for that matter, the changes of emphasis and weight of his overall appraisal of Hegel's philosophy, there still remains, in my view, a thread of continuity in his assessment.

The guiding thread of this continuity in Marx's thought is contained in his assessment that there was a fundamentally contradictory element and dynamic contained in Hegel's own account of dialectic. Its twofold form and nature was, paradoxically, both mystical and rational. Firstly, what evidence is there in Marx that would lend aid and support to this viewpoint?

Secondly, what other reflections are there on Hegel, that Marx makes over the years, that could give some more clues and insights into, not only Marx's critical assessment of Hegel, but also what still remains in his thought that could be considered of rational scientific use? Let us investigate the second question first, before seeing what evidence there might be for the idea of a thread of continuity in Marx's critical assessment of Hegel.

Despite their sketchy nature, the methodological remarks in the afterwords and prefaces written by Marx, supplemented by some letters of correspondence, can, in my view, yield some interesting and fruitful lines of investigation. The only available empirical data for analysing the relation of Hegel to Marx are the above, and the primary texts of Hegel and Marx. We have no other substantial material at our disposal to work with. It therefore requires thoroughgoing analysis to see what they can yield. This is the strategy adopted in the present work.⁵

The correspondence cited here dates from the period when Marx was compiling his Grundrisse notebooks to a few years after the publication of Capital volume 1. Roughly, the years from 1857 to 1873. The correspondence analysed here broadly highlight areas why Marx may have, not only benefited as he put it “by mere accident” from re-acquainting himself with Hegel’s Logic, but also why he thought it necessary to endeavour to ascertain the rational core of Hegel’s work.

The following letter to Engels is dated 16th Jan. 1858, when Marx was busily working on the Grundrisse.

“I am, by the way, discovering some nice arguments. E.G. I have completely demolished the theory of profit as hitherto propounded. What was of great use to me as regards *method of treatment* was Hegel’s Logic at which I had another look BY MERE ACCIDENT. . . . If ever the time comes when such work is again possible, I should very much like to write two or three sheets making accessible to the common reader the *rational* aspect of the method which Hegel not only discovered but also mystified.”⁶

⁵ This is not entirely true, we also have the work of F. Engels, which, despite whatever misgivings some people may have, are a highly valuable resource on both dialectics and Marx’s thought. I am, here, also making a distinction between what I would call the primary material of Hegel and Marx that is the necessary core of the research, from the secondary material and literature on the subject.

⁶ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 40. Lawrence and Wishart. (1983.) P.249.

Four months later in a letter to Lassalle dated 31st May 1858, Marx writes on a similar theme:

“This dialectic is, to be sure, the ultimate word in philosophy and hence there is all the more need to divest it of the mystical aura given it by Hegel.”⁷

Some ten years later, in a letter to J. Dietzgen dated 9th May 1868 he writes:

“When I have cast off the burden of political economy, I shall write a ‘Dialectic’. The true laws of dialectics are already contained in Hegel, though in a mystical form. What is needed is to strip away this form.”⁸

Finally, for the present, the above remarks should be combined with the following (in)famous passage from the Afterword to the second German edition of Capital, which was written five years later in 1873:

“The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel’s hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel in the mystical shell.”⁹

We can now pose another question for the present investigation. How do these remarks in the Afterword relate to the other comments of Marx that are cited here, and which are spread over a period of some fifteen years? What results from analysing the above comments of Marx, in my view, are the following points.

Firstly, due to the significance of Hegel’s dialectical method, Marx put settling his accounts with Hegel second only in importance to his work on political economy; at least as far as his

⁷ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 40. Lawrence and Wishart. (1983.) P.316.

⁸ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart. (1988.) P.31.

theoretical and methodological output was concerned. Marx, unfortunately, never gained the time to fully “cast off the burden of political economy” in order to write his dialectic.

Secondly, and most importantly for the present investigation, is that according to Marx, already contained within Hegel’s work and thought is the “rational aspect” of the method that Hegel, not only “discovered” in dialectics, but at the same time formulated and interpreted in a mystical form. This rational aspect of the dialectical method is the core of what still remains of lasting value in it; what are we though, to make of this discovery of Hegel’s that Marx attributes to him?

To discover something is to unearth and to bring into view or ascertain, a truth that was already in existence, but hidden from perception and/or cognition. In the case of Hegel’s dialectic, the discovery itself has to be critically analysed, in order to divest and strip away its mystical aura, and reveal the rational kernel in the mystical shell. The inversion of Hegel itself being described as a method of discovery by Marx, and the product or result of this activity, what is to be discovered, or more accurately re-discovered, is the rational kernel contained within Hegelian dialectics.

In my analysis the usage here by Marx of “rational kernel” is a reference back to the previous point in the 1873 Afterword; namely that of Hegel being the first to present, in a comprehensive and conscious manner, the general form of working of the dialectic. The point being made by Marx, and this is largely missed, is that it is the *general form* of working of dialectic that is *standing on its head*. It is then, according to my analysis, the general form of working of dialectic that Hegel not only discovered, but also mystified.

The *rational kernel* to be discovered by inverting Hegel is then this *general form* of working of the dialectic. This is the core of the rational aspect of Hegel’s dialectical method for Marx. This still leaves open, of course, what the nature of this general form of working of

⁹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.29.

the dialectic could be, and, moreover, what employment Marx utilises of it in his analysis of political economy.

In turn, and given the intimacy of their relation, the question also becomes in what way is this rational, general form of working of the dialectic, linked and related to the comments in the correspondence that the “true laws of dialectics are already contained in Hegel”? In both cases, as Marx’s writings and correspondence tells us, these rational core aspects of Hegel’s dialectic are enveloped in a mystical form that needs to be stripped of this same form. It is by inverting that mystical form, that we can, at the same time, divest or strip away that idealist veil.

To answer the question of their relation more directly, then it would appear that they are a reference to the same thing, or to be more precise, the same process. For the laws of dialectics cannot, in my view, be logically separated off from its general form of working. In turn, the general form itself has to be the basic and primary ontological categories and laws governing both being and thought, as well as the relationship of being and thought.

These are the rational aspects gleaned from Marx’s own correspondence and writings, which I will argue, remain of Hegel’s dialectic. The related question that arises from this is what rational form do these elements take in its inverted materialised form of Marx’s dialectic? These are the central themes and topics of the thesis as a whole.

It is by attempting to make some headway in this task that we can begin to more fully answer C. Arthur’s pertinent question of how an idealist logic can assist a materialist science. The ascertaining of the nature of the laws of dialectics, and its general form of working, being key elements, I would argue, in answering that very question.

The general form of working and the laws of dialectics find their meeting point, in my view, in the analysis of a dialectical account of systematic nomological behaviour. Hegel predicates this systematic nomological activity within an idealist foundation and framework

that sublates the object as the product of a mystical subject; through analysing the generic ontological concepts, categories, and predications contained in substance, as the idealist movement of the categories that generate real, material, and objective substantial activity.

These laws and their general form of expression are the foundational principles and primary ontological categories that are involved in the analysis of the nature of the necessary activity of a systematic and substantial subject. They are the core principles and categories for understanding the nomological basis for the phenomenal form of appearance of that substantial subject. What though is the dynamic motor source of this nomological motion of the idealist categories and concepts inherent within manifested substantial being?

The principle of change and alteration inherent to a dialectical account of nomological activity is based on an architectonic of posited and resolved contradiction; this process of the systematic movement of a substantial contradiction is the core dynamic behind the general form of working and the laws of dialectics. As such, it is an essential feature of dialectics in both its mystical and rational forms; this is their commonality of source and meeting point.¹⁰

What my analysis in the thesis will aim to show is the interrelation between these three aspects of Hegel's idealist account of dialectic. The nature of the general form of working of dialectic, its laws of motion, and their essential correlation and expression in the dynamic principle of change and alteration contained in the systematic movement of the ontological categories and predications of a substantial subject.

Dialectics is about the movement and development of the contradiction of an interconnected whole, expressed by Engels, as the "science of universal interconnection." Its aim is to demonstrate the necessary nexus or inner connection that is the mediation between the polar extremes that contain the parameters of the process of movement and change of a substantial

subject. Marx and Hegel's distinction between the essence of the substantial activity expressed in that inner connection, and its phenomenal form of appearance lies precisely in this area.

The question, and inherent difficulty in any attempt to understand what exactly is entailed by inverting Hegel, is to separate out and not conflate, the rational and mystical sides of his dialectical method from Marx's materialist perspective. The other central question and problem generated by this activity is to ascertain what is left of this Hegelian method, stripped of its idealism, that continues to remain rational?

In order to retrieve that rational element of the Hegelian method it had to be not only critically examined, but also at the same time put on a material foundation and basis. Marx himself had to go through this very process when de-mystifying the Hegelian dialectic. Marx's foundation for the dialectic lies in the material changes and motions in nature not spirit. In particular, the major emphasis of Marx is on the human expression of its relationship with nature, namely labour. Labour, moreover, that is in an oppressed, exploited, and alienated condition.

This process finds, as we shall shortly investigate, its first concrete expression in the Paris Manuscripts of 1844. This inversion of dialectical subject was necessary, for both Marx's own theoretical self-clarification, and for developing the grounds for a materialist form of dialectical method to begin to emerge in his work.

The inversion of Hegel and the application of the dialectical method to political economy are intrinsically bound together. Even if for no other reason than the simple one that a materialist ontological presupposition and foundation needs and requires a materialist ontological subject matter and content for dialectical investigation. It is then, a fundamental component of the materialist inversion of Hegel's dialectic by Marx.

¹⁰ This commonality of the systematic movement of a contradiction should also not blind us to the differences that pertain to an idealist and materialist analysis of the ontological nature of both contradiction

The scientific importance and contribution of Hegel's dialectic is not what Marx is calling into question. Marx is, in fact, stating the opposite in quite unambiguous terms; though what the rational content of the idealist form of dialectic that remains of scientific value does remain ambiguous, and hence needs to be theoretically clarified.

What is puzzling is Marx's suggestion of inverting it. It is a mistake however to infer from this position that though turning it right side up again, in order to discover the rational kernel is itself posed by Marx in a form that is problematical and enigmatic, then the importance of Hegel's dialectical method for Marx is so also. The conclusion does not flow from the premise.

Nor does it flow from any of the available evidence in Marx. What is unclear and problematic is only our understanding of the relation of Marx to Hegel and, even more importantly as it is the crucial result of this relation, the nature of a rational form of dialectics itself.

One can be critical of the means suggested by Marx, but what is relatively clear is the end aim of the activity, to extract the rational kernel from the mystical shell. It would appear then, from all the available evidence, that Marx would have rejected Althusser's assertion that the kernel itself is infected with mysticism and ideology; that it is in fact rotten to its idealist core and fit only for the dustbin of history.

It is no accident that Marx kept on returning to this common theme of his relation to Hegel; as we shall see, it is a theme that generated its own variations over a number of years. When this commonality of theme is combined with both his felt desire to, and the theoretical need for, clarifying what was still rational in Hegel, then this would seem to indicate that Marx did have a relatively clear conception of his own relation to Hegel's dialectic.

and system.

3. In Defence of the “Dead Dog”.

The viewpoint that attempts to deny or neuter the influence of Hegel on Marx, for example, the Althusserian position that the mature Marx’s thought owes virtually next to nothing to Hegel’s dialectical method, is, for its adherents, unfortunately contradicted by the mature Marx himself.

We have already seen some evidence for this position, but there is still more contained in the mature Marx’s writings, to confirm that, if anything was the case, Marx had reassessed his relation to Hegel more positively than in his younger days. Here is some more of the oft-quoted view of the 1873 Afterword.

“The mystifying side of Hegelian dialectic I criticised nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still the fashion. But just as I was working at the first volume of “Das Kapital”, it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre Epigones who now talk large in cultured Germany, to treat Hegel in the same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing’s time treated Spinoza, i.e. as a “dead dog”. I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and even here and there, in the chapter on value, coquetted with the modes of expression peculiar to him.”¹¹

Marx is here referring to a trip he made to Germany in April and May of 1867, to oversee the publication of the first edition of Capital. The analogy he uses with Spinoza’s treatment is not an isolated one. There is a further reference to this dismissive treatment of Hegel contained in a letter to Kugelmann dated 27th June 1870.

“And what this Lange has to say about the Hegelian method and my application of the same is simply childish. First, he understands *rien* about Hegel’s method and, therefore, second, still less about my critical manner of applying it. In one respect he

reminds me of Moses Mendelssohn. That prototype of a windbag once wrote to Lessing asking how he could possibly take that “dead dog Spinoza” seriously! In the same way, Mr. Lange expresses surprise that Engels, I, etc. take seriously the dead dog Hegel, after Buchner, Lange, Dr. Doring, Fechner, etc., had long agreed that they - poor dear - had long since buried him. Lange is naive enough to say that I “move with rare freedom” in empirical matter. He has not the slightest idea that this “free movement in matter” is nothing but a paraphrase for the *method* of dealing with matter - that is, the *dialectical method*.”¹²

What is of interest here is not only that Marx takes the dead dog Hegel seriously, but that entailed in doing this is both his critical adoption and his critical manner of applying Hegel’s dialectical method. Marx also appears to be suggesting here that one has to have some real knowledge of Hegel’s dialectical method before an understanding of his own critical application of it can be fully grasped. This could also be interpreted as a point that apparently confirms Lenin’s famous aphorism cited earlier, on the relation of Hegel’s Logic to Marx’s Capital.

It is precisely due to Hegel’s discovery of the comprehensive operation of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics that Marx ranks Hegel’s thought as being the “ultimate word” in philosophy. It is by attempting to analyse and understand how that general form and the laws of dialectics operate in Hegel and Marx’s work, that we can build up a clearer picture of their relation, and begin to further ascertain the rational kernel in the Hegelian mystical shell.

Going in reverse chronological order, there is yet a third reference by Marx, on Hegel and his dialectic being treated as a “dead dog”. In a letter to Engels, written on the 11th Jan. 1868 he also states the following:

¹¹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.29.

¹² Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart. (1988.) P.528.

“The gentlemen in Germany (with the exception of theological reactionaries) believe Hegel’s dialectic to be a “dead dog”. Feuerbach has much on his conscience in this respect.”¹³

From the above letter it is clear that not only is Marx prepared to defend Hegel, with only the dubious company of “theological reactionaries”, he seemingly blames Feuerbach for being a central contributor to this sorry state of affairs.

A position that is apparently radically different from his early writings. In particular, and as we shall shortly see, one can cite evidence from the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (E.P.M. or Paris Manuscripts or Manuscripts) for proof of this.

In that work, Feuerbach was viewed as providing the materialist critique of Hegel’s idealist dialectic of systematic thought. He is heralded as the person who “has in principle overthrown the old dialectic and philosophy” and is “in fact the true conqueror of the old philosophy”.

Why then, a quarter of a century later, is Marx going out of his road to defend Hegel from what he regards as unjustified and philistine attacks and, at the same time, implicating Feuerbach as a pivotal source behind this sorry state of affairs?

The question generated by this apparent paradox of young versus old is the following one, why is there an ostensible and radical about turn in Marx’s view of Hegel? This volte-face of Marx, however, also appears to raise some problems for the proposition I posed earlier. That of the idea, defended in the present thesis, that there is, at the same time, a thread of continuity from the early to the late Marx in his characterisation of the twofold rational and mystical elements contained in Hegel’s dialectic method?

¹³ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 42. Lawrence and Wishart. (1987.) P.520.

What Marx's object of criticism of Hegel was directed towards all those years ago, as he tells us in the 1873 Afterword, was the "mystifying side" of the Hegelian dialectic. The implication of this being that there is another side to Hegel's thought, a rational side. It is, of course, precisely because of this rational element contained in Hegel's dialectic that he cannot simply be written off as a "dead dog" for Marx.

However, this twofold nature of Marx's analysis does not appear to be driving his earlier 1844 explication and analysis of Hegel's philosophy; this takes the form of a critique that is dominated by the impact of Feuerbach's demolition of speculative idealism.

The question is, does the appearance of the earlier critique contradict the essence of the later criticism here, or does the appearance also belie some other form of movement, closer to the later twofold rational and mystical analysis and characterisation of Hegel by Marx?

4. Marx's Apparent Volte-Face.

This conspicuously apparent volte-face in Marx's view of Hegel, here expressed through a radical change in his attitude to Feuerbach has, like the enigma of the inversion, never been adequately or fully explained. The two questions being merely different facets of the same problem.

The question is, how do we understand and interpret the dynamics of Marx's own intellectual development in order to explain these two viewpoints, expressed nearly thirty years apart, and which if viewed solely on the surface or factually reductive level, are apparently in contradiction with each other? Let us start the analysis with his earlier viewpoint, expressed in the Paris Manuscripts, one that is still clearly reverberating under the bombastic impact of Feuerbach's explosion of Hegel's systematic idealism.

In the E.P.M., Feuerbach's "great achievement" for Marx was contained in the following gains that he contributed to the critical development of thought. Firstly, he proved that

philosophy is an estranged and alienated condition that is nothing else but religion rendered into thought and is the divine expounded by thought. In other words, Feuerbach exposes philosophical thought in its apposite condition, as an alienated and estranged expression of the essence of man.

Secondly, by making the social relation of “man to man” the basic principle of the theory, he establishes “*true materialism*” and “*real science*” for Marx. Finally, Feuerbach’s “opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the self-supporting positive, positively based on itself.”¹⁴

Feuerbach, according to Marx, highlights Hegel’s failure to resolve the alienation inherent in his idealist dialectic; furthermore, he also shows that Hegel ultimately affirms that alienation after having rejected it. Philosophy itself, at least in this its idealist form is shown to be riddled with theological thought and presuppositions.

Consequently, and this is no small or mean achievement, it was by showing that alienation is inherently expressed and manifested, in an alienated way in the idealist view, that gives value to Feuerbach’s critique of Hegel’s philosophical negating and then reaffirming of religion. Hegel’s philosophical system is shown to be the product of an alienated philosophical mind that affirms theology after having negated it.

By doing so, Feuerbach had laid bare the material, natural, and social basis for religious thought and belief as an expression and product of alienated humanity itself. By inverting the ontological foundation of that speculative system, he was thus able to show the resultant descent of spirit from the heavens, to its more mundane origin in the human condition; whose alienated conditions of existence are seen as ultimately residing in nature and society, its true, objective and material foundations.

¹⁴ Marx Engels. *Collected Works*. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.328.

Here, idealist thought finds its inverted and naturalised rooting of the prime relation and subject matter of investigation to that of the relation of man to man, which itself is reflected in the relation of the individual to civil society. The importance of the Feuerbachian critique lies in the inversion of the foundations of absolute idealism, and in the replacement of those idealist foundations in real, natural, material and social relations, their true source.

By doing so the speculative system of Hegel is blown apart and philosophy, rescued from the realms of the absolute, is now given a fundamentally natural, anthropological, and psychological foundation for the analysis of the human condition. However, Feuerbach's immediate impact on Marx, and his intellectual development, was, despite the earth-shattering nature and extent of it at this point, still relatively transitory and short-lived. How are we to explain this?

Furthermore, is there any indication, within the E.P.M., that Marx already appears, at least in any embryonic form, to be in the process of distancing himself from, or at the very least qualifying, his positive view of Feuerbach's outstanding achievements? If so, where does this difference or qualification begin to emerge? The question is can a critical analysis of the Manuscripts reveal the sources for those soon to be emerging differences?¹⁵

The primary reason for this fundamentally important but transitory impact of Feuerbach's naturalism and materialism on Marx, in my view, was that Marx had a grasp of dialectics that was ultimately superior in knowledge and scale to Feuerbach's. Marx does not follow Feuerbach's rejection of Hegel's speculative dialectic as a rejection of the application of dialectics per se. This difference, as we shall see, is already evident in Marx's own critique of Hegel's speculative form of dialectic in the 1844 text.

¹⁵ Feuerbach's work was both a revelation and a liberation from the shackles of idealism. Hegel's system was at last exploded and cast aside. "Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much - in spite of all critical reservations - he was influenced by it, one may read in *The Holy Family*." F. Engels. Marx-Engels. Selected Works. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.333. As Engels then goes on to point out, to discard a system does not mean that that system has been disposed of by the mere assertion that it is either false, or by it being ignored. This important theoretical omission is one of the central limitations of Feuerbach's critique of Hegel.

5. Marx's Strategy.

“The time was ripe for a critical settling of accounts with the mother of Young Hegelianism – the Hegelian dialectic.”¹⁶

Marx himself expresses the overall need of the philosophical criticism, contained in the Manuscripts, in the above manner. What Marx intends to do in order to settle those accounts, as he also tells us in his prefatory remarks of the analysis, is to engage in “a critical discussion of *Hegelian dialectic* and philosophy as a whole”. This critical form of analysis he considers not only “to be absolutely necessary”, but more importantly for the present line of investigation, he also regards it as “a task not yet performed.”¹⁷

This necessary critical settling of accounts is still posited though, within the parameters and gains of Feuerbach's own “theoretical revolution”; the only genuine advance in philosophy since Hegel according to Marx. However, what the above also tells us is that Marx saw the need for Hegel's philosophy to be criticised in a more generalised fashion, as a systematic whole; secondly, that the humanistic and naturalistic criticism by Feuerbach of Hegel still required further proof. As Marx himself expresses it:

“How far, on the other hand, *Feuerbach's* discoveries about the nature of philosophy still, for their *proof* at least, called for a critical discussion of philosophical dialectic will be seen from my exposition itself.”¹⁸

The question raised here is what is the relation between these twin tasks, that of the generalised critique of Hegel's dialectic and philosophy as a whole, and Marx's attempt to provide the proof of Feuerbach's discoveries through this critical vehicle? Feuerbach's .

¹⁶ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.328.

¹⁷ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.232.

¹⁸ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.234.

critique then, though philosophically liberating, still lacked a sufficient generalised form of proof for Marx.

This lacuna is not, however, posed in the form of a criticism of Feuerbach; indeed, Marx himself sought to furnish the necessary proof that would confirm the Feuerbachian account. The intriguing question that this generates is what impact did the attempted providing of this proof have on the intellectual development of Marx himself? Indeed, what form and content does this proof take in order to underpin the naturalised and materialised foundation for the criticism of idealist and speculative thought?

Marx aims to outline and highlight, in the course of his general analysis and exposition, the difference between what could be described as the abstract idealist and critical materialist form of dialectic. He expresses this inverse dialectical relation in the form of a contradiction that is latent within the idealist view; a contradiction that is brought out in this its critical-materialist form.

This inverse relation of the contradiction between the abstract philosophical and the critical materialist form of dialectic is characterised in the Paris Manuscripts by Marx in the following terms, as “the *critical* form of this in Hegel still uncritical process.”¹⁹

Marx, through this formulation, not only wishes then, to confirm and provide the proof of the Feuerbachian critique, via this approach, he also aims to generalise the criticism of Hegel in this form. The interpretation and logical development of this self-characterisation of his overall strategy, if adequately unpacked, is the key to a more comprehensive understanding of both Marx’s own positive account of the dialectic in the Paris Manuscripts, and his own intellectual development.

How are we to interpret this overall approach to the problem and Marx’s own self-characterisation of it as “the *critical* form of this in Hegel uncritical process”? What is also

important to ascertain is if this critical form of Marx's analysis of Hegel, contained in the Manuscripts, relates to the more general question of the thesis, what the nature of the materialist inversion of Hegel's dialectic entails.

If this indeed turns out to be the case, and there is a relationship between the earlier and later forms of Marx's criticism, then in what manner can it aid our understanding of Marx's own intellectual development, and his later correlated strategy of inverting Hegel's dialectic? What does Marx mean and intend by posing the problem in this form? Furthermore, is this formulation merely an earlier variation on the later theme, of there being a rational kernel contained within the mystical shell of Hegel's dialectic? If so, then what would the nature of that connection be?

Does this "*critical* form of an uncritical process" foreshadow later writings on the subject; do they represent the first formulations of a common theme that straddles Marx's later pronouncements on his relation to Hegel's dialectic? Is this proposition then merely an earlier variation of how the dialectic in Hegel glorifies and mystifies existing states of affairs, whilst the dialectic is, in its essence, critical and revolutionary?

If this is indeed the case it may also be the key then to ascertaining the bedrock that forms the continuity of the dialectic on which the development of the mature Marx's thought is based. If so, then an important, not to say foundational, link will have been made with regards to the question of the relation of the early to the later Marx. Is there then such a link in these Paris writings that would indicate real continuity in the critical development of both his later dialectical thought, and in his critique of Hegel's idealist and speculative variation of the dialectic?

To pose the question more starkly, is Marx, here in the Manuscripts, stating that the critique of Hegel that he attempts will also bring out important elements of the critical and rational form of dialectic that is contained within Hegel, but posed by him in an uncritical and

¹⁹ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.329.

mystical fashion? Is this the same process as turning Hegel right side up again in order to discover the rational kernel that is contained within the mystical shell? Is there any further evidence, contained in the Paris writings, which would allow this interpretation to be legitimated as a valid proposition?

It is now time to analyse this criticism of Marx, contained in the 1844 Manuscripts, of Hegel's account of the negation of the negation as a fundamental principle involved in dialectics, in order to see what it can reveal for the present discussion and subject matter of investigation.

CHAPTER TWO.

THE DIALECTIC OF NEGATIVITY.

“All social life is essentially *practical*. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.” K. Marx. Thesis 8 ‘On Feuerbach’.²⁰

1. The Dialectic of Negativity.

Marx’s analysis of Hegel in this early work is, in my analysis, like his later pronouncements on the subject of Hegel’s dialectic, twofold and contradictory. His dialectical critique is, however, undoubtedly and asymmetrically weighted in the E.P.M. to exposing the mystical idealism and foundation of Hegel’s thought. That the emphasis in the work is primarily directed against the mystical and alienated form that Hegel’s dialectic takes, is not unsurprising; as it is a critical settling of accounts with Hegelianism and the Hegelian dialectic that is Marx’s aim in that work.

What Marx attempts to ascertain, through his analysis, is a generalised form of criticism of Hegel’s dialectical thought; this is achieved via the development of a critical form that converges on Hegel’s analysis of a central principle and law of the general form of working of the dialectic. As such, Marx’s critical analysis of this dialectic of negativity focuses on the discussion of the role that negation of the negation plays in Hegel. This discussion being central for Marx to achieve his desired aim, that of a “critical settling of accounts” with the Hegelian dialectic.

²⁰ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 5. Lawrence and Wishart. (1976.) P.5.

Nevertheless, the criticism also contains within it some positive affirmations of certain aspects of Hegel's dialectical method. Whilst the emphasis, necessarily at this time and stage of Marx's own intellectual development, is on the critique of the mystical form of Hegel's dialectic, there are also some allusions, as we shall shortly see, to the rational and positive form that is inherently contained in the Hegelian dialectic.

This generalised critique, as we shall see, not only "at least" provides the proof of Feuerbach's discoveries; it will also point beyond them, through the positing of the real and concrete material source and content that is lurking behind Hegel's form of mystical dialectic. What Marx actually does then, in my analysis, is to not only provide the necessary proof of Feuerbach's discoveries, but by doing so he is also in the process of going well beyond Feuerbach's parameters and viewpoint.

What will also be argued for then is that Marx, not only criticises Hegel's mystical idealism, but at the same time he also highlights some fundamentally important elements of dialectical reasoning and analysis contained in Hegel, that are both retained, and critically applied by Marx to a new subject matter. There is, even within this early work, an expression of both the twofold rational and mystical sides of the operation of Hegel's dialectic that are exposed and expressed in Marx's generalised form of critique.

At the same time, Marx is also developing his own materialist foundation for the dialectic to be applied in a critical manner, and to a materialist subject matter. In the 1844 Manuscripts, Marx is already then, inverting the dialectic from Hegel's philosophical head and standing it on terra firma. His criticism remains, despite the open and welcoming embracement of Feuerbach's gains, one that still remains rooted in a dialectical foundation.

This distinction itself separates off Marx from Feuerbach; this differentiation, whilst not expressed as either a conscious criticism or difference with Feuerbach, is already in operation within the Manuscripts. That these differences are either latent within the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, or largely remain below the surface level as

unresolved tensions and antinomies, does not mean that there is no tentative expression of them.

Marx's glowing advocacy for Feuerbach will, in my analysis, ultimately prove to be unsure of its footing; this being due to the inherent dynamics of the dialectics that are involved in the positive and negative aspects of Hegel's thought that are both outlined, and critically analysed by Marx.

That Marx wholeheartedly accepts the core of Feuerbach's critique is not the issue, he clearly does. The problem is in explaining how that Feuerbachian critique is interpreted by Marx in conjunction with, for example, his apparent retention of what he considers to be the core rational element that remains of the Hegelian dialectic of negativity.²¹

The further question generated by this is the following one, are these rational elements the source of the critical form of dialectic that is contained, within this Hegelian mystical guise, as an uncritical process? If so, what is their positive nature? The dialectical nature of the critique, contained in this process is already embryonically reflected and contained, as the analysis will attempt to show, within Marx's discussion of Hegel's dialectic of negativity and negation of the negation in the Manuscripts.

In order to answer the above questions more fully then the following strategy has to be employed; it is necessary to separate out Marx's twofold analysis of the abstract idealist and the critical materialist form of dialectic contained in his criticism. At the same time both have to be related and integrated into the investigation of the core elements of his argument.

²¹ Whilst Feuerbach signals a huge leap forward for critical thought, his naturalism and materialism is not dialectical and active, but contemplative and passive. The critical explosion of Hegel's idealist foundation for thought, contained in Feuerbach's theoretical advance, and its replacement with a material and natural foundation as the source for a naturalised ontology and epistemology is, however, not the same thing as an inverted material, natural, and social form of dialectic. This difference in the philosophical basis for Marx's critique, though not yet consciously expressed here by Marx, will shortly manifest itself in the theses on Feuerbach.

Otherwise, it would be impossible to expound what Marx characterises as “the *critical* form of this in Hegel, uncritical process.”

This dialectical form and exposition of the critique is necessary, in order to show how Marx reveals both the mystical and rational elements contained in Hegel’s method. The dialectical character of the critique should also exhibit how Marx’s own critical form of dialectic is, paradoxically, both contained in, and the inverse of, the abstract idealist form; this can only be achieved by demonstrating how it emerges out of his general criticism of Hegel’s idealist dialectic.

Failure to do so would raise serious doubts as to the validity of trying to make sense of Marx’s suggestion, here contained in its earliest form of expression, of the need to invert the Hegelian form of dialectic. This primary dialectical principle of change and alteration contained in the law of the negation of the negation should, therefore, logically take both a critical and uncritical form in Marx’s exposition, if the above interpretation contains any efficacy.

As we shall see, this dialectical principle and law of motion does take a contradictory form in Marx’s analysis of Hegel’s exposition. It contains both genuine and important theoretical insight, and an alienated and mystified form of expression that is grounded in an absolute form of idealist ontology. Herein lies the real difficulty for the analysis of the rational form contained in Hegel; it lies in unearthing this critical form, which in Hegel is still left at the level of an uncritical process; a process that is subsumed and blunted by his idealism.

This twofold character of Marx’s analysis of this fundamental principle of the negation of the negation, as a principle that pertains to all forms of being, is now, due to its centrality for explaining and resolving the above problem, now posited as the subject matter for our investigation.

2. Negation of the Negation.

First of all for the investigation, just what role does the negation of the negation play in Hegel's philosophical analysis? In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, for example, it takes the following form for Marx. The negation of the negation is the process of the coming to be of self-consciousness and self-affirmation through the supersession of its own form of alienation and estrangement; a form that is itself expressed in the relation of consciousness to objectivity. This process, in turn, becomes expressed in Hegel's idealism, as a dialectic between consciousness and self-consciousness; that is, as a dialectic within consciousness itself.

Alternatively expressed, it is the act of self-reference in alienation by the supersession of that alienation. It is the superseding of alienation by the active negation, by the subject, of its own alienated condition; a condition that takes the form of its relation to its direct opposite, its dialectical pole, its own other as Hegel expresses it. It is the active subject resolving its contradiction by negating and incorporating that opposite pole as a moment or determination of its own activity; by doing so it affirms itself as the subject of the process.

As such, it is a core element in Hegel's account of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics. The concept is here at the level of abstract definition; the aim is that this will be investigated and teased out in a variety of fashions, and in more concrete detail, as the thesis develops.²²

²² This key concept of Hegel's dialectic has, in my analysis, more than one logical and ontological application and usage. It applies to both the operation of a systematic subject in its dialectical activity of positing and resolving the primary contradiction in its nature, and, in the more traditional and "orthodox" Marxist sense and usage; that of a subject superseding itself and positing a new specific form of systematic activity. Capital, as the systematic exploitation of commodified labour power, would be an example of the former. Labour, in its evolving social forms, with its dialectical transformation and supersession into higher historical social forms of development as an example of the latter.

Hegel also applies this key concept to the analysis of substance, as the fundamental ontological category of being; indeed the logical, historical, and objective elements in Hegel's thought are united in the idea of the process of how substance becomes subject. This application of the negation of the negation to substantial activity will have its resonance in Marx's dialectic of labour and value. It is an important and fundamental relation that cannot be stressed highly enough, and will be the subject of investigation as the thesis develops.

Hegel views this alienated form of speculative dialectic as being ultimately the expression and product of the movement contained within pure logical thought itself. The absolute nature of thought is revealed in the process of conceptual development; as a universal interconnection of the categories of thought that are conceptually integrated by Hegel into a cohesive and self-moving logical totality.

A self-moving logical and systematic totality that objectifies itself in manifest nature, and subjectifies itself in society as human spirit or mind; this latter shape is itself expressed in its highest form by pure, logical, speculative, philosophical thought.

We shall start off the analysis with the central points of the criticism, contained in the E.P.M., of Feuerbach's view of Hegel's the negation of the negation. The criticism takes the following forms in Marx's exposition; forms that are derived from and summarise Feuerbach's from Marx's perspective.

Feuerbach's Critique.

Feuerbach's importance for Marx is that he represents both genuine insight and a real gain for critical thought in his explication of the contradiction contained in this core principle of Hegel's speculative idealism. In the Feuerbachian critique, it is posed as a contradiction within Hegel's philosophy that it affirms theology after having denied it, and which it therefore affirms in opposition to itself.

In broad terms, the negation of the negation in Hegel is the self-confirmation of alienated consciousness in its own alienation. The positive side of the negation of the negation in Hegel, the self-affirmation contained in it, is viewed, by Feuerbach, as a position that still has not overcome its opposition.

The “positive position” of the self-affirmation and self-confirmation that is contained in the negation of the negation is therefore not proven in Hegel. It is still “burdened” with its opposite, nature. Hegel’s view thus does not demonstrate itself by its existence. As the speculative idealist account does not prove itself objectively in existence, it is, therefore, for Feuerbach’s naturalism, “confronted by the position of sense-certainty based on itself.”²³

The General Form of Marx’s Critique.

Marx is in broad agreement with the above criticisms of Feuerbach. At the same time there is the need to generalise the critique of Hegel’s dialectic and this fundamental principle of all activity pertaining to it, to widen and extend its nature. Due to this very need for a more generalised settling of accounts with Hegel’s dialectic, there is inevitably a difference expressed by Marx between the scope and range contained in Feuerbach’s, and his own form of criticism and investigation. This is so for the following reasons.

Firstly, whilst Marx accepts the Feuerbachian analysis, it is a specific critique of Hegel’s idealist and theosophical viewpoint. One that is still contained, by and large, within traditional philosophical boundaries and parameters. Feuerbach limits his critique of Hegel’s application of the negation of the negation to Hegel’s theosophical and philosophical relation, expressed as a contradiction of philosophy with itself.

“ Feuerbach thus conceives the negation of the negation *only* as a contradiction of philosophy with itself - as philosophy which affirms theology (the transcendent etc.) after having denied it, and which it therefore affirms in opposition to itself.”²⁴

²³ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.329. In a note in the text here by Marx, he also expresses this in the following manner. “Feuerbach also defines the negation of the negation, the definite concept, as thinking surpassing itself in thinking and as thinking wanting to be directly awareness, nature, reality.”

²⁴ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.329.

Feuerbach, according to Marx, does not see the positive side of the negation of negation as self-affirmation and self-confirmation, because Hegel's absolute idealism fails to demonstrate its existence in the real world. The world remains unaltered by the activity of speculative idealist thought for it has only overcome that world in thought, and posited that world as the product of thought.

By implication, Marx sees the critique, inherent the negation of the negation, in a wider sense than the expression of an alienated movement that entails the negation of religion and its subsequent reaffirmation in the guise of the philosophy of religion. The negation of the negation has a universal application and usage in Hegel's philosophy; the materialist criticism of Marx reflects this more universal application of this dialectical principle of all movement and generation.

The failure of Hegel's idealist account of self-affirmation contained in Feuerbach's critique does not mean that the negation of the negation cannot be applied to other active subjects, subjects where it is objectively self-affirmed. By contrast, Marx, as we shall see, is attempting to generate just this form of dialectic. This generalised form of criticism is reflected by Marx in his discussion of the negation of the negation as applying to, not only the negating and affirming of alienated religion as philosophy, à la Feuerbach; but also to another subject.

This subject, the inverted materialist form of Hegel's mystical one is nature; this natural subject also further includes within it, the essential human activity that is bound up with external nature. Dialectics, as the movement of an ontological contradiction, is expressed as a necessary relation of the subject to sublimate the opposite determination in its own specific nature. For Marx this dialectic is expressed through the human activity of labour.

Paradoxically though, both the positive as well as the negative aspects of Hegel's mystical application of this dialectical principle will be brought out in Marx's critical analysis of the

more generalised form of estrangement and alienation that negation of the negation takes in Hegel.

That is, both the rational and the mystical elements will be represented in his critical analysis of this pivotal Hegelian concept and dialectical category. It is by counterpoising Hegel's idealist account of spirit's relation to nature with labour's relation to nature that Marx generates this dialectical paradox. It is this inversion of the dialectic within all activity that will fundamentally separate Marx's critique from that of Feuerbach's.

There is, for Marx, still a positive aspect to this failed idealist dialectic; this is implicitly revealed in the following usage by Marx of a qualifying "but". Marx himself proceeds to tell us what the nature of that qualifying "but" actually is.

"But because Hegel has conceived the negation of the negation, from the point of view of the positive relation inherent in it, as the true and only positive, and from the point of view of the negative relation inherent in it as the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being, he has found only the *abstract, logical, speculative* expression for the movement of history, which is not yet the *real* history of man as a given subject, but only the *act of creation, the history of the origin* of man."²⁵

Secondly, and directly related to the view that Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel's philosophy, whilst undoubtedly correct for Marx, has to be expanded in its range and scope. There is yet another qualifying "but" to Feuerbach's argument that is pregnantly inserted into Marx's account in the Manuscripts. This qualification reinforces the earlier need to generalise the criticism of Hegel through this his core principle.

"Here is the root of Hegel's *false* positivism, or of his merely *apparent* criticism: this is what Feuerbach designated as the positing, negating and then the re-affirming and

²⁵ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.329.

re-establishing of religion or theology - but it has to be expressed in more general terms. Thus reason is at home in unreason as unreason.”²⁶

This aspect of my analysis is in disagreement with C. Arthur’s view, which attaches no significance to the earlier point made by Marx. That of how Feuerbach criticised the negation of the negation in a specific form, that is, *only* as a contradiction of philosophy with itself. This formulation, according to Arthur, cannot be taken as indicating any real criticism of Feuerbach’s analysis by Marx; this is due to the following reason.

To interpret Marx’s comment here as being more negative than “either an endorsement” or a “neutral report” with regards Feuerbach, is to “read too much into the text”. The reason for this, according to Arthur, is that “no other remark in the 1844 Manuscripts can be said to be critical of Feuerbach, so the balance of probability is that this is not either.”²⁷

It seems clear though, that there is a form of relation between the above quoted two forms of employment, by Marx, of the qualifying use of “but”, and how Hegel’s negation of the negation is interpreted by Feuerbach only as a contradiction of philosophy with itself.²⁸

Firstly, because Hegel has encapsulated the dialectical polarity of the principle of negativity as “the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being” and the “abstract, logical, speculative expression for the movement of history” entails that its application is wider than Hegel’s theosophical contradiction. It is by showing how Hegel’s thought, is not only in contradiction in its philosophical expression of its relation to religion, that it precisely requires to be widened in its scope.

²⁶ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.339.

²⁷ C. Arthur. Dialectics of Labour. Blackwell. (1986.) P. 122.

²⁸ G. Lukacs. The Young Hegel. Merlin Press. (1975.) Pages 547-561. G. Lukacs takes a similar view to the position outlined in this section of the thesis. See P. 559-560. However, he does not link the second qualifying “but” to the first, to produce the critique inherent in Marx vis a vis Feuerbach. In my view, to do so adds further strength to the viewpoint that does see that, even within the E.P.M., there are some implicit if not explicit criticisms of Feuerbach’s analysis of Hegel’s negation of negation at work. The real question, and problem, is to understand the fluidity and dynamics involved that are forming Marx’s intellectual development at this particular period.

This naturally leads on to the second qualifying but of Marx, one that does clearly connect with the need for a wider critique than Feuerbach's view that the negation of the negation expresses only a contradiction of philosophy with itself. It is also because it is a generalised philosophical principle with a wider application to all being that it is characterised, by Marx, as an alienated philosophical form that expresses a more generalised condition.

For example, Hegel's thought contains an inverted and mysticised account of human rationality that is also in contradiction with both its relation to nature, and its alienated social condition. This is also why it is generalised, by Marx, in the form of how "reason is at home in unreason as unreason." This is why his alienated form of reason, and his application of his dialectical principle, as Marx puts it, "has to be expressed in more general terms."

In my perspective, both the above remarks, combined with Marx's expression that the critique of Hegel has to be generalised and aimed at Hegel's dialectic and philosophy as a whole, entails that if taken together, and viewed as being in some form of intellectual and theoretical relation, amount to more than just "an endorsement" or a "neutral report" on Feuerbach. As such, they indicate, at the least, an immanent criticism, or an underlying tension.

The situation can also be posed, perhaps more accurately, in the following fashion, as being both an endorsement and as a going beyond the parameters of Feuerbach's critique, to a wider and fuller form. Marx's attempted proof of Feuerbach's achievements would though, take his general form of criticism into uncharted regions, well beyond the topography of Feuerbach.

This, I believe, captures the dynamics of the relation more accurately. To see the interconnection between these two qualifying statements by Marx is to trace out, what was already in the embryonic process of becoming a significant difference between Feuerbach

and Marx. The two remarks are, in my view, related and have a widespread significance and implication for understanding Marx's own critique of Hegel. The question is what are the implications of the dynamic inherent in this more generalised form of critique of Marx?

Marx's critique of Hegel's idealism is posited by him in a more generalised form whose specific aim is not just to show Hegel's philosophical thought as expressing an alienated philosophical and theosophical form; a form which has its roots in nature and civil society. There would be no point, that specific criticism of Hegel had already been achieved by Feuerbach and accepted wholeheartedly by Marx.

The materialist critique of Marx aims to demonstrate that the negation of the negation, when critically applied, for example, to Hegel's alienated expression of social thought, reveals that "this lie is the lie of his principle." The problem with Hegel's account is that it rationalises that alienated condition in its alienated fashion, and cognises it as the product of abstract philosophical mind.

"The man who has recognised that he is leading an alienated life in law, politics, etc., is leading his true human life in this alienated life as such. Self-affirmation, self-confirmation *in contradiction* with itself – in contradiction with both the knowledge and the essential being of the object – is thus true *knowledge* and *life*."²⁹

What Marx seeks to add to the Feuerbachian account is a generalised form of criticism, and a generalised proof of this criticism. This generalised disapprobation would, if successful, seem to be a more damning criticism than Feuerbach's, and in many ways it certainly is. However, and paradoxically, this generalised form of criticism also allows for the positive and rational element, contained within the idealist conception of the dialectic of negativity, to begin to emerge more clearly.

Marx's incisive analysis is of a central concept and fundamental principle in Hegel's philosophy. By honing in on the dynamic contradiction that is expressed within it, the criticism can then be applied to the "the entire compass of abstraction" contained in Hegel's thought. This will, paradoxically, both deepen and comprehensively extend the materialist critique of Hegel, and at the same time draw out the positive aspects of the principle of the negation of the negation contained in Hegel's work. This is brought out precisely by showing how "reason is at home in unreason as unreason."³⁰

Marx's critique is a critique that posits that the totality of Hegel's view of activity, including the objective world and nature, is itself posited in an idealist and alienated fashion as ultimately the work of thought. It is this very objectivity itself that Hegel has to annul by the movement of self-consciousness, by idealist philosophical thought. The critique inherent in Marx then, is not only limited to the inversion of ontological primacy, but also of an idealist subject of dialectical activity and its replacement with a materialist subject of dialectical activity.

The emphasis Marx places on the positive form of the Hegelian dialectic of negativity as the self-movement of a contradiction, the essence of the dialectical method, marks him out from the Feuerbach critique. What separates Marx from Feuerbach in the Manuscripts, and this is of vital importance for understanding the nature of Marx's inversion, is the attempt to

²⁹ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.339. Marx then goes on to say the following. "There can therefore no longer be any question about an act of accommodation on Hegel's part vis-à-vis religion, the state, etc., since this lie is the lie of his principle."

³⁰ This leaves us with a problem that requires some explanation, one whose answer will challenge the view that Hegel's dialectic is rotten to its idealist core; how, for the critical materialist, can reason be at home in unreason as unreason? Before we can even begin to answer this question we will have to introduce yet another element into the argument. In my analysis, this further element has not been sufficiently integrated into the analysis by commentators in this area of historical research. This element being Marx's designation of Hegel's philosophy, and his view of the essence of it, as a form of "alienated science thinking itself". This unusual formulation of Marx can also be, in my account, interpreted as an alternative way of expressing his generalised criticism that in Hegel's thought, "reason is at home in unreason as unreason."

The discussion of this relation between reason being at home in unreason as unreason, and its relation to Marx's designation of Hegel's Logic as a form of alienated science, will be discussed later in the thesis. (See chapter four.) Before we can do so, it requires yet further analysis of Marx's critique of Hegel's idealist dialectic to prepare some more groundwork for a more fruitful discussion to take place.

disengage Hegel's methodological insights from his idealist system. This strategy is not part of Feuerbach's philosophical criticism.³¹

It is time now to begin to take a more in depth look at the core elements of Hegel's account of the dynamics of the process and movement of dialectical thought, and the areas where Marx develops his generalised form of criticism of Hegel's alienated form of expression of dialectic. Hegel's application of the principle of change and alteration inherent to the dialectic of negativity is to the development of mind as self-consciousness; in a process of subsuming its opposite, nature, in order to affirm itself as logical speculative mind.

The objectivity of external being is cognised as merely the alienated form and manifestation of the activity of absolute thought, manifested and expressed in that thought's own estranged form of existence, the objective natural totality. The result of this mystified dialectical process and supersession of Hegel is the creation of a totality of logical abstraction. This is expressed by Marx as the "dialectic of pure thought" that revolves within its own circle, in its own peculiar, speculative, and alienated form as philosophical logic, and containing its twin dialectical poles of abstract nature and abstract mind.

How does Hegel end up with an idealist account of the dialectic that mystifies rather than clarifies that real relation? How does Hegel arrive at this peculiar position of abstract thought being its own subject and object, its own self-contained totality according to Marx?

3. Hegel's Double Error.

The explanation of the sources of Hegel's speculative leaps and somersaults involves what Marx calls Hegel's "double error"; the critical analysis of this twofold error by Marx attacks

³¹ This separation of method from system will prove to be fundamentally important for the development of Marx's critical thought. The contradiction in Hegel between method and system, later highlighted by Engels, is already in operation here. These differences, of a materialist subject of the dialectic, and the separation of the dialectical method from an idealist system, constitute what would become a fundamental separation of Marx from Feuerbach. The full ramifications of which, Marx had yet to develop, never mind fully think through.

the philosophical foundation for Hegel's idealist illusions. What Hegel takes to be the criterion of the estranged world, is, in fact, itself an alienated expression of that estrangement for Marx. This is Hegel's first error. What are posed, as the criterion of the estranged world, are the philosopher and the activity of philosophical thought.

“The whole history of the alienation process and the whole process of the retraction of the alienation is therefore nothing but the *history of the production* of abstract (i.e. absolute) thought – of logical speculative thought.”³²

Objectivity becomes interpreted as an abstract objectivity, with the ongoing and developing forms of consciousness viewed in an unfolding dialectical and historical relation; a relation that results in the realisation of its true nature, as self-conscious mind that contains knowledge of the absolute. The Phenomenology of Spirit, as the historical result of this development of abstract philosophical thought, has realised its teleological goal, as absolute knowledge.

The core of the alienation process is contained within the parameters of the dialectic of subject and object; with the *object* cast as the *idea in itself*, as *nature*, and the *subject* cast as the *idea for itself*, as *mind*. Estrangement, is the direct oppositional form of this objective dialectical relation between nature and man that is contained in this contrariety of in itself and for itself. The opposition is also manifested, according to Marx, as that between abstract thinking and sensuous reality “or real sensuousness within thought itself.”

The objective relation is itself subjectivised and sublated in thought by Hegel's idealism; the objective relation is internalised within the subject, and is now expressed in the form of the dialectic of consciousness and self-consciousness. As the object now appears as a form of consciousness, it is in the process of being superseded by the realm of thought.

³² Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.331.

The object then appears only as an external manifestation of abstract consciousness, as an externalised thought-entity or concept; this is its idealised form of being. The subject, as man, appears only as self-consciousness; the dialectic of self and other, of subject and object, is now integrated within the process of thought itself. This relation being the posited essence and source of the objective estrangement that is to be superseded in thought and by thought.

This process, of estrangement and its supersession, is all the entire work of the movement of the categories of thought. Estrangement lies in the form of the opposition of the objectification of natural man, in contrast to his truer and higher nature, as abstract thinker. The appropriation of objectivity and the annulling of the estrangement occur in the realm of thought, as a movement and process belonging only to pure thought.

The second error that flows from this is that mind is posited as the essence of man. As the philosopher, the abstract form of estranged man, is the criterion of the estranged world, then mind, whose essence is alienated abstract thinking, appropriates the estranged world in an estranged way; in the active form and mode of abstract philosophical thought.

As the external objects, both natural and social, are ultimately seen as thought-determinations, as conceptual thought-entities, then the idealist dialectical paradox that ensues is that they are then both objectively estranged from, and at the same time contained within, abstract philosophical thought. As the product of abstract mind, and as the phenomenal form of the movement of the categories of thought, they are phases of mind or conceptual thought-entities. The true appropriation of objectivity occurs then, only in the form of abstract thought, that is, in the estranged form of abstract philosophical man.

Consciousness, in this its dynamic dialectical movement, becomes self-consciousness. The process and the result of this idealist dialectic is absolute mind, which is thinking returning home to its point of origin. The historical result of this process being the dialectic of pure thought, with the true form of mind as logical, speculative mind.

As such, the dialectic of consciousness and self-consciousness becomes generalised in an alienated philosophical form, as pure logical thought. Alternatively expressed, it is alienated thinking contemplating itself in an alienated fashion, and, moreover, taking that alienated expression as its true and real expression. As this is abstract thought that abstracts from real nature and from real man, it is an abstract totality of thought that becomes indifferent to all real determinateness.

In Marx's view the activity of the philosophical mind, the essence and criterion of all reality for Hegel, is "nothing but the estranged mind of the world thinking within its self-estrangement - i.e., comprehending itself abstractly."³³

This view is, in itself, a more generalised criticism of Hegel's philosophy than that of the negating of religion and its philosophical reaffirmation through the negating of that negation. This "double error" in Hegel gives rise to the speculative illusions that are expressed in his inverted and mystical form of dialectic; a dialectic that contains its own specific form of idealist presuppositions as its foundation.

4. Speculative Illusions.

"The issue, therefore is to surmount the *object of consciousness*. *Objectivity*, as such is regarded as an estranged human relationship which does not correspond to the *essence of man*, to self-consciousness. The *reappropriation* of the objective essence of man, produced within the orbit of estrangement as something alien, therefore denotes not only the annulment of *estrangement*, but of *objectivity* as well. Man, that is to say, is regarded as a *non-objective spiritual* being."³⁴

³³ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.330.

³⁴ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.333-334.

The movement of the negation of the negation in Hegel is characterised here by Marx as “the movement of surmounting the object of consciousness.” The exposition of Hegel’s account of this process, contained in Marx’s criticism, and outlined here, will concentrate on the mystical and uncritical form of the idealist dialectic before drawing out, later in the thesis, some of the more positive or critical aspects that are entailed in this Hegelian principle of the dialectic.

First of all, it is important to be clear what Marx means here by his use of the phrase “the movement of surmounting the object of consciousness.” What is referred to and entailed in the use of this phrase by Marx? Hegel, for Marx, regards the externalised and alienated objectivity of nature as an estranged relationship that does not correspond to the essence of man, that is, to man in his apposite form as rational and speculative mind. What though is the ontological status of the object of consciousness here?

The object of consciousness is, for abstract philosophical man, nothing but self-consciousness; or alternatively, the object is itself only a form of objectified and alienated self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, in fact, presents itself to itself, in the form of an object; an object that is destined to be, in this its alien-objective and estranged form, negated by the process and movement of self-consciousness itself. The movement of surmounting the object of consciousness is then the process of the return of the object into the self, in the form of conceptual thought, its true essence and ontological root.

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The movement behind this process takes the form of the negation of the negation, as the dialectic inherent in the active thought process. Consciousness, first of all, negates itself by alienating itself in the estranged form of the object; this it does in order to then negate the estranged nature of the object and return to itself as self-conscious conceptual thought. The means by which this process is realised is through the sublation of the alienation of self-consciousness through the movement of surmounting that estranged object of consciousness, namely objective nature.

Self-consciousness posits objectivity itself as a thing whose essentiality lies outside its own materialised form; its essence lies in the form of abstract thought. The objectivity of material being, as estrangement and alienation, exists then only as a result of the self-estrangement and self-alienation of absolute thought. As conceptual thought is regarded as the very essence of that estranged and alien objectivity, then by conceptually surmounting the object of consciousness, consciousness will, at the same time, realise itself in its higher form, as self-consciousness.

What constitutes estrangement for Hegel's idealism is not the determinate character of the object but its very objectivity itself. Self-consciousness "takes offence" not at estranged objectivity, but at objectivity per se. It is objectivity itself that is to be annulled in thought and as thought. This entails that in the supersession, it is not only the annulment of estrangement that takes place, but also the annulment of objectivity itself. This is why, the essence of man, as Marx characterises Hegel's view, is ultimately regarded as being that of a "*non-objective spiritual being.*"

This re-appropriation of man's estranged objective essence is effected through the dialectic contained in the alienated form of the natural object outside him, as an object that is inherently fated to be subsumed in the process of the production of speculative and logical thought. This consciousness realises by replacing the "offensive" objectivity, the externalised form of the estranged essence, with a new object that reflects its true essential activity; namely, conceptual thought.

The result of this process of surmounting the object of consciousness is that the object itself becomes a moment, a determination of thought; as essentially the product of a conceptual entity. This conceptuality is then, both the very essence and the source of the substantial being of the object; as a conceptual essence that can only be grasped in and by rational thought, its true source and substantial foundation.

Speculative thought becomes, through this idealist dialectic of consciousness with self-consciousness, its own subject and object; one that merely has an estranged external and natural form, but whose true essence lies in the domain of conceptual thought. Nature and objectivity are then viewed as being essentially conceptual entities, as the externalised material form of the expression of self-consciousness. It is the process where objectivity itself is sublated in thought and expressed in its universal form as pure, logical, speculative thought.

Through this dialectical activity of mind, self-critical thought becomes a systematic, rational and logical self-consciousness. At the same time, nature is shown to be the product of conceptual thought, as its mere phenomenal appearance and manifestation. The real alienation, of active objective humanity in relation to active objective nature, is inverted and regarded as the form of appearance of the estrangement of self-consciousness.

The object turns out to be, in this inverted idealist process, the self-estrangement and externalisation of thought that is retracted back to its truer and higher form, as rational conceptual thought, as knowledge, but in an alienated and estranged fashion that, in Marx's critique, only confirms its own alienated and abstract philosophical activity.

How does this process and movement unfold that would underpin and confirm the idealist viewpoint for Hegel? The answer to this idealist process ties in with the previous criticism of Marx, the "double error" in Hegel discussed in the last section.

As mind is the true human essence for Hegel, then the development of mind is in the overcoming of this its alienated condition. As abstract philosophical man, the criterion of all knowledge, is in this view self-consciousness, then the objective estrangement is the estrangement of self-consciousness from realising itself in its true nature, as logical, speculative mind. Alienated self-consciousness posits that estranged objective essence as an abstraction, as an abstract object; the result of this positing is that external being is itself reduced to a conceptual abstraction, namely "thinghood".

Thinghood, as the abstract form of external nature, is the estranged form of that objective essence; as the dialectical opposite and negative identity of alienated self-consciousness itself. In this alienated form, self-consciousness posits itself as object, and the object as itself. This it can do only through the positing of thinghood as the reduction of the objective concrete determination to an abstract thought determination.

“And what is posited, instead of confirming itself, is but confirmation of the act of positing which for a moment fixes its energy as the product, and gives it the *semblance* – but only for a moment – of an independent, real substance.”³⁵

This idealist abstraction, posited by the alienation of self-consciousness, entails that objectivity and thus thinghood is inherently non-independent; what it is dependent on is the activity of conceptual thought. The determinate character of the object and its very objectivity are negated and cancelled by this process and act of abstraction; this only serves to confirm objectivity as both the self-alienation and dialectical return of abstract speculative thought to itself.

Thinghood is thus both a product of, and posited by, abstract thought itself; it is, in turn, dependent upon abstract thought for its very existence. This positing of thinghood “is itself an illusion of speculation” for this abstract objectification of externality is itself “an act of contradicting the nature of pure activity, it has to be cancelled again and thinghood denied.” Thinghood does not then confirm itself in its activity; instead it merely confirms the activity of abstract thought.

The object, as it becomes sublated in the form of conceptual thought, is shown to be both dependent and self-annulling. The nullity of the estranged object is “precisely the self-confirmation of the non-objectivity of the abstraction itself.” Here the nullity of the object lies in the non-existence of the distinction between the object of conceptual consciousness

and self-consciousness itself; it lies in their direct identity as essentially the product of speculative thought.

At the same time as speculative idealism is showing the essential "nullity" of an external object, as an object that is itself dependent on conceptual and abstract thought as its very essence, self-consciousness, through the process of re-absorbing that objectivity, realises that it is, in fact, at home in its other being as such. Estranged objectivity is thus dependent upon abstract thought for its estranged form of existence.

Knowing has confronted itself with itself; that which appears to it as an object is only itself. The outcome of the process is that self-consciousness "knows knowing" as an object, as an object that is merely the alienated form of self-conscious mind. Knowing has confronted itself with itself; the object is its own estranged and external form.

The "in itself" of consciousness in its dialectical relation to objective nature becomes the "for itself" of self-consciousness as mind or spirit. Mind is thus self-confirmed as the true essence of man, and thinking, logical, speculative mind is the true character and the realised essence of mind. This is the illusion of thought in its mystical and idealist form, and how the principle of the negation of the negation becomes, in Hegel's analysis, the inverted confirmation of the pseudo-essence, as abstract, speculative thought.

The entity that is superseded is the entity as an object of knowledge; what is ultimately transcended is a conceptual entity. In turn, as the object is transformed into a moment or determination of thought, it merely confirms the abstractions of self-consciousness. The result of this idealist movement is the identity of consciousness with self-consciousness in the form of absolute knowledge.

³⁵ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.336.

“[T]he movement of abstract thought no longer directed outwards but proceeding now only within its own self: that is to say, the dialectic of pure thought is the result.”³⁶

In the dialectical movement for surmounting the object of consciousness what is cancelled is estranged objectivity, what is retained is that estranged objectivity as a moment and determination of thought, as the alienated and inverted contrary form of the dialectic contained in conceptual thought. Nature is, by its very externality, absolute thought's own estranged form of negative existence.

Self-consciousness thus realises and affirms itself in its highest form, as a logical, systematic, and speculative totality of pure thought. The conceptual identity of object and subject is underpinned and hypostasised as the product of pure logical thought, their common foundation, one that is conferred with an absolute status. The potentiality of consciousness as mind or spirit is actualised in this its divine element and source, as the absolute idea.

This is why self-consciousness can believe itself to be directly the other of itself. Hegel's speculative illusions reside in his view that consciousness, as self-consciousness, as it is both in direct identity to and the source of that very estranged objectivity, thinks that it is at home in its other-being as such. As speculative thought imagines itself to be the other of itself, as the essence of the object; then the action of thought is taken to be the essential source of the action behind the object.

As Hegel's illusion posits that self-consciousness is at home in its alienated and estranged other, then its materialist critique posits its direct opposite; that knowing pretends to be directly that other, the real world, life. As Feuerbach expressed it, thought surpasses itself in thought, it does not, however, prove itself in its existence. Externality remains unaffected by the activity of abstract speculative thought. This is why Feuerbach posits that, for his

³⁶ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.332.

materialist critique, Hegel's idealism is "confronted by the position of sense-certainty based on itself."

This supersession in thought then, both leaves the object intact, and at the same time believes that it has now subsumed the object in its essential form, as a product of conceptual abstraction. This abolition of the estrangement is in fact a confirmation of the estrangement in the materialist critique. The estrangement inherent to this idealist dialectic of object and subject remains in the sense that the object, nature, is ontologically posited as the idea in its alienated and external other-being, its unconscious or non-rational form.

Estrangement is its very ontological condition; its real essential activity therefore lies outside itself, in the subjectivity of self-consciousness, in active mind. This implies that when consciousness attains to adequate self-consciousness, when the alienation posited by consciousness is superseded as self-consciousness, it nevertheless posits that alien and estranged objectivity as the product of thought itself. Estrangement is thus a condition that is ultimately posited by abstract thought itself. Estrangement is the inherent condition of external nature for the absolute idealist.

Estrangement, like alienation and religion in the materialist critique, is both negated and then reaffirmed; estrangement is then not overcome, but is regarded as a necessary product of the dialectical diremption of subjectivity and objectivity; a dialectic whose foundation is based on the ontology of absolute idealism. It is absolute thought that estranges itself in the form of the alienated object of thought, as its own alienated essence in an estranged objective form.

Objectivity is confirmed as an alien and estranged objectivity that does not correspond to the real essence of nature. More importantly, it does not correspond to the real essence of man, to self-consciousness; that is, to thought elevated from the animal to its higher form, as absolute spirit or mind, as the divine and rational element in man. The result of Hegel's Logic is the process then whereby systematic abstract thought confirms itself; it confirms

itself in its own alienated activity for it has absorbed nature as an abstract systematic totality that now proceeds within its own self, as the dialectic of pure thought.

Marx's argument finds its inspiration and parallel with Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's negating and reaffirming of religion. Marx's critique of Hegel's dialectic though is of a more generalised form, impacting on the very core of the dialectical principles and foundations of Hegel's speculative and logical system of thought in its relation to objective nature. The reason this is so, is that Marx does not simply counterpose to Hegel's speculative thought, Feuerbach's view that it is "confronted by the position of sense-certainty based on itself."

What Marx inverts and counterposes to Hegel's idealist activity of thought, as we shall see, is what he regards as the real essential activity of humanity. This estranged and alienated form of the dialectic of negativity of Hegel will be inverted by Marx and put to use in understanding real, objective activity. This is one explanation why Marx, in distinction from Feuerbach, expresses this inverted and mystified idealist dialectic of subject and object in Hegel as the condition where "reason is at home in unreason as unreason."

5. Supersensible Subject.

Hegel's critique of nature as being estranged from consciousness of itself, its own conceptual essence, also applies to man's alienated relation to his real essence, the divine. Hegel's absolute idealism posits thought as its own autonomous subject that realises itself through this dialectic of object and subject, of nature and spirit. Philosophical estrangement and religious alienation are thus inherent to the human condition. It is the philosophical expression of "the alienation of man who knows himself" in his alienated being, and thus posits a subject higher and distinct from himself.

"This movement, in its abstract form as dialectic, is therefore regarded as *truly human life* and because it is nevertheless an abstraction - an estrangement of human

life - it is regarded as a *divine process*, but as the divine process of man, a process traversed by man's abstract, pure, absolute essence that is distinct from himself."³⁷

The result of this process being "the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea." This is expressed in pure thought in the universal and systematic logical categories that are posited as the higher form of both nature and spirit, as their common content and divine source. Logical and systematic thought is hypostasised and conferred with the status of the autonomous subject.

"This process must have a bearer, a subject. But the subject only comes into being as a result. This result - the subject knowing itself as absolute self-consciousness - is therefore *God, absolute Spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea*. Real man and real nature become mere predicates - symbols of this hidden, unreal man and of this unreal nature. Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute reversal - *a mystical subject-object* or *a subjectivity reaching beyond the object - absolute subject as a process, as subject alienating itself and returning from alienation into itself, but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself, and the subject as this process, a pure, incessant revolving within itself.*"³⁸

The idealist and mystified dialectic requires, in my reading, an idealist and mystified subject, a supersensible subject. In that sense Marx is entirely correct to draw attention to this expression of Hegel's idealist subject. Those of a Marxist persuasion have not necessarily followed him on this theme of Hegel's idealist subject. For example, T. Smith denies that there is such a supersensible subject in Hegel. The dialectic, even in its Hegelian mystified form, is interpreted by him as being fundamentally that of a dialectic between humans and nature.³⁹

³⁷Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.342.

³⁸ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.342-3.

³⁹ T. Smith: The Logic of Marx's Capital. S.U.N.Y. Press. (1990.) P. 10-13.

Posed in the more traditional and abstractly philosophical terms, as subject and object, there are, for the materialist, no rational and divine source for either the subject or the object. This is only the case when that Hegelian dialectic is viewed on one level. In the materialist critique of Hegel's idealism, it is true, there is the understanding of the dialectic as being contained within the parameters of human labouring activity and nature. Marx clearly reflects this in the Manuscripts; he does not however leave his critique of Hegel solely at this level.

In order to criticise this speculative and systematic account; a speculative subject has to be understood as underpinning Hegel's idealist and absolute form of dialectic. Hegel's objective idealism, in opposition to materialist realism, views that inherently rational form and basis, contained in the dialectic of the objectivity of being and human subjectivity, as the product of not just human mind, but that of an absolute mind. Nature and man are seen as the product of divine, rational, and speculative thought.

Moreover, the objective and subjective idea has to have an absolute subject, as their common identity, in order for thought to take these twofold objective and subjective forms, in order for thought to become its own subject and object. In order for there to be ultimately a direct identity between thought and being. The product and result of Hegel's dialectic of subject and object is the higher form and unity of the two, the Notion or Logical Idea. This is clearly reflected in Marx's critique where real nature and real man become mere predicates of this unreal and abstract subject.

That there is an alienated and pseudo-subject, a product of human thought with no other existence except as the systematic expression of alienated thought, does not downplay either Hegel's dialectical achievements nor the significance this absolute foundation has for Hegel's idealism. To recognise this to be the case leads to not only a fuller understanding of the Hegelian variation of idealism, but also the dialectical critique and materialist inversion of Hegel.

It also, and this is of central importance for the materialist analysis, tellingly impacts in the critique of Hegel's idealist and absolute foundations for a closed philosophical system. The Logical Idea is, as I will later argue later in the thesis, an alienated and abstract account of both scientific method and substantial objectivity; in order to posit their ultimate identity as a result of a systematic philosophical process, Hegel has to promote this outcome to a more elevated and Olympian plateau.

To put it another way, it is logic and science seen as the expression of a divine subject, the product of alienated and estranged thought itself, pure thought, but raised to a divine state that is autonomous from its own creations in nature and humanity.

The architectonic inherent in Hegel's idealism posits a telos or final cause that can only be seen as being ultimately divine. It may, in the materialist critique, be a piece of speculative idealist fantasy, but it is necessary for the source of the final cause; a final cause that gives the coherence and binding totality to Hegel's system, and at the same time confirms its idealist ontological foundation. It also represents the closure principle for the whole system where the "divine dialectic" revolves within its own circular, self-contained, and hermetically sealed abstract totality.

To reject that Hegel has a supersensible subject would be analogous to Marx analysing that commodity production and its realisation in circulation, through the exchange of commodities and money, did not produce capital as a subject, but merely the polarity of production and circulation and the exchange between commodity and money.

CHAPTER THREE.

HEGEL'S PARADOX.

1. Pseudo-Essence and Real Essence.

A central issue in Marx's critique of Hegel's idealism in the Paris Manuscripts is the counterposition of what he calls real objectivity in opposition to the abstract and idealist account of objectivity in Hegel. Marx's materialist inversion of Hegel then has to counterpose what that real objective activity, the real essence that affirms itself by superseding its objective relation, actually is, in contrast to the activity of speculative mind.

Marx does not reduce that objectivity, through the philosophical abstraction inherent in the Hegelian concept of "thinghood", to an entity that is destined to find its essence outside itself, in conceptual thought. Nor does he counterpose to this idealist sublation, in the manner of Feuerbach, nature in the form of immediate sense-certainty as the source for true contemplative philosophical thought. By contrast, Marx counterposes to all forms of abstract philosophical activity, the active objectification in nature and society, of the subjectivity of concrete labour.

"Whenever real, corporeal *man*, man with his feet firmly in the solid ground, man exhaling and inhaling all the forces of nature, *posits* his real, objective *essential powers* as alien objects by his externalisation, it is not the *act of positing* which is the subject in this process: it is the subjectivity of *objective essential powers*, whose action, therefore, must also be something *objective*. An objective being acts objectively, and he would not act objectively if the objective did not reside in the very nature of his being. He only creates or posits objects, because he is posited by objects - because at bottom he is *nature*. In the act of positing, therefore, this

objective being does not fall from his state of “pure activity” into a *creating of the object*; on the contrary, his *objective* product only confirms his *objective* activity, his activity as the activity of an objective, natural being.”⁴⁰

Marx expresses this essence of human species-being, contained in the Manuscripts, via the critical analysis of alienated wage-labour; a process that is itself reflected in its own alien social product. The productive process, and the alienated form that labouring activity takes, is the external result and the real outcome generated by that objective dialectic of humans and nature, a predicament that is socially reflected in the conditions of alienated labour in its oppressed relationship to the power of money.

This important distinction and difference between Feuerbach and Marx’s criticism of Hegel is already being expressed in the Manuscripts. The full consequences of this distinction of the inversion in the subject matter, generated through this form of criticism, have only begun to reveal their consequences for Marx; the impact this will have for his relation to Feuerbach has still to play itself through.

This inversion of the active subject of the process becomes the materialist source for Marx’s generalised form of criticism of Hegel. Marx both counterposes and replaces the activity of speculative and logical thought, as a process of divine creation and the essence of man, with alienated labour; labour that is an evolving, objective activity, one that is fundamentally dialectical and material by nature. For Marx, objectivity and activity necessarily resides in the very nature of essential being.

⁴⁰Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.336. This highlights the fundamental and central importance of activity in Marx’s thought. “Here we see how consistent naturalism or humanism is distinct from both idealism and materialism, and constitutes at the same time the unifying truth of both. We see also how only naturalism is capable of comprehending the action of world history.” Naturalism, in Marx’s “consistent” form, becomes active materialism based on a dialectic of negativity. The importance of this stress on real objectivity and real activity is further developed, under the rubric of theoretical praxis, in the Theses on Feuerbach. The primacy of activity as the mediating relation between humans and nature, and the critique of an idealist view of it, is the core of Marx’s solution to the defects of all preceding materialism.

“A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a *natural* being, and plays no part in the system of nature. A being which has no object outside itself is not an objective being. A being which is not itself an object for some third being has no being for its *object*; i.e., it is not objectively related. Its being is not objective. A non-objective being is a non-being.”⁴¹

Marx here, is both exposing the mystical form of Hegel's negation of the negation, and also positing the rational form that it objectively takes. What is to be in Hegel's view annulled, is the objectivity that is the condition of mind's self-estrangement; this annulment takes place in the realm of thought. Objectivity is negated in order to affirm it as the active product of speculative thought; at the same time, by thought subsuming objectivity it turns it into the product of a systematic self-generating thought whole.

By doing so, thought confirms itself in thought, and by the activity of thought it produces itself. It is then a product of a systematic abstraction and totality of thought, a non-being, whose essence lies, not in objectivity, but solely in the realm of pure thought, the alienated and estranged form of itself. This is the inevitable consequence of the mystified form of expression of the dialectic in Hegel; it is the dynamic whereby the pseudo-essence is confirmed as the real essence.

“In Hegel, therefore, the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of the true essence, effected precisely through the negation of the pseudo-essence. With him the negation of the negation is the confirmation of the pseudo-essence, or of the self-estranged essence in its denial; or it is the denial of this pseudo-essence as an objective being dwelling outside man and independent of him, and its transformation into the subject.”⁴²

⁴¹ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.337.

⁴² Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.339 - 340.

As a result, it takes its alienated philosophical form of expression as being its real and true expression. Here, the negation of the negation, if you will excuse the inference from the above of Marx, is the confirmation of the pseudo-essence, precisely through the negation of the real essence. By confirming the estranged form, in this its alienated thinking, the act of self-reference is validated in its mystical and fetishised form. Hence, Marx's characterisation of Hegel's dialectic in this its general form of criticism shows how, as a result of Hegel's own mystical inversion of the dialectic, "reason is at home in unreason as unreason."

What is also missing for Marx, in Hegel's dialectic of negativity, is what he terms the last act of self-reference in alienation. What does he mean by this phrase? The process of self-reference in alienation and its supersession, viewed in Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's idealism, as speculative thought still being burdened with its opposite, the sensory world, is generalised here in its criticism by Marx, as the stopping at the last act, the act of self-reference in real objective activity.

Feuerbach's critique propounds, in opposition to Hegel's mystical and speculative subject, the self-supporting positive based on itself. For Feuerbach, the philosophical solution to speculative idealism is posited in the contemplation of immediate sense-certainty based on itself, through the analysis of the relation between consciousness and the external nature that generates it.

For Marx, it is "the subjectivity of *objective* essential powers, whose action, therefore, must be something *objective*" that is the solution to speculative idealism. The real activity is externalised in opposition to itself, in the form of the product of labour. The objective product of that social labour only proves or confirms that objective activity in the external and alien product of that activity. Marx's dialectic in contrast to Hegel's is concretely annulled objectively, only in and through labouring activity superseding both its alienated condition and its alienated product, as the last act of self-reference in alienation.

This concrete objectification is in stark contrast to the non-objective proof of Hegel's subsumption of nature as the product of the "pure activity" of logical thought; with the "entire compass of abstraction" locked up in an estranged and alienated form; as the product of the systematic totality of mind. Alternatively posed, it lies in the distinction between the real essence of labour and the pseudo-essence of alienated philosophical mind.

The application by Marx of the dialectical method, itself a not unimportant differentiation from Feuerbach's critique, is already being applied to labouring activity and the product of that activity; this objective relation constitutes the real social essence and species-being of man. That is, it is already posited here as being the inverted and direct opposite of the idealist Hegelian form. The real critical form in opposition to the uncritical process of abstract philosophical activity or speculative thought.

Hegel is clearly though, a contradictory figure for Marx; the dialectic expresses itself in both a positive and negative fashion in his work. On the one hand, this idealist "philosophical dissolution" of the existing empirical world, seen as a product of mind in its realised and essential form of the Logical Idea, is the source of both Hegel's justification for, and the "uncritical positivism" of, his restoration of that existing empirical world. A world that is both sublated and, in turn, glorified as the product of an idealist and alienated conceptual totality of thought.

"Consequently, despite its thoroughly negative and critical appearance and despite the genuine criticism contained in it, which often anticipates far later development, there is already latent within the "Phenomenology" as a germ, a potentiality, a secret, the uncritical positivism and the equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works - that philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world."⁴³

That reconciling of the heart and mind to its alienated condition by the activity of speculative thought; as a mystified form of thought that is at home in both its estranged

natural form and its alienated social form. By doing so, Marx shows how, in Hegel, the dialectic of negativity and the negation of the negation, as the moving and generating principle, becomes the "lie of his principle". It thus provides a philosophical underpinning for the false consciousness of both bourgeois ideology and divine creation.

On the other hand, his thought does also contain far-sighted and genuine criticism; the motor source for that genuine criticism itself lies in that same dynamic form of the dialectic of negativity. The problem is to unearth the rational form of the dialectic from the mystical form of Hegel's exposition. The emphasis, necessarily at this point of Marx's intellectual development, largely resides in the need to critically settle accounts with Hegel's idealist mysticism.

Marx's analysis in the E.P.M. does not, however, entirely confine itself to this framework; he also draws out some positive aspects contained in Hegel's dialectic. The critical elements contained in this application of the dialectic of negativity nevertheless "lie concealed" and hidden within this mystical form of expressing it.

"The *Phenomenology* is, therefore, a hidden, mystifying and still uncertain criticism; but inasmuch as it depicts man's *estrangement*, even though man appears only as mind, there lie concealed in it *all* the elements of criticism, already *prepared* and *elaborated* in a manner often rising far above the Hegelian standpoint."⁴⁴

Despite the mystifying form, Marx also draws out that Hegel's thought does contain, even if in an estranged form, critical-dialectical analyses of whole areas and spheres like conventional religion, the state, civil society, and natural science. The entity that Hegel supersedes though is not the real thing, but the concept of the thing. He stands in opposition, according to Marx, both to the real thing and to the conventional concepts of those real things; this latter point of Marx is viewed as not being entirely negative.

⁴³ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.331-2.

⁴⁴ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.332.

The point, from Marx's 1873 Afterword, that Hegel's dialectic appears to glorify existing states of affairs while the dialectic is, in its essence, critical and revolutionary, the Hegelian paradox and its negative expression, had already been largely made, or first developed, in the Paris Manuscripts.

2. Hegel's Paradox.

Paradoxically then, contained within this mystical form of dialectic, lie all the elements for its critical application. These dialectical elements frequently go well beyond the Hegelian standpoint. The real critical application of those elements required that the dialectic of negativity, and the process of supersession entailed by that activity, in order to take a rational form, had to be inverted into a materialist ontology; that is, it had to be developed from and applied to real, objective, practical, human labouring activity, as the moving source for human development.

There is then, a twofold mystical and rational character in operation in Marx's dialectical critique of Hegel. It is now time to further develop this analysis of the twofold nature of the contradiction contained in Hegel by further examining the "*critical* form of this in Hegel uncritical process."

Despite Hegel's failure to apply that dialectic in a materialist manner, and to a materialist subject matter, it would appear from Marx's comments in the Manuscripts that this did not preclude him from outlining the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle underlying the process of all change. That is, to use a later formulation, it by no means prevented him from consciously and comprehensively outlining the general form of working of dialectic itself; Marx is already making, more or less, this point in the 1844 Manuscripts.

Marx's own supersession, through this critical settling of accounts, lies in precisely applying "all the elements of the criticism" prepared and elaborated by Hegel, but now applied in a materialist manner, and to a materialised subject and relation, nature and alienated humanity. By doing so, Marx now has the foundations for developing his own form of dialectic, in a manner that now goes well beyond Hegel's idealist confines and orientation, precisely by drawing out the contradictions that lie contained within Hegel's account of the general form of working of the dialectic.

According to Marx, a "peculiar role, therefore, is played by the act of *superseding* in which denial and preservation, i.e. affirmation, are bound together." The "peculiar role" of supersession, in Hegel's idealist application of it, as we have seen, is to mystify and invert the real process and relation between subject and object. This general principle, as a process applied to the subject's alienation and the overcoming of it through the dynamic vehicle of negation of the negation, clearly still has some positive aspects for Marx, even in this its alienated idealist expression.

*"Supersession as an objective movement of retracting the alienation into self. This is the insight, expressed within the estrangement, concerning the appropriation of the objective essence through the supersession of its estrangement; it is the estranged insight into the real objectification of man, into the real appropriation of his objective essence through the annihilation of the estranged character of the objective world, through the supersession of the objective world, in its estranged mode of being."*⁴⁵

Marx retains the essential dynamics of the analysis of the process of alienation and estrangement. Where Marx differs from Hegel is that the estrangement and alienation can be overcome subjectively and objectively by the activity of labour itself; there is no necessary ontological condition of nature as being inherently a form of estrangement, due to its very externalised and non-conceptual form of being. The act of supersession is achieved for Marx

by overcoming the negative condition, precisely through the self-affirming dialectical activity of self-reference in objectivity.

There is also then, a potentially more positive form for this "peculiar role" of supersession contained in Marx's comments. The reason that Marx can posit that this is the case, is that the very essence of the dialectic, as self-affirmation through negation; is due to the analysis of all processes of change as being the expression of the movement of a contradiction.

What Hegel does, is to pose in an abstract and idealist fashion, the conceptualised form of the social relations and/or logical categories as interconnected "*moments of motion*". The act of supersession is therefore cognised as a process that has determinate moments; these moments are the universally interconnected and necessary determinations of the particular subject in process. It is through the methodical application of the general form of dialectic that the external motions can be conceptually grasped. "In their actual existence this *mobile* nature of theirs is hidden. It appears and is made manifest only in thought, in philosophy."⁴⁶

The "moments" are expressed through the conceptualisation of the determinate forms and relations of the substantial subject, with a moving internal principle of change and alteration, expressed in the positing and resolving of the contradiction in its nature, that links all these conceptualised determinate moments together. That contrariety contained in all movement, and its adequate cognition, requires understanding the specific form of contradiction that drives the substantial activity as a form of determinate negation. This materialised specification of the dialectics of motion provides the basis for the development of Marx's own critical form of dialectic.

This general critique of Marx, and the paradoxes in Hegel derived from it, go well beyond the criticisms of Feuerbach. The inherently critical form of Hegel's dialectic applies, not only to specific spheres of human activity and their conventional conceptions, but also to the

⁴⁵ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.341.

⁴⁶ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.340.

process of development and change in general; as the source for their general laws of motion and self-activity.

The essential point for Marx is that Hegel has captured the essence of movement and change as the dialectic of negativity, as the movement and development of a contradiction. Even in that alienated form, it is the explicit view of being for self or affirmation through its negative other, its own alienated form of being, and, in turn, the negation of that alienation as the process of self-determining and self-affirming activity.

This critique of Hegelianism, as the preceding analysis of Marx's view attempted to show, had to be generalised to develop what for him was the necessary task of settling accounts with the Hegelian dialectic and philosophy as a whole. At the same time, this generalised form of Marx also furnished the proof that would underpin Feuerbach's criticism; that of Hegel's positing, negating, and then re-affirming of religion or theology.

The criticism had to be generalised, not only in order for it to be extended to cover all the areas of Hegel's philosophical subject matter; but also to draw out the full implications of Hegel's dialectical idealism and its alienated and speculative form. Marx's general strategy was to dialectically bring out and highlight, both the mystical and the rational forms that are inherent in Hegel's dialectic; even within the mystical guise that the dialectic has in its idealist imposed parameters and boundaries.

Alternatively expressed, it was to extract the critical form of Hegel's account of a dialectical process. In order to do so, Marx had to draw out the logic of the contradiction that is fundamentally contained within Hegel's thought. By drawing out the inborn contradictions in Hegel's dialectic, Marx is able show how there is an inherently critical form contained in this dialectic; a dialectic, which in Hegel, is cognised as an uncritical process of affirming that self-alienation in its alienated form.

3. Hegel's Outstanding Achievement.

Hegel's concept of negation of negation, despite the mystical veil that he envelopes it within, is nevertheless still of central importance in understanding Marx's evolving materialism. His general critique of this fundamental generating principle of Hegel's dialectic, with its consequential inversion of ontological presupposition and subject matter of investigation, allowed the application of the dialectic to be turned right side up again.

This idealist inversion of reality in Hegel notwithstanding, it nevertheless still entailed that he had, according to Marx, discovered in this principle, the abstract, logical, and speculative expression for the movement of history. This mystically interpreted by Hegel as the history of spirit, of the evolution of the philosophical idea, that is, as the abstract history of intellectual thought.

That historical development of the idealist subject shortly becomes, in the development of Marx's critique, materialised as the evolution of social labouring activity, as the inverted and real objective basis for the species-being of man, and the source and true nature of man as a historical subject.

Even within Hegel's idealist expression of an estranged human condition, Hegel still grasps labour, in the alienated form of the intellectual labour of mind or spirit, as the true essence of being human. The only labour that Hegel truly recognises for Marx is "abstractly mental labour." This idealist paradigm of Hegel's is cognised as the very species-being and activity that marks humanity off from the rest of nature. Despite entrapping objectivity within the confines of an idealist view of estrangement there is, however, genuine insight into the contradictory nature of the process of supersession.

"Thus by grasping the *positive* meaning of self-referred negation (although again in an estranged fashion) Hegel grasps man's self-estrangement, the alienation of man's essence, man's loss of objectivity and his loss of realness as self-discovery,

manifestation of his nature, objectification and realisation. < In short, within the sphere of abstraction, Hegel conceives labour as man's act of *self-genesis* - conceives man's relation to himself as an alien being to be the emergence of *species-consciousness* and *species life*. >”⁴⁷

Hegel, for Marx, and here he is in distinction from Feuerbach, holds to the view that despite his idealism Hegel still grasps the “*positive* meaning of self-referred negation”. The central problem lies in his idealist approach to the question of self-referring negativity, not to the category or principle behind the process of self-movement. Accordingly then, for Marx, all this mystical inversion of reality by Hegel does not negate the “*outstanding achievement*” and the result of the Phenomenology.

This achievement is attained in its highest form precisely through the conceptual exposition and employment of the “*dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle*”. It is through this “*outstanding achievement*” of Hegel's analysis of a dialectical process that the substantial being realises its essential form activity as subject, and therefore receives its adequate conceptual generalisation and expression.

This dialectical principle is the core of the positive aspect of the critical form, a form that is inherent to Hegel's dialectic for Marx. This is what Marx's critical settling of accounts with the Hegelian dialectic also seeks to extract. That extraction of the rational kernel is derived precisely through Marx's materialist inversion of this Hegelian principle.

This dialectic of negativity or self-referring negation is then a key element in the analysis of the process of the materialist inversion of Hegel's idealist content and form. It appears, from all the evidence of the E.P.M., to be retained as an essential element of the rational kernel in the mystical shell. There is no evidence of Marx ever having changed his mind on the central importance of the dialectic of unfree and free labour in his work.

⁴⁷ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.341.

Marx's early emphasis on the alienation process of labouring activity had still though, to be underpinned with a scientific analysis of the nature of value itself. To be more accurate, that understanding of the alienation process of labour in the Manuscripts, whilst not incorrect, had yet to receive its concrete scientific foundation, in the critical analysis of value as a specific form of alienated social productive activity.

The "burden" of political economy had only just begun. What has been developed here are some of the major philosophical and scientific presuppositions of the method that Marx is going to employ in his critique of political economy. The negation and polarity contained within contradiction, as the dynamic source of the movement and development of the opposition, is central to Hegel's influence on Marx's dialectic of labour.

Even within Hegel's idealist analysis of estrangement, the emphasis on labour, even in its abstract philosophical guise, still retain some positive aspects and merits for Marx, precisely as it is based on the abstract form of negation of the negation. Hegel's "outstanding achievement", despite his mystifications, lies then in his very application of this dialectical principle of negativity.

"Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of *labour* and comprehends objective man - true, because real man - as the outcome of man's *own labour*."⁴⁸

If Marx does not retain this "outstanding achievement" of Hegel's Phenomenology, then he retains virtually nothing of Hegel's work that could be described as a rational element, as this principle is at the very heart of his dialectical view. Even if labour is conceived by Hegel, either as an abstract logical philosophical activity, as the labour of spirit, or, through "the lie of his principle" in its alienated social form, its subsumption under value.

“Let us provisionally say just this much in advance: Hegel’s standpoint is that of modern political economy. He grasps *labour* as the *essence* of man - as man’s essence which stands the test: he sees only the positive not the negative side of labour. Labour is *man’s coming-to-be for himself* within *alienation*, or as *alienated man*. The only labour which Hegel knows and recognises is abstractly mental labour. Therefore, that which constitutes the essence of philosophy - *the alienation of man who knows himself, or alienated science thinking itself* - Hegel grasps as its essence; and in contradistinction to previous philosophy he is therefore able to combine its separate aspects and to present his philosophy as *the philosophy*.”⁴⁹

Marx’s critique of the philosophical essence as being the “alienation of man who knows himself, or alienated science thinking itself” also demands some further analysis. The earlier criticism of Hegel’s philosophical illusions was expressed in its generalised form by Marx as the condition where “reason is at home in unreason as unreason.” The relationship of this earlier formulation to “alienated science thinking itself” has now become the subject matter of investigation.

⁴⁸ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.332-3.

⁴⁹ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.333.

CHAPTER FOUR.

ALIENATED SCIENCE.

1. Alienated Science Thinking Itself.

Marx's description of the essence of philosophy in general, and Hegel's apotheosis of philosophy in particular, as the "*alienation of man who knows himself, or alienated science thinking itself*" raises the question of what Marx means by this statement? Furthermore, how does this proposition square with one of Feuerbach's "great achievements" for Marx, where he proved that "philosophy is nothing else but religion rendered into thought and expounded by thought"?

What can religious mystification and human estrangement in the form of speculative philosophical thought contribute to science? Moreover, why is its contribution, if it is "nothing else" but religion rendered into thought, also describable as a form of alienated science? There seems to be, to put it at its mildest, a tension contained here in Marx's analysis, one that is expressed in the same piece of work.

This tension is, in my view, generated by the difference of the scope, nature and content that is contained in Feuerbach and Marx's criticisms of Hegel. However, this solution also seems problematical, given that Marx's aim in the Manuscripts was also to provide the proof of the Feuerbachian critique, that Hegel's philosophy was no more than religion rendered into thought and expounded by thought.

My analysis has, nevertheless, attempted to point out that in the process of developing his own generalised form of criticism, Marx not only proved the Feuerbachian case, he travelled well beyond its philosophical parameters. This being precisely due to his criticism taking

both a more generalised, and, more importantly, a dialectical exposition and form. In particular, Marx's strategy and analysis consciously attempted to, not only settle accounts with the Hegelian dialectic, but also to outline the critical form of the dialectic that in Hegel was cognised as an uncritical process.

As a result of the uniquely dialectical nature of his criticism, Hegel's alienated and estranged form of the dialectic was described by Marx within the following general proposition and framework; as that of reason being at home in unreason as unreason. Is this position, derived from my analysis of the text, also manifested and confirmed in a further proposition of Marx, that the essence of Hegel's philosophy is also describable as a form of "alienated science thinking itself"?

The question I am trying to provide a possible foundation for answering can also be formulated in another fashion, in the following form. How can that alienated science, the product of an idealist mystical inversion of thought, in turn become real science? Allowing, for the moment, that it may positively contribute towards a genuine method for scientific inquiry; then the question becomes if, and if so how, can it then provide, given that it is enveloped within a mystified and alienated form, any genuine scientific insights and concepts?

It is time to posit some initial and tentative steps towards resolving the dilemma of what Hegel's philosophy, as a form of "alienated science" actually is or could be. A significant part of the answer to this question has in fact already been given; in the form of Marx's generalised form of criticism of Hegel's dialectic of negativity. To explain what is entailed in Marx's characterisation of alienated science, is to further develop and expound this earlier generalised form of criticism of Hegel's thought, of how reason is at home in unreason as unreason.

First of all then, what is the relation between Hegel's alienated form of reason and its alienated view of science? Furthermore, what is, to paraphrase Marx's strategy, the critical

form that lies within this uncritical process of “alienated science thinking itself”? Just what is the dialectic of negativity applied to in this account of alienated science by Hegel?

To answer the above questions, is to further extricate what Marx considers the important and fundamentally rational elements that still remain contained within Hegelian dialectics, despite its mystical form. The solution to the above problems have then no little significance for understanding the nature and process of Marx’s suggested inversion of Hegel’s dialectic. A fuller answer to these questions can be procured, if this generalised form of criticism is integrated with an understanding of what it is, according to Marx, for alienated science to think itself.

The answers to these questions is largely comprehended by working through the consequences of what the nature of the real relationships are between that of alienated abstract thinking on the one hand, and the real dynamic objectivity of nature and society on the other hand, actually are. What is this theosophical and philosophical mystification of Hegel’s logical thought, as a form of alienated science, actually thinking about other than its divine and alienated subject? Marx has his own views on the answer to this question.

“The rich, living, sensuous, concrete activity of self-objectification is therefore reduced to its mere abstraction, *absolute negativity* - an abstraction which is again fixed as such and considered as an independent activity - as sheer activity. Because this so-called negativity is nothing but the *abstract, empty* form of that real living act, its content can in consequence be merely a *formal* content produced by abstraction from all content. As a result therefore one gets general, abstract *forms of abstraction* pertaining to every content and on that account indifferent to, and, consequently valid for, all content - the thought forms or logical categories torn from *real* mind and from *real* nature.”

“Hegel’s positive achievement here, in his speculative logic, is that the *definite concepts*, the universal *fixed thought-forms* in their independence *vis a vis* nature and

mind are a necessary result of the general estrangement of the human being and therefore also of human thought, and that Hegel has therefore brought these together and presented them as moments of the abstraction process . . . But abstraction comprehending itself as abstraction knows itself to be nothing: it must abandon itself - abandon abstraction - and so it arrives at an entity which is its exact opposite - at *nature*. Thus, the entire logic is the demonstration that abstract thought is nothing in itself; that the absolute idea is nothing for itself; that only *nature* is something.”⁵⁰

There is again here, a double-edged sword involved in Marx's critical appraisal of Hegel. This alienation of systematic thought is the alienation of, not only the thinker estranged from himself, but also the thinker estranged from his real essence, nature. The objective act of self-reference in alienation, which is the true mode of being of these abstract forms, expressed in their real self-objectification and substantial activity in nature, are sublated as the product and activity of abstract thought; as the outcome of the movement of the categories of pure thought.

Instead of that real substantial activity, Hegel reduces objectivity itself to a thought entity or concept; that is, he views them as abstract nature not real nature, and abstract activity not real activity. This means that the principle of the negation of the negation, in the systematic form of the Logic is the restoring of that objective totality as a thought totality; objectivity is thus systematically subsumed in an alienated and mystical form, as “moments of the abstraction process.”

That is, and here lies a potentially more positive outcome, the essence of that substantial, natural objectivity is contained in the generalised logical and ontological categories, predicates, and necessary relations that are the conceptual sources for understanding the dynamic activities that pertain to a systematic whole. This process unfolds, in both its relational parts and as a totality, into a universal interconnection of the categories.

⁵⁰ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.343.

The outcome of this dialectical process of the alienated thinking of Hegel's speculative idealism, according to Marx, is that the logical thoughts "are therefore fixed mental forms dwelling outside nature and man." What Hegel has done is hypostasise them, for he has "locked up" these fixed mental forms together and created a totality of abstraction, which means that the fixed abstractions become one systematic act of abstraction revolving in its own circle. As the dialectical movement of the principle of negativity, in the form of pure thought that is now systematically outlined as the logical process of "absolute negativity."

These "*definite concepts, the universal fixed thought-forms,*" as the product of conceptual supersession, are the basic categories inherent in all substantial being. Hegel's positive achievement is to present them as a totality of interrelated categorial and conceptual abstractions. The ontological categories concretely inherent in substantial nature are then subsumed and perceived as moments and determinations of the absolute negativity of the abstraction process.

Furthermore, as this absolute negativity is an abstraction, which is fixed, and considered as an independent activity, as pure activity, it can only have a content which is the abstract form pertaining to every content. At the same time, this entails that it is indifferent to every content, and thus valid for all content. It is then a formal and abstract appropriation and conception of systematic self-objectification, where the real concrete natural activity is reduced to its mere abstraction, as the systematic movement of the categories of "pure thought".

This has to be the central implication of the view that the abstract categories, as the product of alienated thinking that abstracts from real nature and real man, paradoxically in turn, and by dint of their abstraction and generality, in fact also pertain to that objective material and substantial content. As that objectivity is the real source and movement for the dialectic in abstract thinking, the totality of abstractions, as Marx points out, are nothing but the conceptual abstractions that are "torn from *real* mind and from *real* nature."

The result for Marx, though this is far from being entirely negative in my view, is a content whose thought-forms or logical categories are both indifferent to and at the same time pertain to, every content. This elucidation has to be combined, with yet another viewpoint of Marx; that Hegel bequeathed us “the entire compass of abstraction” as now being the object of criticism, to more fully answer the question of how “alienated science thinking itself” could become real science.

Despite Hegel’s mystifying form and exposition, his logical and systematic whole of abstraction has to be seen as a totality that includes the appropriation and criticism of all previous philosophical thought. This, in turn, made the criticism of Hegel’s philosophy a criticism of philosophy in general.

“This means that what Hegel does is to put in place of these fixed abstractions the act of abstraction which revolves in its own circle. We must therefore give him the credit for having indicated the source of all those inappropriate concepts which originally appertained to particular philosophers; for having brought them together; and for having created the entire compass of abstraction as the object of criticism, instead of some specific abstraction.”⁵¹

The above passage also highlights that the critique of Hegel is itself not just a specific critique of a specific abstraction, but the “entire compass” of Hegel’s summation of philosophy that now has to be criticised. This further reinforces the point that Marx’s criticism is, and has to be, of a generalised nature. This critique of Hegel’s systematic dialectic entails the overthrow of philosophy in its traditional metaphysical boundaries and theoretical presuppositions.

Paradoxically, not only then does this prove Feuerbach’s point that Hegel’s philosophy as being religion merely rendered into thought, but in this, its highest and systematic form of

⁵¹ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.344. (Footnote by Marx.)

expression, it also generates a form of alienated science thinking itself in its alienated condition.

The movement of the real, substantial, objective contradiction, expressed in the principle contained in the dialectic of negativity, is reflected in this systematic totality of the concepts and categories of the abstraction process itself. The movement of the categories, whose initial starting point is contained in its elementary abstract simple universal forms, are then further developed through their own specific forms of determinate negation and opposition, and resolved in the positing of more complex and determinate categories, concepts, and relations.

The result is the evolution of a conceptual totality of relations, with the positing and resolving of contradiction as the motor force of the whole process. Hegel starts with abstract thought, and in the process he generates a systematic whole that is abstracted from, indifferent to, and valid for, all content. In reality that totality of logical thought is "nothing but the abstract empty form of that real living act", nothing but the abstract categories generated from real nature, real mind, and real social being.

Generated though, in an alienated conceptual form and idealist foundation that is indifferent to the real determinations and substantial referents, preferring instead their conceptual and idealist form as the truth behind, and the origin of, that objective, material reality.

Thought, alienated from its natural and human essence, is now confined and abstractly summated within an alienated philosophical system of pure logic. The movement of abstract thought is no longer directed outwards to its real source in real objectivity, but now proceeds within itself; the result is the dialectic of pure thought, as rational self-consciousness or philosophical logic.

As the supersession contained in the dialectic of negativity in its general form, is a restoring of these categorial forms in their estrangement; it is also a stopping at the last act, the act of

self-reference in real alienation. The self-reference takes place entirely within the realm of systematic logical thought. It is also then, for this reason, that Marx describes Hegel's thought as a form of alienated science thinking itself.

The real and objectively moving contradiction is reduced to a contradiction in the process of thought. This would seem to point to a not insignificant contribution to a scientific and nomological account that is already contained, albeit in an estranged and mystical form, in Hegel's thought. Expressed more positively, it is an alienated and idealist account of scientific method, that is, alienated in the sense of its ontological foundations and result, thought of as proof of his speculative systematic and supersensible subject, but nevertheless, still a contribution to a scientific methodology.

That abstract and empty totality, the Logical Idea, as the autonomous and independent subject is, in Hegel's idealist account, also the highest expression and the logical form of scientific method. The two are fused together in Hegel's analysis. What is necessary, for a materialist and dialectical criticism of this methodology, to follow Marx's example, is to separate out the idealist subject and ontology of the content, from the scientific method and the objective, real, material content that it is bound up with.

That the logic is forced to end by positing its opposite, nature, means, for the materialist critique, that it has in fact returned to its real and true point of departure. The idealist account has ultimately nowhere else to go other than back to its direct polar opposite and material source; otherwise, it can only revolve within its own self-enclosed conceptual totality as pure thought. This is why the system of logic is, for Marx, alienated science thinking itself; precisely because it is conceived as a totality of logical abstract thinking that is independent of, and indifferent to, its real and objective source and substantiation.⁵²

⁵² For Marx, Hegel's Logic is *alienated thinking*. Idealist thought, by the very nature of its emphasis on mind as the human essence, the estranged form that thought takes in philosophical speculation, has to lay stress on the ontological primacy of the concept and category. "*Logic - mind's coin of the realm*, the speculative or *mental value* of man and nature - its essence which has grown totally indifferent to all real determinateness, and hence unreal - is *alienated thinking* and therefore thinking which abstracts from nature and from real man: *abstract thinking*." Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart.

Conversely, that an idealist dialectic is ultimately derived from this real nature means, to logically invert it and stand it on its feet, that it reflects and pertains to that very same real nature. What it does not do is generate that external nature from the activity of the categories of thought; to speculate in this manner, is to posit the relation and the explanation in a mystified manner that itself cannot contain its own contradictions.

The autonomous subject, the Logical Idea, turns out, in the course of Marx's critique, not to be an autonomous being-for-self, but to be dependent upon its dialectical other, nature, as the real being-for-self. As the totality of the categories of abstraction are, in fact, "nothing else but abstractions from nature", Hegel is driven from the systematic whole of his logic to the direct opposite of the systematic abstractions and categories; that is, he is driven by "boredom" according to Marx, back to nature.

That the thought totality is the product of the concrete totality, as its mystifying inversion, by no means prevents Hegel, to paraphrase Marx, from consciously comprehending and outlining that dialectical thought totality in its general form of working and operation. The Logical Idea is then, a form of alienated science thinking itself, and pretending to be at home with itself in that alienated condition. It is, paradoxically, the "alienation of man who knows himself".

What is however highlighted, and here it applies to the Logic, in the dialectical critique of Marx is not only the negative, but also the positive aspect of the principle of the negation of the negation that is contained in Hegel. The application of the principle of negativity does not appear to deter him from making some genuine insights into the universal interconnection of the categories and concepts that generate and explain the methodological and scientific basis for analysing the movement and development of a systematic totality.

(1975.) P.330. The Logic is then, a form of abstract thought thinking about itself, or as alternatively expressed by Marx, as "the alienation of man who knows himself, or alienated science thinking itself."

A totality that contains a universal principle of change and alteration, namely the movement of a contradiction that both posits and resolves itself, and that characterises the specific contrariety contained in each of its categorial forms and relations in their ongoing forms of development and systematic activity.

The dialectic of negativity as “the moving and generating principle of all being” has, by its very defining terms, a universal application. Once the divine element as the autonomous subject is removed, what we have is an abstract and idealist account of how a systematic totality and its fundamental categories, derived from nature, universally interconnect and operate in a systematic fashion.

Scientific method is not an independent subject autonomous from nature and humanity; it is, in fact, one of the central and hard-won products and dialectical results of that real relation, viewed as a body of knowledge and procedure. Furthermore, this systematic totality of thought, viewed as independent from nature and mind, are both the product and the “necessary result” for Marx of the generalised alienation and estrangement of the human condition in its fundamental activity and thought.

Alienated social activity produces alienated forms of thought. It is capable though, at the same time, of producing some rational insight into that alienated condition. The rational and the mystical can be, and in Hegel’s case are, bound together. This binding together in an uneasy alliance is the source for Hegel’s own specific form of contradiction, a contradiction that points well beyond his own self-imposed idealist boundaries.

That rational insight itself takes an alienated form, an alienated form that can paradoxically both give genuine understanding and at the same time mystify that real relation. This alienated expression of supersession entails that what Hegel supersedes is not the real thing but the concept of the thing. However, due to the critical dialectical form that is nevertheless inherent to this uncritical process, Hegel, at the same time, stands in opposition to the following for Marx.

“From the one point of view, therefore, he stands in opposition both to the *real* thing and to the immediate, unphilosophic *science* or the unphilosophic *conceptions* of this thing. He therefore contradicts their conventional conceptions.”⁵³

The enigma surrounding the inversion of Hegel is, in principle, resolvable. It involves though a combination of different strands and elements. What has already been shown to be central to this resolution is not only the ontological reversal and inversion in the relation of thought to being, but also the necessity of applying that dialectical method to a materialist subject matter.

That Hegel's idealism inverts the categories and dialectical concepts of his analysis does not negate the fact that they are ultimately derived from that real material and social basis. The question is to separate out the dialectics involved in a nomological account of substantial activity from their idealist and mystical foundation, not to mention their bogus, autonomous, and divine subject. It is in this sense that it is a form of alienated science thinking about itself.

This generalised critique of Marx showed the need to, not only condemn abstract thought for not basing itself ultimately on real, material, natural, social relations, and development, it also showed the need to base dialectics upon just such a critical analysis of those very same natural, material and social foundations. The alienated science thinking itself is demystified, and genuine science is realised and materialised, precisely through the rational comprehension and practical emancipation of the human condition.

Despite its mystical form, Hegel's dialectic of negativity provides, as we have seen, the grounds and conditions necessary for that materialist succession; with those grounds being retained, in their more critical process and form, as the basis for future development. It is in this sense that Marx's dialectic supersedes Hegel's.

It is also in this sense, to answer Althusser's question, that we can show how an inversion can be an extraction; indeed, it is only through the process of inverting those idealist presuppositions and subject matter, and applying them to a materialist content and process, that the rational core of the Hegelian dialectic of negativity can itself be extracted.

By positing the source of the development of the contradiction as residing in those same objective processes and activities, the resultant aim of conceptual thought is to then reflect and correspond to the real movement of the material contradictions in the subject matter. It is, furthermore, to derive and deduce those contradictions from the objective movement, instead of imposing them abstractly and systematically as the movement of the categories; as a conceptual self-enclosed whole that has realised its teleological nature.

By doing so Hegel thus has to attempt a dialectical balancing of concepts that blunts, both the real, material contradictions in operation, and the essentially critical, revolutionary content that is inherent to a dialectical methodology; a methodology that itself posits all motions and processes as containing constant change through contradiction. Both errors have to be committed by Hegel, in order to accommodate and confine the dialectic within the idealist foundations and presuppositions of a closed philosophical system, as the final and ultimate form of that dialectical method.

Even in such an early work that is still under the spell of Feuerbach as the Paris Manuscripts are, it is clear that Marx applies a double-edged sword to Hegel's dialectical thought. The problematic lies in explaining how there can, at the same time, be both positive-rational and negative-mystical elements in Hegel's speculative analysis.

Marx's analysis and critique of Hegel's philosophy has, as I have attempted to elucidate and show, itself an inherently dialectical flavour and character. The result is that the uncritical process contained in Hegel's dialectic is itself superseded by Marx through the catalyst of

⁵³ Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.341.

Feuerbach's materialism and naturalism. What is cancelled is the mystical-idealist foundation and explanation, what is retained is the rational element in his dialectical analysis of the process of movement and change through the developing and ongoing contradiction of a systematic subject.

A materialist and idealist dialectic are not polar opposites slugging it out for dominance; Marx's materialist dialectic arises out of and goes beyond its idealist predecessor. Hegel himself has been subjected to his own concept of *aufheben*. It was by showing how the contradictions inherent within Hegel's dialectic, which itself includes laying the grounds and foundations through that critique for a materialist dialectic and subject to begin to emerge in the work of Marx, that is reflected in the analysis proffered here.

Marx's settling of his accounts with Hegelianism in the Paris Manuscripts, regardless of whether it is viewed as being fully comprehensive or otherwise, is nevertheless primarily expressed through this exposition of the dialectic of negativity in its twofold character. This is itself expressed in the opposition of the twofold critical and uncritical forms of the process that Marx's analysis develops.

Marx develops this resultant critical form of dialectic, extracted here in its embryonic form, through his generalised inversion of Hegel's own mystical application of the negation of the negation. One might almost say that Marx turns a fundamental dialectical principle of Hegel's right side up again in order to discover and appropriate the rational kernel that is contained within it.

The source underpinning Hegel's illusions, that Marx develops and generalises from Feuerbach's groundbreaking innovations, lays the material foundations for that dialectical process to be analysed in its more critical process and form by Marx. His treatment of Hegel in the E.P.M. exemplifies this approach; he may, over the course of time, change and alter his appreciation of Hegel, and, for that matter Feuerbach, but he does not deviate from this twofold analysis and characterisation of Hegel's dialectic.

Marx, unlike Feuerbach, never gave up on dialectics; the question is what rational form his dialectic takes in relation to Hegel's mystical variation. Taken together, that fusion of the dialectic with the activity of labour already heralds important differences that are emerging in the views of Marx and Feuerbach vis a vis Hegel; not to mention the impact they will shortly have on Marx's own attitude to Feuerbach.

It was by basing it on the practical, objective activity of labour as the new subject; as the substantial and essential activity that expresses both man's relation to man, and at the same time, man's relation objectively to nature, that a rational form of dialectic now becomes possible to generate. In this sense Marx was wrong, when he posed, as a positive outcome and achievement of Feuerbach's critique, the establishing of "true materialism" and "real science"; this now becomes possible only as a consequence of his own work.

The development of the critique of socially alienated labour in both its social-material fetters and in its contradictory conditions of existence, is the core subject matter of the Manuscripts. It is not only Prometheus and his gift of labour, but also the dialectic itself, that is now potentially unbound and set free from its idealist fetters and chains by Marx's critique.

This not only marks him off from Feuerbach; it also signals the clear attempt to begin to apply the dialectic, in a rational manner, to a rational subject. This new subject matter of investigation, in combination with its boundless potentiality for free activity, is now posited as the focal point and nexus for the further development of both human society and critical thought itself.

This orientation is first posited as the foundation central to Marx's thought in the Paris Manuscripts; the consequences and further development of this new subject matter for investigation are nevertheless still embryonic in their nature at this point. However, the ball has already been sent rolling; the only question is in ascertaining the nature and extent of its

accelerating and gathering momentum. That evaluation has to be viewed though as an ongoing dynamic process, with the rational form of dialectic itself lying behind the changes in Marx's viewpoint and perspective. This is the key to understanding Marx's rapidly evolving world outlook.

The earlier critical weighing of the philosophical scales in favour of Feuerbach, due to the very liberating manner of Feuerbach's explosive demolition of Hegel's systematic idealism, has its own internal dynamic. The dynamics of this process is largely determined, and ultimately measured by, the nature of Marx's own assimilation and further development of the materialist application of the rational form of dialectic to the category of labour.

This asymmetrical weighing of the dialectical scales begins to inevitably tip back in favour of Hegel, as Marx evolves his own independent world viewpoint of the dialectics of social labour and the critique of value.

2. Summary.

It is the view of the thesis that the early and incomplete settling of accounts with Hegel in the Manuscripts is viewed in a different light when the application of the dialectic to political economy has, by and large, been completed some fifteen years later. The early critique of Hegel was centrally aimed towards the mystifying side of his dialectic. Not only, "all those years ago" though, did Marx criticise the mystical side of Hegel's dialectic; he also outlined, as we have witnessed, some positive aspects pertaining to his thought.

Marx, later in life, clearly felt the need to draw a balance sheet and clarify his relation to Hegel by writing a work on dialectics, but only once the necessary burden of political economy had been put on a scientific foundation. Marx's debt to Hegel, as the thesis will

later attempt to show, is, if anything, greater when Marx begins to apply that dialectic to the systematic laws of motion of capital.⁵⁴

Not only is the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, expressed in the law of the negation of the negation retained in Marx's later work, but the other laws of dialectics, discovered and logically systematised by Hegel, are also applied to both the understanding and the critique of the political economy of value.

In order to arrive at this point, Marx had to, not only accept the Feuerbachian critique of Hegel, though, as I have argued, heavily qualified by Marx's own keen sense of dialectic; he also had to develop a materialist critique of Feuerbach's inadequate materialism. The positive contribution of Feuerbach largely lies in preparing the conditions for further intellectual development through the devastating critique of Hegel's idealist foundation for thought. This development culminated with Marx's own critical and materialist form of dialectic inherent within labouring activity.

This was achieved, at least in part, by drawing upon the positive elements in Hegel's dialectic of change and activity, and applying them to the study of alienated labour and the power of money. It was also achieved by developing a generalised materialist form of criticism of Hegel's idealist system; a system that is ultimately in contradiction with both the essence and the subject matter of the dialectical method.

Feuerbach's role in this process is that he bridges the gap in this transition from absolute idealism to the critique of political economy and a materialist conception of history. This he did by showing that nature and civil society were the true sources of the divine and the

⁵⁴ For example, could Marx really have known, at the time of writing the E.P.M. and the German Ideology, that, for example, Hegel's dialectic of quality and quantity and their transformation into the category of measure, would be of central importance in analysing both the substance of value, and the money form of value? Its analysis had barely been put on the agenda at this time, far less understood in a thoroughly scientific and dialectical manner through the employment and analysis of these very categories.

mystical, and the real foundation by which human understanding and knowledge should be interpreted, developed and understood.⁵⁵

Feuerbach's liberating influence, despite his pivotal role for this further development of critical thought is, however, both mediatory and transitory. It is in this sense, despite Hegel's philosophical superiority, that Feuerbach was "epoch making *after* Hegel." Marx, in a letter to Schweitzer dated Jan. 24th 1865, where he writes clarifying his relation to Proudhon, makes the following interesting comment that relates to the present discussion:

"Proudhon's relation to Saint-Simon and Fourier is about the same as that of Feuerbach to Hegel. Compared with Hegel, Feuerbach is extremely poor. All the same he was epoch making *after* Hegel because he laid *stress* on certain points which were disagreeable to the Christian consciousness but important for the progress of criticism, and which Hegel had left in mystic semi-obscurity."⁵⁶

Philosophically speaking then, Feuerbach is "extremely poor" in comparison with Hegel as a philosopher and thinker. Indeed, Hegel is later characterised by Marx as being the "ultimate word" in philosophy, this is why the materialist criticism of the mystifying form of the Hegelian dialectic was all the more necessary. Feuerbach's great achievement and merit for Marx and Engels, was to produce a materialist critique of that speculative philosophical form, by showing that the mystical form of idealism has, in fact, secular, material, and natural roots.

⁵⁵ Engels summarises the dissolution of the Hegelian school of philosophy in the following manner: "Feuerbach alone was of significance as a philosopher. But not only did philosophy – claimed to soar above all special sciences and to be the science of sciences connecting them – remain to him an impassable barrier, an inviolable holy thing, but as a philosopher too he stopped halfway, was a materialist below and an idealist above. He was incapable of disposing of Hegel through criticism; he simply threw him aside as useless, while he himself compared with the encyclopaedic wealth of the Hegelian system, achieved nothing positive beyond a turgid religion of love and a meagre, impotent morality." F. Engels. *Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy*. Marx-Engels. *Selected Works*. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.349. See also P.345 for more on Engels view of Feuerbach's "astonishing poverty" when compared with Hegel.

⁵⁶ Marx-Engels. *Selected Correspondence*. Lawrence and Wishart. (1956.) P.185.

The central importance, the historical relevance, and the “epoch making” aspect of Feuerbach’s thought, was that his materialist critique of religion and philosophical idealism were fundamentally “important for the progress of criticism”. That is, he laid the groundwork for the further development of critical thought; this culminated in the form of a dialectical and materialist analysis to emerge in the work of Marx and Engels. This, despite the view that his thought is deemed philosophically inferior and “extremely poor” in comparison with Hegel.

However, as Marx also notes in the correspondence, the “certain points” that Feuerbach develops and lays stress on, which were important for further critical development and progress; had already been left, by Hegel, in “mystic semi-obscurity”. That is, they were already contained, at least in the germ in Hegel, but in a mystified and obscurantist form.

Marx’s positive attitude to Feuerbach had though, both theoretical and practical reasons and causes. The major theoretical reason is Feuerbach’s critical explosion of Hegel’s idealist system; this greatly influenced and pushed Marx and Engels towards developing their own materialist, historical, and dialectical viewpoint.

The practical reason was that in their early adherence to communism, Marx and Engels wanted to win such an important and influential figure as Feuerbach to the communist cause. However, there was, after a brief but torrid and seminal flirtation with Feuerbach, a decisive rejection and brake with him.

That Marx grasped, more positively than Feuerbach, the rational and revolutionary element in Hegel’s dialectics had to be tempered, however, with the fact that it had yet to be fully married to his study of political economy in order to generate a new materialist explanation of social being that was fundamentally dialectical.

Feuerbach, however, has very little to offer on this developing front, in the application of the dialectic to labour and political economy; Hegel, by contrast, and as we shall see in some detail later, is an entirely different kettle of fish.

CHAPTER FIVE.

HEGEL'S ILLUSION REVISITED.

“My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of “the Idea”, he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of “the Idea”. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.”⁵⁷

1. Direct Opposite.

The nature of Marx's materialist inversion of Hegel's dialectic entails that Marx's method and application of that dialectic is, as he consciously expressed it, the “direct opposite” and not merely different from his idealist predecessor. The question being, and remaining, what is the exact nature of this inverted, directly opposite, or contrary form of dialectic? We have already gone some way down the road to answering this, but there is yet further progress we can make that will both back up the route taken so far, and lead us into new paths for investigation.

Hegel's idealist and speculative foundation for the dialectic, as part of the criticism contained in the Paris Manuscripts showed, is also the source of his idealist illusions. Marx, in his later years, also made some comments regarding the nature of the speculative illusions that held Hegel in their sway. It is to these comments that we will now turn our analysis

⁵⁷ K. Marx. Afterword to the Second German Edition of Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.29. Jan. 24th 1873.

towards, with a backward glance seeing how they relate to Marx's earlier attempted general critique in the Paris Manuscripts, and a forward glance that relates to Marx's mature work, Capital.

As regards the question of the continuity in Marx's thought, the evidence from Marx's early work is, in many ways, both reiterated and developed within his more mature writings. Some of the themes of his later criticisms of Hegelian idealism are, as we shall shortly witness, the same as the earlier targets. The vexed question of the continuity or otherwise in Marx's critical account of Hegel and the dialectic can now be put under the spotlight for further investigation.

Marx, in his analysis of the method of political economy, contained in the introduction to the Grundrisse, and written some thirteen years after the Manuscripts, returns again to the sources underpinning Hegel's illusion. Marx's frugal observations here are important, not only for the beginning of an understanding of Marx's view of a scientific method of cognition, itself a dialectical one, but also why this cognitive dialectic helped to both delude and confirm Hegel in his idealist illusions.

In this later work, Marx offers some further thoughts on Hegel's analysis of a systematic whole that brings out more aspects of the argument for the ontological priority of material being over consciousness, an early but constant theme of Marx's critique of Hegelian idealism.

He also offers a partial explanation of how Hegel came to have a mystified account of the relation in the introduction to the Grundrisse. The source of why this systematic totality of thought is viewed in a speculative and alienated manner, as the product of thought, lies in Hegel's viewing the dialectical method, inherent in the cognitive process, in an idealist fashion. As Marx puts it:

“The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation and conception. Along the first path the full conception was evaporated to yield an abstract determination; along the second, the abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought. In this way Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself, whereas the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete comes into being.”⁵⁸

The above was written in 1857, which, if taken alongside the passage quoted at the beginning of this section from the Afterword written in 1873, still echo that earlier critique in the 1844 Manuscripts. A time period of nearly thirty years. There are undoubted similarities and continuities of thought contained in the early and mature Marx, and there are also nuances within the broad concepts contained in that materialist critique, which point to other areas of inquiry.

In the above two quotes, written sixteen years apart, Marx criticises Hegel’s view and interpretation of the nature of the “process of thinking.” What are the core elements of these two criticisms of the “life-process of the human brain”, that is, the process of thinking?

In the 1873 Afterword to Capital, the “process of thinking” is seen as, and transformed into, an independent subject that is the creator of the real world. The world is, in turn, reduced to the status of the external phenomenal form of “the Idea”. In the Grundrisse introduction of 1857, the criticism of the “process of thinking” is that concrete reality appears as the result

⁵⁸K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) Introduction. P.101. Aug-Sept. 1857.

of the process of concentrated thought unfolding itself out of itself and by itself, in the external form of the real world.

Here we have a common perennial theme that echoes the earlier criticisms in the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 of Hegel's alienated thought subsuming not only nature, but the movement of thought itself; by the positing of a divine subject as the source of the whole process; where nature and man become mere predicates of this unreal, autonomous, and mystical subject.

Hegel's illusion is that he conceives the real as the result of the process of thinking constructed into a totality of thought, which unfolds and objectifies itself as nature and human spirit. In these passages, Marx clearly posits the ontological primacy of the material world as the presupposition and real starting point of how the concrete can be captured in conceptual thought. The 1857 introduction also echoes the designation of Hegel's philosophy in the Manuscripts, as being a form of "alienated science thinking itself." Here, again, are the later remarks of the Grundrisse.

"Therefore, to the kind of consciousness - and this is characteristic of the philosophical consciousness - for which conceptual thinking is the real human being, and for which the conceptual world as such is thus the only reality, the movement of the categories appears as the real act of production - which only, unfortunately, receives a jolt from outside - whose product is the world; and - but this is again a tautology - this is correct in so far as the concrete totality is a totality of thoughts, concrete in thought, in fact a product of thinking and comprehending; but not in any way a product of the concept which thinks and generates itself outside or above observation and conception; a product, rather, of the working up of observation and conception into concepts."⁵⁹

⁵⁹ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) Introduction. P.101. Aug-Sept. 1857.

In the Manuscripts, Marx had also written about the illusions of speculation. The question is, does the earlier critique both reflect and foreshadow his later writings? Hegel's "double error" in the Manuscripts was to pose the philosopher as the criterion of knowledge, and mind as the essence of man. In the Grundrisse, the variation on the common theme is that conceptual thinking is regarded as the real human being and the conceptual world as the only true reality.

Again, the problematic criterion of philosophical man in his essential speculative activity is seen as the expression of the real human being, where Hegel's mystical and inverted speculative idealism confirms itself in its own philosophical alienation as an alienated subject. The essence of Hegel's illusion, where the movement of the categories is mystically interpreted as the real act of production, is also reflected in the following remarks from the 1844 text.

"[T]he abstract thinker learns in his intuition of nature that the entities which he thought to create from nothing, from pure abstraction - the entities he believed he was producing in the divine dialectic as pure products of the labour of thought, for ever shuttling back and forth in itself and never looking outward into reality are *nothing else but abstractions from characteristics from nature*. To him, therefore, the whole of nature merely repeats the logical abstractions in a sensuous, external form. He once more resolves nature into these abstractions. Thus his intuition of nature is only the act of confirming his abstraction from the intuition of nature - is only the conscious repetition by him of the process of creating his abstraction.⁶⁰

2. Movement of the Categories.

The pieces and extracts, quoted from three different works, span the period from 1844 - 1873, a period of nearly thirty years. There is, however, a definite continuity and consistency in Marx's critique. The "divine dialectic" of 1844 is "nothing else but

abstractions from the characteristics of nature.” The Idea, in 1873, is “nothing else” than the “material world reflected in the human mind.”

The 1857 critique posits that the concept does not generate itself “outside” of our observations and our conceptions, that is, the Idea does not take an external material form in nature; it is merely the product of our reflection of nature in the categories of thought. Nor is it “above” conception and observation, that is, its source is not the divine, absolute and autonomous subject of the Notion.

Furthermore, the Logical Idea is not, as in 1873, the “demiurgos of the real world.” The “movement of the categories” is therefore not the “real act of production”, with the real being merely cognised as the “external phenomenal form of the Idea”, the product of thought unfolding itself out of itself, by itself. Nature, as it is not the product of autonomous idealist thought, cannot then, as in 1844, be reduced to the estranged objective form that merely “repeats the logical abstractions”, the pure products of the labour of thought, in “a sensuous, external form.” Marx’s criticisms, spanning over three decades, hammer away then at some common perennial themes.

Cognitive Illusion.

Hegel’s illusion is also due in part, and here we have another positive element emerging from the idealist philosophical mist, to the application of a dialectical method of cognition and its twofold analytical and synthetic paths. The movement from the concrete to the abstract, the deriving of the analytical, abstract universal determinations that, as Marx puts it, “evaporated” the concrete whole or “full conception”, is the abstract starting point for the appropriation of the concrete in thought.

The idealist ontological illusion of Hegel, that it is the result of the categories in operation, is then confirmed, for Hegel, by the second opposite path of the cognitive dialectic. Here,

⁶⁰ Marx Engels. *Collected Works*. Volume 3. Lawrence and Wishart. (1975.) P.345-346.

“the abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought.” It is this second motion of the synthetic appropriation of that concrete totality back into that full conception, the movement that reproduces the concrete as the concrete in thought, that confirms the prior motion in its abstract starting point. It is this standing reality on its head that supports the mystical inversion of Hegel’s idealism that thought does not, in fact presuppose external nature for its starting point, but that the direct opposite is in fact the case.

It is then, due to the ability of the twofold contrary motions, the move from the concrete to the abstract and its opposite motion, the move from the abstract to the concrete, that is contained in the cognitive dialectic, that not only allows thought to reproduce the concrete in thought, but also aided and contributed to Hegel’s illusion that the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete was, in fact, the way the concrete was itself created.

The further question for the materialist critique of this idealist form of the cognitive dialectic is how Hegel, despite these speculative mystifications of this form of dialectic, generated those concepts and categories into a systematic whole, and how that entire compass of abstraction relates to the real concrete totality?

In order to cognitively understand the nature of a concrete totality in its dynamic activity, then the major categories of its determinate being have to be integrated in such a way that the totality expresses itself in the evolving dialectical oppositions and relations of those categories. This evolution, whilst conceptual in its form, aims through its categories and concepts, to reflect the process whereby that objective totality makes itself into a unity of a manifold diversity.

This mirroring of the real by cognition is achieved by developing the forms of dialectical activity that reflect the motions that manifest themselves in the subject’s general characteristics of being. These objective ontological forms being underpinned by, and understood as, the nomological basis for the substantial activity that is expressed in the

principles of change and alteration inherent in those developing and contradictory, but reciprocal ontological poles. As the source of the motions that specifically determine and individuate the subject into a unified totality embodying its own internal principle of movement and self-activity.

The materialist nature of the dialectic, and its subject matter, means that it is the real material contradiction that is the basis for the movement, change, and supersession of that subject in all its material activities and contradictions, not its abstract thought forms or concepts. The dialectic of negativity applies primarily to the ontology of objective and substantial activity.

In turn, this objective contradiction provides the basis for the dialectic of negativity in the cognitive form. This applies in a twofold sense, firstly, in the contrary analytic and synthetic forms of motion pertaining to the cognitive process. Secondly, as a conceptual reflection, through those analytic and synthetic forms in cognition that allows thought to grasp the evolving, specific and determinate forms of the unfolding of the contradiction in objective being.

Those specific determinations are reflected within the ontological forms of the categories that are generated by thought, from their simple, abstract universal forms to their more developed concrete determinations and relations that allows thought to appropriate the ontological relations in the world. This cognitive result is achieved precisely through the contradictions that are contained in the categories of conceptual cognition; categories that are generated by and the reflections of, their ontological referents in that substantial objectivity.

In general terms, the analytic form of cognition produces the universal form of abstraction pertinent to the subject, the synthetic form of cognition specifies and concretises that universal form, by grasping the specific difference that characterises the abstract universal. By dialectically relating these two forms and resolving the opposition contained in them, the

universal and particular are individuated in the concept that can correspond to the subject under investigation.

The twofold forms of the cognitive dialectic are united into a systematic whole, with a central, dynamic and moving principle of change, the positing and resolving of contradiction, that unites and universally interconnects all its determinate forms, and reveals the systematic activity of the subject. The result is a scientific cognition of that concrete totality, not the concrete totality itself.

The dialectic of negativity in the real world is appropriated through this cognitive dialectic. Hegel conflates both processes and posits the ontological source for the former as residing in the latter, in the primacy of the dialectic of negativity contained in the categories. Marx retains Hegel's cognitive dialectic as a scientific method of cognition, what he negates is that the real is the product or result of the movement of dialectical thought. The result is the scientific understanding and analysis of the object of investigation, not the proof of an idealist ontological basis for the existence of the object.

The method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is, as Marx points out, only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete and reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. It is not the way or the process by which that concrete totality comes into existence. There is both a mirroring, one is tempted to say an extraction, and an inverting in Marx's critique of Hegel's idealist form of cognitive dialectic.

It would appear then, paradoxically, that Hegel's illusion is caused by an incorrect idealist foundation and ontology combined with a correct dialectical method of cognition. A method of rising, through the analytic and synthetic forms of cognition, from the abstract to the concrete, that allows the concrete to be reproduced in thought. It is again difficult to draw out any other contrary conclusion from Marx's comments. This does not entail though, that Marx has an idealist account of the process of cognition.

That science has to have a materialist grounding is not the question at issue here, but that materialist grounding, by no means rules out the point that idealist thought can, and has, made important contributions to scientific thought. Marx is merely making the point of how a correct conceptual method of appropriating the objective can strengthen and underpin an idealist view of them as being the product and result of the subjective. The dialectic between the method of inquiry and the method of presentation can, as Marx expresses the relation here, also help to further confirm those idealist illusions.

“Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connexion. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere a priori construction.”⁶¹

The real and objective contradictions necessarily continue to play themselves out to a material conclusion, given the finite nature of objective, material existence. Moreover, this produces new dialectical forms of change that are themselves both heedless of, and unenlightened by, the illusions of speculative thought in its mystical glorification, and in its dialectical balancing of the concepts, of what already exists.

The dialectics involved in the cognitive process are materialised by Marx as the historical result and product of, not only the dialectic in objectivity, but also how that objective dialectic between humans and nature is cognitively and dialectically reflected in human subjectivity. As the result of the social evolution of the brain, itself the highest product and result of the dialectic of human labour and nature.

⁶¹ K. Marx. Afterword to the Second German Edition of Capital Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.28. Written on Jan.24th 1873.

The thinking head, in order to think, has to have a material opposition in order to be able to develop the working up of observation and conception into the concepts and categories of thought. It is its source, its cause, and its ground, and the categories and their movement are, in the final analysis, derived from and presuppose this very material basis. The process of thinking, viewed as the process of the movement of the categories, thus reflects idealistically the real process in the world according to the materialist critique.

This is why Marx necessarily posits that Hegel's idealism "unfortunately" has to receive "a jolt from the outside" in order to get the whole idealist process of thought kick started and moving in the direction of conceptual appropriation of that primary objective activity.

3. Materialist Subject.

Simply positing the inversion of the primary ontological assumptions of idealism does not fully exhaust Marx's materialist inversion of Hegel. Marx's rejection of an idealist dialectic also entails the rejection of an idealist subject, the Logical Idea. It necessarily in my view, and there is more evidence than we have already witnessed in the early Marx to support this, entails that the inversion also posits a different subject matter for investigation. The theoretical method too, must have a materialist subject. Marx tells us what it is in the Grundrisse.

"The totality as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts, is a product of a thinking head, which appropriates the world in the only way it can, a way different from the artistic, religious, practical, and mental appropriation of this world. The real subject retains its autonomous existence outside the head just as before; namely as long as the head's conduct is merely speculative, merely theoretical. Hence, in the theoretical method, too, the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as the presupposition."⁶²

That subject matter and presupposition of a dialectical method, from a materialist perspective, is nature and man; there are no other subjects, supersensible or otherwise for a materialist dialectic to investigate. There is, though in a sense, only one science for Marx and Engels, that science is history; that history itself can be further divided in the form of a predominant natural history, and its offspring, human history.⁶³

What I have been arguing for, is that the solution to the enigma of the inversion remains problematic, for it remains incomplete in content, if the inversion is left solely at the reversal of ontological presuppositions without working through the further consequences of this.

This was reflected in Marx's inversion of the Hegelian dialectic in the Manuscripts was necessarily combined with its application to the category of labour in its dialectical relation to nature. The social form and mode of production of human evolution being viewed as a subject, that in its social movement, is treated as a derivative process of natural history.

Marx, in the Afterword to *Capital*, quotes from a Russian reviewer who outlines his general, dialectical, realist, and materialist method for the analysis of political economy. The value of analysing this review of Marx's method is that it provides a rough sketch of key areas of the general form of working of dialectic from his own materialist and historical perspective. It is worth extensively quoting to provide further material for the investigation and discussion.

“Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, consciousness and intelligence, but rather, on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence If in the

⁶² K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) Introduction. P.101-102. Aug-Sept. 1857.

⁶³ In the first section of the *German Ideology*, in a passage of the first version that is crossed out, the following remarks are formulated. “We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are, however, inseparable; the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist.” Marx Engels. *Collected Works Volume 5*. Lawrence and Wishart. (1976.) P. 28.

history of civilisation the conscious element plays a part so subordinate, then it is self-evident that a critical inquiry whose subject matter is civilisation, can less than anything else, have for its basis any form or result of consciousness. That is to say, that not the idea, but the material phenomena alone can serve as its starting point. Such an inquiry will confine itself to the confrontation and the comparison of a fact, not with ideas, but with another fact. For this inquiry, the one thing of moment is, that both facts be investigated as accurately as possible, and that they actually form, each with respect to the other, different momenta of an evolution; but most important of all is the rigid analysis of the series of successions, of the sequences and concatenations in which the different stages of such an evolution present themselves.⁶⁴

The subject matter then also provides a materialist grounding of the dialectic. What Marx analyses in the value form is the development of the contradiction of two facts, use value and exchange value, that run all the way through, and take evolving and progressively more concrete forms of determinations and relations in the course of the analysis. It is not the Idea that is in the driving seat, nor is the understanding of that objective activity based on an idealist dialectic of thought and object.

Marx's materialism and realism entails that the economic laws of motion are independent of human thought and volition. The movement of the conceptual categories, portrayed in their evolving dialectical polarity, only provides the conceptual framework for reflecting and understanding the real material basis and characteristic forms of determinations of the objective economic laws of motion of the operation of the value form and system.

The real point of departure for Marx's materialism and realism is the objective concrete totality that is the starting point for the head's appropriation. The subject of Marx's

⁶⁴ K. Marx. Afterword to the Second German Edition of Capital Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.27-28. (Jan. 24th 1873.)

materialism is material production, but material production in its historical and social specificity, not material production viewed abstractly and ahistorically.

Those material and social connections are rooted in the concrete historical conditions that generate a specific form of material production and its social relations. Those social connections are necessary connections for the working of the economic laws of motion of the specific mode of social production under investigation. They are not the products of accidental relations, but of the historical development of the social conditions of labour in combination with, and presupposing as their foundation, objective natural necessity.

Production is not only the result of specific and evolving forms of production, a historical result, but it also generates specific forms and economic categories inherent to that mode of production. A definite form or mode of production “thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange as well as *definite relations between these different moments*.”⁶⁵

A definite production generates then, historically specific forms that are systematically congealed into a unity of the diverse moments contained in that organic totality. There is a systematic and reciprocal relation between the different moments, although the point of departure and return is that of the productive mode. Marx’s subject matter is aimed at the analysis of the specific and dominant social form of labour that determines the nature of the specific historical mode of material production.

“In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others. It is a general illumination which bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialised within it.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) Introduction. P.99.

⁶⁶ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Introduction. P.106-107.

The general form of working, the essence of the dialectical method, is now applied by Marx to the study of the social form of labour, in order to analyse the historical development and laws of motion of the historico-specific forms that it takes in its productive modes of operation. This includes the arisal, maturity, decline, and transition, to higher forms of social labour contained in the dialectic of those specific historical forms.

That Marx decisively rejects the idealism and mystical inversion in Hegel's thought is a constant from his early writings onwards. What is variable is his application of the general form of working and the laws of dialectic. It is not until Marx clearly defines his own subject matter and parameters of investigation, that the laws of dialectics are applied, in a systematic manner, to a systematic materialist subject.

The complexities of Hegel's dialectical analysis of nomological activity are not brought out in the critical discussion of Hegel in the Manuscripts. What the thesis will argue is that what is retained and applied, in a materialist manner to political economy, are the general laws that Hegel outlines as pertaining to the workings of a systematic whole in its substantial process. This is the kernel that contains the rational element in Hegel's dialectic as applied to a system.

Marx does not give up on the laws of dialectics formulated and discovered by Hegel. These laws being at the heart of any general form of working of dialectic itself, including Marx's own application of the dialectic. Marx does not abandon these at any time, even though they may have to be altered and tailored to suit a materialist foundation of the dialectic. This important question will be discussed in part two of the thesis.

4. Summary.

Turning Hegel's dialectic right side up is, as is generally regarded, a reference to the contrary ontological presuppositions of both thinkers. The critique of Hegel's idealist totality as the abstract, philosophical expression of the real, its reconstitution as the concrete

in thought, is returned to its real point of departure. The solution to the enigma of the inversion largely lies in working through what are the ontological and epistemological implications of this materialist grounding of the dialectic.

Not only is there an ontological inversion in the primary foundations, with material and social reality replacing thought as the moving force, but also as the thesis argues, this necessitates a new subject matter of investigation. It also necessitates viewing the theoretical form of the general form of dialectic as itself arising out of the movement of real material, natural, and social being.

What has also been ascertained by the method of investigation employed, is that implicit in the above are the following consequences for not only understanding the positive and negative sides of Hegel's dialectical thought, but also its ontological inversion in the materialist critique. So far, the following consequences have been gleaned from the materialist inversion, primarily from the analysis of Marx's early work.

1. There is a materialist inversion in the ontological primacy from an idealist monism to a materialist monism.
2. The consequences of this is that a new, primary, materialist subject matter, the practical activity and historical evolution of the social form of labour, replaces the idealist historical teleology of the "Phenomenology of Spirit".
3. The "Science of Logic" gets demoted from its Pantheonic and Olympean heights to its true material origin; as a mystified and idealist account of scientific method that is contained in the outlining of the fundamentally dialectical nature of the activity of the ontological categories and laws that govern the interrelation and universal interconnection of a systematic organic totality.

4. The fundamental principles that operate in the analysis of all three elements above are the general form of working and the laws of dialectics.

The relation between the general form of working and the laws of dialectics is expressed in the laws of motion of a systematic and substantial subject, as a process and movement containing an inherent principle of change and alteration. Dialectics is about the discovering of the laws of motion and the driving contradiction that expresses those laws of motion of the substantial process. This being the core content of the laws of dialectics themselves. What Hegel outlines is the general form of working of these laws of dialectics.

It would seem unlikely, and it appears contrary to what little evidence we have, that Marx would want to jettison what he regarded as Hegel's hard won positive achievements of both consciously and comprehensively outlining the general form of working and the laws of dialectics, even if they are not ready or tailor made for Marx, but have to be modified in line with his materialism. This is a question we are not yet in a position to give a more full and sufficient answer to.

They do provide, however, and this was gleaned from the analysis of the Paris Manuscripts, the basis for the critical form of dialectic that inherently lies in Hegel's thought. The replacement of the idealist view of the dialectical abstractions with the materialist poles of the dialectic, derived from the subject under investigation, are combined with the grounding of their activity in that objectivity rather than the categories of thought. This has the following immediate result from the materialist perspective.

It leads to a contrary understanding of the movement of the material poles of the contradiction in their development and supersession. It posits an open ended and evolving materialist view of the interrelated systems of nature and society, and the dialectical contradictions inherent in their specific motions and processes; not the hermetically sealed idealist teleology and resolution of the dialectical contradictions within a system of logical

thought. It also posits then, the fundamental contradiction in Hegel's thought, of that between the dialectical method and his idealist system.

The point is to unearth the laws of motion of this real movement in its specific contradictions, that is, to specify the general form itself in a determinate subject in its own specific expressions of those laws. Hegel imposes them on the world, as laws of thought, not laws generated from real nature, their true source of origin. It does not stop him though, from outlining what the nature of those general laws governing the dialectical movement of a totality, actually are.

To apply it idealistically is to apply it in an alienated manner, and to impose that logic on the world as the laws of motion of thought, instead of deriving it from the real relations and the actual facts, is to invert and mystify those real relations and actual facts. Marx retains these laws of dialectical development; they are the key to understanding, and the essence of, the rational kernel contained in Hegel's mystical inversion of dialectics.

The fundamental contradiction that inherently lies in Hegel's work, is that it contains both metaphysics and science wrapped together in an idealist account. The point is to strip it of the contradiction between the metaphysical content and form that Hegel imposes upon the scientific content and form. It is by doing so that the rational kernel can be revealed and divorced from the mystical shell, and the basis for understanding how that idealist and abstract view of the laws of motion and development of a dialectical totality can be an aid to a materialist science, finds its expression.

This is the core content of the rational kernel that is left from turning Hegel's dialectic upside down; the systematic materialist result of this inversion was the application, by Marx, of this dialectical method to the political economy of value. What the relations are between these two processes and what more it can reveal for clarifying the dialectical enigma of the relation of Hegel and Marx's dialectic is now the subject for further investigation. This is the general theme of part two of the thesis.

**PART TWO:
THE GENERAL FORM OF DIALECTIC.**

CHAPTER SIX.

OBJECTIVE PROCESS AND THOUGHT.

1. Introduction.

“Marx was and is the only one who could undertake the work of extracting from the Hegelian logic the nucleus containing Hegel’s real discoveries in this field, and of establishing the dialectical method, divested of its idealist wrappings, in the simple form in which it becomes the only correct mode of conceptual evolution. The working out of the method which underlies Marx’s critique of political economy is, we think, a result hardly less significant than the basic materialist conception.”⁶⁷

We saw, in part one of the thesis, that Marx’s characterisation of Hegel’s logical thought was postulated as a form of “alienated science thinking itself.” A central thrust of the materialist critique of this estranged and alienated account of scientific method by Marx was focussed on Hegel’s illusion that the categories were the source of the movement in the real world.

That the movement of the categories is not the real act of production does not, of course, negate that the categories can capture that real movement in conceptual thought; all

⁶⁷ F. Engels. From a review article [Das Volk, no.16, August 20th 1859] contained in K. Marx. A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Progress Publishers. (1977.) P.224-225.

scientific cognition has this as its aim. Furthermore, the critique of Hegel's idealist ontological primacy of thought, as we have also seen, does not, for Marx, necessarily entail the rejection of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics, only their speculative foundation and application.

We have already partially addressed the nature of the content of this general form of the Hegelian dialectic; this we elucidated through Marx's critical analysis, and inverted application, of the Hegelian principle of the dialectic of negativity to the category of labour. We will, though, have to further investigate how Hegel mystifies the dialectical method that is contained in his account of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics.

The real question, for an understanding of the materialist critique and inversion, is what are the consequences for the laws of dialectics, the core elements of the general form of working of the Hegelian dialectic, when they are grounded in social and natural being, as opposed to Hegel's idealist point of departure and systematic logical thought totality? Our spades have, then, some further digging to do in order to provide the groundwork for the beginnings of a fuller answer to this historical legacy and problem in theoretical thought.

In order to more fully comprehend the nature of Hegel's logical system, then the following primary constituents have to be viewed as being of paramount importance for understanding the dialectical principles underlying the analysis of the Logic.

The relation between contradiction as the primary moving principle of the system, the meta-logical principle of the whole, and its application to the fundamental characteristics, predications, and determinations of the generic analysis of substance. These interconnected constituents provide the key for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the rational kernel contained in the general form of working of the dialectic.

Both are fundamentally interlinked and united by Hegel in the process whereby substantial form activity is interpreted, in its universal forms of predication, as the product of

conceptual and logical activity; by so doing it becomes a logical subject and the product of pure thought.

Substance as being-for-self, as subject, is what ties these elements of the Hegelian analysis together and determines the self-reflexive nature and reciprocal relation of the concepts and categories that make up the essential elements and determinations of the category of substance. This ontological category is the product, for Hegel, of the primacy of an idealist logical and conceptual ontology.

2. The Logic of an Idealist Ontology.

“The tendency of all man’s endeavours is to understand the world, to appropriate and subdue it to himself: and to this end the positive reality of the world must be as it were crushed and pounded, in other words, idealised. At the same time we must note that it is not the mere act of our personal self-consciousness which introduces an absolute unity into the variety of sense. Rather, this identity is itself the absolute.”⁶⁸

Philosophy, for Hegel, is a “peculiar mode of thinking.” It is a mode in which “thinking becomes knowledge, and knowledge through notions.” The rational principle behind all substantial being is, in this account, conceptual thought as the sole expression of the essence of the universal form. Those universal forms are both subjective and objective in their manifestation, but their true medium lies in the realm of mind, where they find their adequate universal expression in speculative philosophical thought.

“It will be shown in the Logic that thought (and the universal) is not a mere opposite of sense: it lets nothing escape it, but, outflanking its other, is at once that other and itself.”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. Oxford University Press. (O.U.P.). (1975.) Paragraph 42.z. P.69. Here, Hegel is reflecting the Aristotelian position expressed in the opening line of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. “All men by nature desire to know.”

⁶⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 20. P.31.

The appropriation of the world is through the vehicle of thought; that vehicle is idealistically viewed as being absolute in both an objective and subjective sense. Thought, in the guise of speculative philosophical logic, then becomes its own form and content, its own subject and object, whose content is “the entire compass of abstraction”. Hegel’s aim is to consciously develop and systematise this idealist form of “alienated science” contained in logical thought.

Logic, according to Hegel, has, since Aristotle, not lost any ground. However, on the other hand it has also not gained any ground either. The conclusion that Hegel draws from this is that it is surely “all the more in need of a total reconstruction.” The reason for this necessity of logical rebuilding is that the evolution of philosophical thought has itself developed as an immanent criticism of inherited philosophical and logical form.

The absolute nature of logical thought has now revealed and manifested itself, for Hegel, as the result of an idealist historical process of spirit; a historical process that is in fact driven by these very same conceptual and logical categories. As the logical and systematic totality of the speculative notion, in the form of universal thought, conceived as the movement of pure reason. The product and result of which, entails that the universal forms of the categories of thought can now be conceptually articulated and universally interconnected into a systematic logical whole.

This is achieved through revealing the dynamic manner that the categories both particularise and individuate themselves into a systematic logical totality covering the whole realm and content of philosophical endeavour. Hegel expresses this historical development of the philosophical idea in the following form.

“Spirit, after its labours over two thousand years, must have attained to a higher consciousness about its thinking and about its own pure, essential nature.”⁷⁰

The problem with the more modern accounts of philosophical logic, for Hegel, is that, not only have they failed to theoretically develop the fundamental Aristotelian heritage, they have also been infected with a methodology that is largely borrowed from the empirical sciences and mathematics. However, these methodological forms are in large part responsible for what Hegel calls the “abstract identity” that marks these conceptually fixed, and at the same time, contingently and externally related categories of logic.

The solution to these ossified logical forms lies in a method that can breathe life back into the petrified categories. What the logical science aims to capture is the systematic integration, development, and interconnections of the categories and universal forms of logical thought.

“Before these dead bones of logic can be quickened by spirit, and so become possessed of a substantial, significant content, its method must be that which alone can enable it to be a pure science.”⁷¹

Logic had become sterile and lifeless for Hegel; it lacked a principle of movement and change that could universally integrate the logical categories in their necessary predications and relations. The problem with this fossilised view of the logical categories is that the

⁷⁰ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.51. Human historical, social, scientific, and religious development, the evolution of spirit, to put it in Hegel's terms, have posed the need for the reconstruction of logic in a higher form; a form that is more in accord with these historical advances of spirit. The development of Christianity, combined with the principle of individuality that distinguishes the bourgeois rational enlightenment outlook, mark the turning point and the fulcrum of “the world revolution” in thought for Hegel. Those twin interrelated developments, embodied in Lutheran protestantism and bourgeois philosophical and political thought, characterise the essential difference and development that fundamentally marks off the modern viewpoint from the ancient and medieval in Hegel's historical analysis of spirit.

⁷¹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.53.

“determinations are accepted in their unmoved fixity and are brought only into an external relation with each other.”⁷²

In order to develop this system of logical thought it is however necessary, according to Hegel, to outline the methodological principle of activity that both enables and shows how the categories universally interconnect and develop in their systemic relations. At the same time, for Hegel, the understanding of the dynamics inherent in this universal interconnection will also allow the logical thought process “to ascertain both the systematic connection of these forms and their value.”

Logic, for Hegel, is the study of the form and content of thought, in the realm of pure thought; it is the analysis and relation “of the pure thought-forms” through the systematic construction of the categories of thought. The aim of the logical reconstruction is to integrate the logical categories with the ontological; by doing so he aims to comprehensively unify logic and metaphysics through the analysis of the nature and source of all being, namely universal thought.⁷³

To pose this idealist solution of Hegel in an alternative form. Logic and metaphysics have to be synthesised and shown to be the product of absolute speculative thought, as their common universal foundation. Accordingly, as the activity of thought, viewed in this speculative philosophical manner, “may be termed Objective Thoughts”, the following consequence ensues for Hegel.

⁷² This characterisation is at the core of Hegel’s critique of the logical foundations of the metaphysics of what he calls the “abstract understanding.” This difference will further manifest itself, later in the thesis, in Hegel’s critical account of the scientific method and nomological activity that this form of thought generates.

⁷³ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 24. P.36. Hegel’s Italics. In the Zusatz to this paragraph, (P.39.), Hegel states the following: “If in pursuance of the foregoing remarks we consider Logic to be the system of the pure types of thought, we find that the other philosophical sciences, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Mind, take the place, as it were, of an Applied Logic, and that Logic is the soul which animates them both. Their problem in that case is only to recognise the logical forms under the shapes they assume in Nature and Mind – shapes which are only a particular mode of expression for the forms of pure thought.” The dialectic of nature and mind are the contrary species or specific difference of a common genus, namely logic. The common universal content takes on a twofold contrariety of form.

*“Logic therefore coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and held in thoughts – thoughts accredited able to express the essential reality of things.”*⁷⁴

That “essential reality of things” is developed through the generic ontological category of substance. In the Hegelian logic of ontology, the primary ontological category of “being”, through the dynamic development of its own internal categorial contradictions, makes a transition into its higher form, as essence and as substance. As substance is viewed as the generic form of all being, then the question of what is being is for Hegel, like Aristotle before him, the question of what is substance.

*“This being is substance; as the final unity of essence and being it is the being in all being; it is neither the unreflected immediate, nor an abstract being standing behind Existence and Appearance, but it is immediate actuality itself and this as absolute reflectedness-into-self, as a subsisting in and for itself.”*⁷⁵

Philosophical essentialism seeks to determine the adequate conceptual forms and categories that determine the ontological relations that are inherently contained in the category of substance. By doing so it aims to rationally understand substance as the generic type of all being in its generalised ontological categories and determinate forms of activities and relations.

This process will prove to be inherently dialectical as the categories and qualities, necessary to understand the processes contained in substantial movement, are the direct expression of the principle of change and alteration contained within the category of substance. This ontological development of the primacy of substance is the dynamic that unites and individuates the polar determinations inherent within its necessary forms of ontological predication; these, in turn, provide the source for cognising the principle of change and alteration contained in all substantial form activity.

⁷⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 24. P.36.

⁷⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.555.

Substantial essence is the kind as kind, the universal form particularising itself in its necessary specificity and individuation. That universal form particularising and individuating itself is the product of the activity of logical thought; it is the product of mind and spirit in their absolute conceptual form. This universal form is only truly captured in the medium of philosophical logic.

“The universal does not exist externally to the outward eye as a universal. The kind as kind cannot be perceived: the laws of the celestial motions are not written on the sky. The universal is neither seen nor heard, its existence is only for the mind. Religion leads us to a universal, which embraces all else within itself, to an Absolute by which all else is brought into being: and this Absolute is an object not of the senses but of the mind and thought.”⁷⁶

This rational universal, “which cannot be apprehended by the senses”, and whose inherent medium lies in the realm of conceptual thought, nevertheless, “contains the value of the thing – is the essential, inward, and true.” Thought, in this essentialist and idealist account, is “the constitutive substance of external things.”

That essential reality of things, the universal form of all substantial being, is ontologically grounded in conceptual and universal thought. The genesis and unfolding of this substantial being is, for Hegel, the product of the concept or the notion. The potentiality of the form

⁷⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 21z. P.34. Thought, in its pure logical form becomes its own form and content, its own subject and object, whose facts are the generic logical and ontological categories. These are the facts and content of thought, their universal form is the methodological and systematic order that they take. “For in point of contents, thought is only true in proportion as it sinks itself in the facts; and in point of form it is no private or particular state or act of the subject, but rather that attitude of consciousness where the abstract self, freed from all the special limitations to which its ordinary states or qualities are liable, restricts itself to that universal action in which it is identical with all individuals. In these circumstances philosophy may be acquitted of the charge of pride. And when Aristotle summons the mind to rise to the dignity of that attitude, the dignity he seeks is won by letting slip all our individual opinions and prejudices, and submitting to the sway of the fact.” G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 23z. P.36.

activity actualising itself through superseding its determinate negation or privation is the teleological activity of substance as a conceptual subject.

“In the living organism, on the contrary, the final cause is a moulding principle and an energy immanent in the matter, and every member is in its turn a means as well as an end The principle of inward adaptation or design, had it been kept to and carried out in scientific application, would have led to a different and higher method of observing nature.”⁷⁷

The genealogy of the logical concepts is elucidated and developed through the genesis of substance, and the genesis of substance is the Notion for Hegel. Substance, as the product of universal conceptual thought becomes subject; this it does in the actualising of the conceptual necessity that is inherent in the form activity.

“Still, in the sense in which Aristotle, too, defines Nature as purposive activity, purpose is what is immediate and *at rest*, the unmoved which is also *self-moving*, and as such is Subject. Its power to move, taken abstractly, is *being-for-self* or pure negativity.”⁷⁸

The idealist account of substance as subject entails that it is a being-for-self that has a telos, a final cause. The architectonic inherent in substance is located in the expression of the development towards its final and end form, its telos or goal. The dynamic behind that architectonic is the positing and resolving of the contradictions, the “pure negativity”, pertaining to its specific nature.

⁷⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraphs 57/58. P.89-90.

⁷⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. *Preface. Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) Paragraph 22. P.12.

This is the source of its activity contained in its concept or notion, and its essence as form activity and subject. These are the core elements of the dynamics contained in the logic of ontology as objective logic, as the logic of being as substance.⁷⁹

How though, does Hegel go about developing this “total reconstruction” of logical thought from the logical foundations inherited from Aristotle? This generic aspect of being is analysed in its fundamental categories, concepts, and relations, from their abstract simple relations such as quality, determinate being, being for self, to their more complex forms of determinations that are necessary for developing a systematically coherent and rational account of this universal presentation of all being.

In Hegel’s idealism, the dialectical method is both universal in form and substance, and the evolution of the categories contained in the objective logic, the substantial ontological content, represent the genesis and the conceptual unfolding of the universal notion. This, in turn, gives the categories, concepts, and relations their concrete meaning, function, and place in the analysis of a universally interconnected whole, which is exhibited in the determinate expressions of its specific differences and individuating forms.

By reconstructing a logical totality of conceptual thought he, at the same time, outlines the rational elements of a dialectical methodology, but envelops that method in a mystical guise, in the form of an “alienated science” generated by the contemplative philosopher and conceived as the dialectical fusion of logic and metaphysics.

⁷⁹Hegel’s teleological view of substance is also then derived from his ancient Greek predecessor, Aristotle. “Aristotle’s definition of life virtually implies inner design, and is thus far in advance of the notion of design in modern Teleology, which had in view finite and outward design only.” G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. Paragraph 205. P.269. In *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*. Blackwell. (1986.) P.103. Hegel describes the end or the teleological concept in the following form. “There is Internal Purposiveness when an existence has its concept within itself and at the same time is end, means and self-realising and realised End in its own self.”

3. Hegel's Dialectical Method.

“On the other hand, the investigation of the forms of thought, the thought determinations, is very profitable and necessary, and since Aristotle this has been systematically undertaken only by Hegel.”⁸⁰

The method, for Hegel, is the universal element of the form that the categorial content of the logic takes. What ties the method and form to the content is that the inner self-movement of the categorial content of the logic is gleaned through the activities and relations of the interconnected and universal form activity of the ontological categories.

“However, the exposition of what alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic.”⁸¹

As a result of this idealist form of ontological primacy, the categories of thought, as Hegel tells us, have to be studied “in their essential nature and complete development” in order to delineate their inherent limitations, internal contradictions, and necessary relations. This “inner self-movement” is the source of the contradiction contained within the logical categories. As such, the categories evince their own specific forms of dialectical contradictions and relations.

“So that what we want is to combine in our process of inquiry the action of the forms of thought with a criticism of them. The forms of thought must be studied in their essential nature and complete development: they are at once the object of research and the action of that object. Hence they examine themselves: in their own action they must determine their limits, and point out their defects. This is that action of thought, which will hereafter be specially considered under the name of Dialectic,

⁸⁰ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.240.

⁸¹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.53.

and regarding which we need only at the outset observe that, instead of being brought to bear upon the categories from without, it is immanent in their own action.”⁸²

The categories themselves are the outcome of dialectical relations, they contain opposed determinations, and, at the same time, they are universally interconnected and architectonically developed from the abstract simple to the more complex concrete categories that can explain their movement into a systematic totality.

The logical subject becomes a totality by positing and resolving the specific difference of the contradiction pertaining to the evolving and interrelated categorial and conceptual relations that, at each subsequent and ongoing level of ontological development, makes it into a determinate whole.

The need to develop a universal systematic relation of the logical categories also entails that there has to be also a universal method for interconnecting the parts of the logic with the whole. What is required is a dialectical method for developing the necessary connections between the logical forms and relations of the content of the categories.

That connection is provided through the motor force of polarity and contradiction that universally interconnects the primary concepts and categories in their necessary relations. This process of the systematic movement and development, the positing and resolving of the contradiction of the logical subject in all its evolving categorial and conceptual relations, is essential in understanding the general form of working of the Hegelian dialectic, and the key rational element of its operation.

“All that is necessary to achieve scientific progress – and it is essential to strive to gain this quite *simple* insight – is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve

⁸² G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 41z. P.66.

itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content, in other words, that such a negation is not all and every negation but the negation of a specific subject matter which resolves itself, and consequently is a specific negation, and therefore the result essentially contains that from which it results; which strictly speaking is a tautology, for otherwise it would be an immediacy, not a result. Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* negation it has a *content*. It is a fresh Notion but higher and richer than its predecessor; for it is richer by the negation or opposite of the latter, therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite. It is in this way that the system of Notions as such has to be formed – and has to complete itself in a purely continuous course in which nothing extraneous is introduced.”⁸³

This driving contradiction, where the contradiction is both posited in its positive and negative forms, and then resolved and sublated in the higher form that unites them, is inherent in the entire compass of Hegel’s logical abstractions. It is through the development of this dynamic contained in a theoretical totality that the method gains its adequate expression as the conceptual evolution and activity of the substantial self-moving whole.

The central nature of contradiction has then to manifest its activity in Hegel’s general application of it to the conceptual development and categories of the Logic; it could not do otherwise. The forms and categories of thought exhibit this deficiency and contradiction as an immanent element in their own relational activity.

What Hegel has contributed to thought, and this is no small achievement, is the conscious and systematic ordering of the basic ontological categories into a coherent logical whole, with the principle of movement and change, namely posited and resolved contradiction, as the dynamic expression underpinning the laws of motion of categorial and conceptual thought. This principle is the foundation for their universal interconnection, and the force for elevating the logical and metaphysical into a systematic methodology.

⁸³ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.54.

“This movement of pure essences constitutes the nature of scientific method in general. Regarded as the connectedness of their content it is the necessary expansion of that content into an organic whole.”⁸⁴

The principle of contradiction, as the motor force behind the process of movement and change, is dynamically fused with the logical relations of the substantial categories. The aim of this synthesis is to develop the conceptual evolution of an ontological whole of categorial thought terms in and through their necessary relations and inner connections.

It is through developing these twin primary generic principles and categories of substance and contradiction that Hegel reconstructs the logic as a conceptual totality and develops the conceptual framework and method for capturing the “consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content.”

This elevation, by Hegel, of contradiction into a meta-logical principle of the system is the key then, to both the fuller understanding of the conceptual framework of substance, and how that generic and universal determination of being particularises and determines itself through its individuation. This twofold dynamic is also then, the key to understanding how Hegel both inherits, develops, and systematises philosophy from that inherited Aristotelian perspective.⁸⁵

The outlining of the method is, at the same time, also the outlining of the ontological categories, predicates, and relations, that are involved in the construction of a logical and systematic whole; substantial ontology becomes a form of logical necessity. This is why the

⁸⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Preface. O.U.P. (1977.) Paragraph 34. P.20.

⁸⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. *History of Philosophy*. Volume 2. Kegan Paul. (1894.) P.140. “The principle of individualisation, not in the sense of a casual and merely particular subjectivity, but in that of pure subjectivity, is peculiar to Aristotle. Aristotle thus also makes the Good, as the universal end, the substantial foundation, and maintains this position against Heraclitus and the Eleatics. The Becoming of Heraclitus is a true and real determination, but change yet lacks the determination of identity with itself, the constancy of the universal. The stream is ever changing, yet it is nevertheless the same, and is really a universal existence.”

method is consequently described by him as “nothing but the structure set forth in its pure essentiality.”

Hegel’s uniting of logic and ontology, develops the general laws of motion that are dialectically contained in the reciprocal and evolving predicates and relations expressed in the polarities that make up the category of substance. As they are expressions of fundamental ontological characteristics, the contradiction then is expressed in all the categories and conceptual forms of determinate being.

4. Method as Evolution of the Whole.

“The True is the whole. But the Whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this constitutes its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.”⁸⁶

Dialectical method, according to Hegel, is expressed in the evolution of the whole; the evolution of the whole is, for him, the movement of the notion itself. The method is then, to summarise the analysis so far, the universal element of the form of the logical content, encapsulated in the dialectical movement and interconnecting systematisation of the categories.

The aim of Hegel’s idealist orientation is that of logically developing a conceptual and dialectical totality based on the emergent movement of the categories of thought; that is, each of the categories are shown to contain their own polar forms of opposition that are both mutually reciprocal and at the same time mutually exclusive. The inherent logical dynamic contained in them shows their dialectical resolution and fusion into a more evolved and higher developed categorial and ontological concept.

This dialectical evolution of the categories, from their primary to their higher evolving forms finds its resolution when the categories are integrated into a systematic whole that now contains and exhibits a systematic principle of change and alteration, namely, the positing and resolving of a determinate totality of contradiction.

The laws of motion of the subject are, in consequence, based upon how, to put it in Hegel's terms, it mediates itself with itself through its negativity. The polar difference is both sublated and retained as the specific difference of the universal, as the conceptual source of the dynamics of the whole movement and process. The identity is itself the expression of the contradiction contained in the conceptual and substantial essence of the subject.

The "genesis of substance is the notion" for Hegel, and the conceptual evolution of the notion that has gained this absolute form, the *concept of the concept* contained in all being, is its true being revealed to itself. For Hegel, the method has emerged as the "*self-knowing Notion that has itself*, as the absolute, both subjective and objective, *for its subject matter*."

The content of that whole has been gleaned through the subjectivity of the notion, its real and ideal source; the concepts and ontological categories of which are manifested in objective and substantial being that are idealistically sublated as the product of the evolution of the general form of working of the conceptual categories of the genesis of substance, namely the notion.

"Further, the living Substance is being which is in truth *Subject*, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This Substance is, as Subject, pure *simple negativity*, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. Only this *self-restoring* sameness, or

⁸⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. Preface. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) Paragraph 20. P.11.

this reflection in otherness within itself – not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such – is the True. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.”⁸⁷

That is, substance realises itself as a logical subject through its essential conceptual or teleological activity. At the same time, mind or spirit realises and actualises its autonomy and real nature, its being-for-self as a logical subject. This absolute, methodological and logical subject unites, in a single identity for the idealist, the subjective and objective aspects of cognition and the objective world.

The method here is not merely, as in Kant, an instrument and means of knowledge, it is, for Hegel, knowledge of itself as the essence of all cognitive and objective activity. The method is the “instrument and means of the cognising activity, distinguished from that activity, but only as the activities own essentiality.” The method has now emerged as rational thought conscious of itself in its highest methodological and theoretical form of activity.

Accordingly, this idealist account entails for Hegel that science itself only really “exists only in the self-movement of the Notion.” Its mystical absolute form and mode of expression, as an idealist philosophy of science, fetishises the method itself. This is yet another reason why Marx describes his thought as a form of “alienated science thinking itself.”

As the universal form and method that generates both nature as objectivity and spirit as the cognitive truth of the substantial process. This twofold form and mode of a common unity and content is expressed in the dialectic of objective and subjective logic. This bifurcation

⁸⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. Preface. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) Paragraph 18. P.10. Hegel also stresses that this fundamental polar difference between nature and mind is not only the expression of the unity and identity of their common content the Logical Idea, but also the expression of the necessary difference of the division and contradiction contained within it. Without the polarity and contradiction there is no movement and no idealist resolution that sublates that necessary twofold dynamic. Without the common identity, and this is fundamental for a dialectical account, there is no specific difference and movement; there is no necessary connection between the two poles.

of the universal method is reflected in both the dialectic of cognition, and in the analysis of the conceptual necessity of substantial form activity.

“The method is therefore to be recognised as the unrestrictedly universal, internal and external mode; and as the absolutely infinite force, to which no object; presenting itself as something external, remote from and independent of reason, could offer resistance or be of a particular nature in opposition to it, or could not be penetrated by it. It is therefore *soul and substance*, and anything whatever is comprehended and known in its truth only when it is *completely subjugated to the method*; it is the method proper to every subject matter because its activity is the Notion. This is also the truer meaning of its *universality*: according to the universality of reflection it is regarded merely as the method for *everything*; but according to the universality of the Idea, it is both the manner peculiar to cognition, to the *subjectively* self-knowing Notion, and also the *objective* manner, or rather the *substantiality of things* – that is of Notions, in so far as they appear primarily to *representation and reflection as others*.⁸⁸

The result of the relation between thought and being is cognitively united in the general form of working of dialectic applied to the primary category of substance; as the generic ontological basis for the analysis of all being and activity. The method of cognition expresses the objective general manner of substance in its categories, concepts, and relations via the opposite forms of motion contained in the analytic and synthetic aspects of the cognitive method that expresses the interconnected evolution of the categories into a systematic whole.

Method is then on this account consciousness of the notion in this its universal form, a form that is determined in and for itself. Subject, object, and method are posited as the one identical notion, as the absolute. The method is then, idealistically construed as the notion of

⁸⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.826.

the notion, or the concept of the concept; alternatively, it is logical thought in the form of pure and absolute reason, as a form of “alienated science thinking itself.”

Hegel in the above quote reflects, albeit in an idealistic form that sublates the polar difference as an absolute subject, the materialist separation of the cognitive (subjective) and the substantial (objective) forms of dialectic. What he is also telling us here, which is of special interest for the investigation of the thesis, is that the method is itself the expression of the general form of working of dialectic, applied here respectively to both cognition and objective substantiality. A position that is both inverted but at the same time reflected, in the materialist critique of Marx and Engels.

5. The Materialist Critique.

The materialist critique of this idealist account of the identity of objectivity and subjectivity, is that the ontological primacy and grounding lies in objective materiality, this separates the direct unity and identity of thought and being expressed in Hegel’s idealism. The idealist presuppositions inherent in the identity of thinking and being in Hegel is expressed by Engels in the following form.

“With Hegel, for example, its affirmation is self-evident; for what we cognise in the real world is precisely its thought-content – that which makes the world a gradual realisation of the absolute idea, which absolute idea has existed somewhere from eternity, independent of the world and before the world. But it is manifest without further proof that thought can know a content which is from the outset a thought-content. It is equally manifest that what is to be proved here is already tacitly contained in the premises.”⁸⁹

The separation and difference of the contrary poles is the result in Hegel’s view of their direct identity. That direct identity lies within their common content and source logical

thought, as an idealist sublation of the polarity of objectivity and cognition speculatively hypostasised as the activity of the notion or absolute idea.

The target of dialectical analysis for the materialist inversion and its true source was now the real world, real nature, and real society, not the philosophical and theosophical view of reason as absolute and divine. Here, in the following passage, we have Engels own expression and variation on Marx's theme of the materialist inversion of Hegel.

“This ideological perversion had to be done away with. We comprehended the concepts in our heads once more materialistically as images [Abbilder] or real things instead of regarding the real things as images of this or that stage of the absolute concept. Thus dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought – two sets of laws which are identical in substance, but different in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now for the most part in human history, these laws exert themselves unconsciously, in the form of external necessity, in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents. Thereby the dialectic of concepts itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and thus the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing, and placed upon its feet.”⁹⁰

The question is what is the nature of the relation of these two sets of laws for the materialist, the natural and the cognitive, which for Engels are “identical in substance, but different in their expression”? There is, at the bottom of this proposition of Engels, a presupposition entailed. This presupposition, inherent to a monistic account, is manifested, but in their inverted forms, in both its idealist and realist forms of expression.

⁸⁹ F. Engels. Marx-Engels. Selected Works. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.335.

⁹⁰ F. Engels. Marx-Engels. Selected Works. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.350.

We have seen how Hegel views that source as absolute and rational thought, but Hegel's absolute form of idealist monism is replaced with a realist and materialist monism. What separates the idealist from the realist here is whether these laws find their foundation in conceptual thought as in the former, or material reality as in the latter viewpoint. This realist and monist materialist difference from, and direct opposition to, a monist idealism, nevertheless entails a further theoretical presupposition that Engels draws out in the following remarks.

“The fact that our subjective thought and the objective world are subject to the same laws, and hence, too, that in the final analysis they cannot contradict each other in their results, but must coincide, governs absolutely our whole theoretical thought. It is the unconscious and unconditional premise for theoretical thought.”⁹¹

The laws of dialectics, whilst they do apply to both forms in the materialist account, nevertheless entails that the ontological primacy of the relation is on the objective expression of the laws of dialectics; our subjective and cognitive apprehension of them is dependent upon that objective operation. In that sense alone they are subject to the same laws, the laws of cognition are, in Engels materialist account, both dependent upon and reflect, their primary natural nomological forms of necessity.

This is the inverted materialist reflection of the twofold form and content of the method of dialectic expressed by Hegel as the general manner of cognition and the objective general manner or substantiality of things. That relation, though, is not one of direct identity, but a practically mediated identity between subjectivity and objectivity; the mediating element here is both the source and the test of their correspondence.

⁹¹ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.266. The materialism of the eighteenth century investigated this premise as regards its content by restricting itself to the proof that the content of all thought and knowledge was derived from sensuous experience. Idealism by contrast, and Hegel in particular, investigated this from the point of view of not only the content of logic expressed in the ontological and conceptual categories of ontology and epistemology, but also by analysing the active interrelations of the predicational forms of these conceptual thought-determinations.

The active mediating link that spans that dialectic of human subjectivity in its objective relation with nature imposed necessity, is social labour. The development of consciousness and rational thought is itself the result of human labouring interaction on and with nature itself; any other explanation for the development of human rationality is inherently dubious for Marx, and consequently receives short shrift.

“Since the reasoning process itself arises from the existing conditions and is itself a natural process, really comprehending thinking can always only be the same, and can vary only gradually, in accordance with the maturity of development, hence also the maturity of the organ that does the thinking. Anything else is drivel.”⁹²

Conscious dialectical thought is, for the critical materialist, then regarded as the highest product of human evolution in opposition to the rest of nature, not the source of the proof of logical systematic thought standing outside and above real man and real nature, as it is in Hegel.

What Marx and Engels reject is the view that the laws of dialectics are laws of absolute thought, and that the material world has to conform to an idealist system of thought. Real nature and history have then to acquiesce to an idealist thought totality that is systematically imposed on that real, historical, and evolutionary development of nature and society. Both of these propositions are rejected in the materialist critique.

“The mistake lies in the fact that these laws are foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, and not deduced from them. This is the source of the whole forced and often outrageous treatment; the universe willy-nilly, has to conform to a system of thought which itself is only the product of a definite stage of evolution of human thought. If we turn the thing round, then everything becomes simple, and the

⁹² K. Marx. Letter to Kugelmann. 11th July 1868. Collected Works. Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart. (1988.) P.69.

dialectical laws that look so extremely mysterious in idealist philosophy at once become clear and simple as noon day.”⁹³

Dialectics is reduced from its idealist and mystified form through the gravitational pull and force of its real material and social roots to its central and rational core, to the science of the general laws of motion of nature and thought. What remains, that still has a rational core for Marx and Engels, once the idealist ontology and system has been rejected, is the Hegelian account of the laws of motion of dialectics.

The problem we are then left with, is how to divest these dialectical laws from their mystical form and content by both deriving and applying them to real material being. The laws of motion of dialectics, in both its cognitive and substantial forms of expression, together with its idealist teleological explanation of substantial necessity, had then to be liberated from Hegel's balancing of dialectical concepts; they had to be put on a materialist footing. The lightning bolt of Hegel's dialectic had to be grounded in its new material content, and in its real material roots.

This rational cognitive result can only arise from deriving the method from the dialectics involved in the existing conditions, not from the systematic and hermetically sealed totality of the movement of speculative and absolute thought. The dialectical relation of thought and nature, mediated through practical activity, is, for all three aspects of the triadic relation of nature, thought, and active objective mediation, therefore an open-ended and evolving process for the materialist.

⁹³ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.62. As to whether they become as clear and simple as noonday in such an uncomplicated manner is a more debatable point. The inability of socialists, who embrace a dialectical method, to have subsequently done so is testimony to the fact that the solution to the enigmatic nature of the materialist inversion of Hegel's dialectic has proven more elusive than simple. Hegel's wry critique of Fichte's abject failure to make good his attempt to make subjective idealism clear and simple as noonday to everyday thought, as exemplified in the guise of common sense realism, is probably the source for Engels choice of words. Opponents of Engels would probably contend that he has been hoisted on his own petard.

Engels materialism reduces Hegel's idealist account of the laws of dialectics to the science of the most general laws of all motion; this entails for him that they apply to the natural world, human history, as well as cognitive thought, as the inverted form of Hegel's idealist dialectic of substance and subject.

“Dialectics is conceived as the science of the most general laws of *all* motion. This implies that its laws must be valid just as much for motion in nature and human history as for the motion in thought.”⁹⁴

The question that still largely remains, however, is how these dialectical laws of motion materially operate in nature, human history and thought. Hegel's philosophical and speculative thought substituted, for the real but unknown interconnections, the mystification of the interconnections of the categories of thought as the source, for example, of human historical development presented as the unfolding of the logical and absolute idea.

In place of the philosophical systems that, as Engels expresses it, “plugged” the factual gaps in knowledge, there is now a dialectical method that aims at the comprehension, by means of the facts, activities, and contrary relations that are objectively generated, of the universal interconnections of a systematic and organic whole. Engels expresses this need for a thoroughgoing dialectical dynamic to also be applied to human social development in the following fashion.

“Here, therefore, just as in the realm of nature, it was necessary to do away with these fabricated, artificial interconnections by the discovery of the real ones – a task which ultimately amounts to the discovery of the general laws of motion which assert themselves as the ruling ones in human society.”⁹⁵

⁹⁴ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.267. The opponents of the view that dialectics applies to nature generally centre their criticism on the work of Engels rather than the corresponding views of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky. In my view all four of them hold to this view of the all-encompassing nature of dialectical laws. There is no contrary evidence in any of their writings that would tend to cast any real doubt on this viewpoint. For example, see S. Hook. *From Hegel to Marx*. Ann Arbor. (1962.). P.75-76.

⁹⁵ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.353.

The discovery of the general laws of motion that operate and assert themselves in human historical and social development were expressed, in their core form by Marx, in the dynamic dialectical relationship manifested in the contradiction between the development of the forces of production and the social relations of production. This analysis of the evolving contradiction contained in the social productive forms and forces of labour is the driving source for Marx's own account of human historical progress.

Labour, as a historically evolving social genus, a genus that finds its specific and concrete expression in its developing social forms and modes of production, is the key to discovering the real interconnections and general laws of motion that assert themselves as the driving forces in human history and society. These are the real material and social connections of the human subject, as opposed to the artificial interconnections and driving force fabricated in Hegel's idealist account of the history of spirit.⁹⁶

What Hegel contributed to philosophical logic was a systematic dialectical method. A method that outlined the laws of motion pertaining to the principle of change and alteration that applies to and interconnects a substantial whole in its process of self-movement. What Hegel generates is an alienated account of science, though this is ultimately derived from real nature, reduces that natural, substantial activity to abstract nature in the form of an idealist and systematic dialectical movement of the ontological categories inherent in substance.

What is central to this "method of science" for Hegel, is the ongoing dialectical polarity and development, with the resultant fusion into a new category that marks every stage of the interconnected whole of a movement and process. This generalised form of dialectic becomes, in turn, and by dint of its universal and abstract generality, the methodological

⁹⁶ "Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and apply it in the materialist conception of nature and history." F. Engels Preface to the second edition of *Anti-Duhring*. September 1885. *Anti-Duhring*. Lawrence and Wishart. (1969.) P.15.

form that can be applied to the specific and determinate laws of motion of particular substantial totalities in their determinate forms of particularisation and individuation.

A dialectical account of method seeks to capture the universal interconnection of the specific categories of the substantial subject in its systematic form activities and determinations; it aims to show how it expresses itself in its specific laws of motion via its necessary activity as that subject. This requires understanding the contrary forms of motion that pertain to the specific predications of the substantial subject in process. These are, and have to be for the materialist, derived from the real determinations and facts, from the real motions of the subject in process.

The nature of that universal form activity is encapsulated in the specific identity of the subject matter in its determinate moments and necessary categorial predications and relations. The laws of dialectics, whilst having universal validity, must also be able to capture the contrary motions in the specific forms that are relevant for the subject matter under investigation.

The general form of the method must contain the flexibility to be derived from, and applied to, the material facts and activities of the specific subject, in order to gain an adequate conceptualisation of it. This test applies to all and any form of general scientific method, not just a dialectical model; unless that is, one holds to the view that there is no holy grail that can pass for a general form of scientific method.

The question then is what impact this derivation of the contradictions from the real determinations of the subject has for the relation between the idealist predecessor and materialist successor in terms of their inverted forms of dialectical method. What impact does this inversion have on a materialist as opposed to an idealist conception of laws of dialectical motion? The further question is what impact this has on the nature of the motor source behind those laws of motion that applies to all substantial being, namely contradiction?

For example, and this is fundamental, Hegel's systematic balancing of the idealist concepts that generate a substantial systematic whole does not take into account the further evolution of the real contradictions that both generate and underpin the motions of a substantial subject; there is no account in Hegel of substantial motion that not only evolves and matures into a systematic subject, but also, through the operation of these same laws of motion, both declines in its characteristic form of activity, and creates the conditions for its own supersession.

What Marx had to do, in order to develop theoretical thought, was to scientifically develop, from a materialist perspective, the methodological form that would enable the development of a generalised concept that could critically encapsulate the nature and characteristic activity of the mode of production based on value and capital. This idealist method of Hegel, inverted by Marx, armed him with the methodology that would enable him to encapsulate the laws of motion and central contradictions that underpin the systematic mode of production founded on value and capital.

This methodological inversion of Marx also entailed showing that the laws of dialectical motion that apply to the systematic activity of capital, in turn create the same driving contradictions that develop the social relations and material conditions for its supersession.

A fundamental question that needs then to be addressed, if the nature of dialectics, in either its idealist or materialist guises, is to be better understood, is to ascertain what the nature of contradiction from a dialectical perspective, actually entails. This is a question that has not been sufficiently investigated, but cannot be side-stepped, as it is central for an understanding of not only the nature of dialectics, in particular an understanding of its laws of motion, but also the relation between Hegel and Marx's inverted forms.

In order to begin to answer this fundamental question we shall have to investigate Hegel's idealist account before we can generate what the materialist inversion of this process may contain.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

CONTRADICTION AND DIALECTIC.

1. Laws of Motion.

“There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits.”⁹⁷

“Should anyone ask for a royal road to Science, there is no more easy-going way than to rely on sound common sense.” - “True thoughts and scientific insight are only to be won through the labour of the Notion.”⁹⁸

For both Hegel and Marx then, there is no royal road to science, it arises after a long period of historical development and is the product and result of hard-won human endeavour, often at a high personal and social cost. Science, in this viewpoint, seeks to find the intrinsic interconnections, the inner essence and specific difference that is the source and explanation behind the changes and processes inherent in the phenomenal forms of appearance.

The aim of scientific cognition is to understand the forms of motion that expresses the inner nature of the contradictions that drive the specific and determinate nature of the form activities that are pertinent to the substantial subject under investigation. As Marx notes, science itself would be superfluous if the cause of the phenomenal form were obviously open to sensory or empirical observation.

⁹⁷ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Preface to the French Edition. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.30. March 18th 1872.

⁹⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) Preface. Paragraph 70. P.43. “Science exists solely in the self-movement of the Notion.” G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) Preface. Paragraph 71. P.44.

The laws of the celestial motions are not, as Hegel expressed it, “written on the sky”; a point that Marx echoes here when discussing the relation between the “general and necessary tendencies” that “must be distinguished from their forms of manifestation.”

“But this much is clear; a scientific analysis of competition is not possible, before we have a conception of the inner nature of capital, just as the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies are not intelligible to any but him, who is acquainted with their real motions, motions that are not directly perceptible to the senses.”⁹⁹

The necessity and need for generating a scientific method is manifested then, precisely due to the very fact that the phenomenal form does not necessarily openly reveal its inner essential being and nature. Contradiction, as an inner difference that manifests itself in an external relation and opposition means, that if it remains unfathomed, then the subject appears as being solely the product and result of an external property and relation, and whose conditions of existence also appear to lie solely in this exterior and apparently contingent relation.¹⁰⁰

Marx echoes this view in his critique of value as being a specific and peculiar social form that takes on a reified appearance; an appearance that belies its real essential nature and inner laws of motion. Value, as a social relation between people that is expressed through things, entails for Marx that value, by its very nature, “does not stalk about with a label describing what it is.” Marx’s attack on vulgar political economy has this crudely empirical account of science in mind as the source of his critique.

⁹⁹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. P.300.

¹⁰⁰ “The vulgar economist has not the slightest idea that the actual, everyday exchange relations and the value magnitudes *cannot be directly identical*. The point of bourgeois society is precisely that, *a priori*, no conscious social regulation of production takes place. What is reasonable and necessary by nature asserts itself only as a blindly operating average. The vulgar economist thinks he has made a great discovery when, faced with the disclosure of the *intrinsic interconnection*, he insists that things look different in appearance. In fact,

“Here it will be shown how the philistines and vulgar economists *manner of conceiving things* arises, namely, because the only thing that is ever reflected in their minds is the immediate *form of appearance* of relations, and not their *inner connection*. Incidentally, if the latter were the case, we would surely have no need for *science* at all.”¹⁰¹

The relation between the contingent and the necessary relations cannot be understood if the specific nature that expresses the laws of motion is not cognitively grasped. The immediate form of appearance of relations then, does not necessarily reveal the nomological foundations of those relations; the subjects or entities involved appear as ontologically atomised, fixed in their separation and only contingently related to each other.

Science aims, in the dialectical account, to reveal the source of the laws of motion that universally interconnects the subject, and which are expressed through the polar parameters of its active principle of change and alteration. That is, if the real motions of substantial activity are to explain their apparent motions.

Value, for Marx, is a universal social form, a social substance that is the product of a historically specific and particular mode of labouring activity. The exact nature and operation of value itself, as a social substance, is the subject matter of Marx's critical enquiries. The aim of the critique in *Capital* was to lay bare the “economic laws of motion” of value through the outlining of the essential forms of the relations, categories, and activities that underpin the mode of production founded upon capital.

Method and proof are united through the conceptualisation of the laws of motion that characterises the form activity of the specific determinations of the subject. The tracing out of the inner connections and forms of development of the subject, by way of the analysis of

he prides himself in clinging to appearances and believing them to be ultimate. Why then have science at all?”
K. Marx. Letter to Kugelman. 11th July 1868. Collected Works. Volume 43. P.69.

¹⁰¹ K. Marx. Letter to Engels. 27th June 1867. Collected Works. Volume 42. Lawrence and Wishart. (1987.) P.390.

the real relations, both reveals, and contains the proof and demonstration of the essential activity of the subject. The concept has though to be derived from the real relations and facts of the subject and not imposed on them as the product of the movement of the categories of conceptual thought.

The concept of value is proven and demonstrated by showing how value, as subject, to borrow Hegel's expression, "by and from itself makes itself what it is." That is, by showing, through critical analysis, the conceptual and categorial relations and dialectical forms that encapsulates the movement in the real relations.

"The unfortunate fellow does not see that, even if there were no chapter on 'value' at all in my book, the analysis that I give of the real relations would contain the proof and demonstration of the real value relation. The chatter about the need to prove the concept of value arises only from the complete ignorance both of the subject under discussion and of the method of science."¹⁰²

The understanding of the nature of the laws of motion, from a dialectical perspective, requires the application of the category of contradiction. That contradiction is both the essence and the driving force of a dialectical method of analysis is a widespread and generally held viewpoint. The analysis of the nature of the method of dialectic, in both or either of its idealist or materialist variations requires then, as a necessary element, an understanding of the nature of contradiction.

The point, however, is that this still begs the question, one that is largely unaddressed, of what the nature of contradiction, viewed from a dialectical perspective, actually is? The key question then, for further developing the investigation, and the relation of Hegel's dialectic to Marx's, is to attempt to ascertain what the nature of Hegel's view of contradiction actually is?

¹⁰² K. Marx. Letter to Kugelmann. 11th July 1868. Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart. (1988.) P.68.

2. The Source of all Dialectic.

“John Stuart Mill, on the contrary, accepts on the one hand Ricardo’s theory of profit, and annexes on the other hand Senior’s “remuneration of abstinence”. He is as much at home in absurd contradictions, as he feels at sea in the Hegelian contradiction, the source of all dialectic. It has never occurred to the vulgar economist to make the simple reflexion, that every human action may be viewed, as “abstinence” from its opposite. Eating is abstinence from fasting, walking, abstinence from standing still, working, abstinence from idling, idling, abstinence from working, &c. These gentlemen would do well, to ponder, once in a way, over Spinoza’s: “Determination est Negation.”¹⁰³

Marx’s comments cited above, albeit limited in their nature, would also appear to confirm the following propositional inference. As Hegelian contradiction is “the source of all dialectic” it is logically then also the source for ascertaining and discovering both the general form of working and the laws of dialectics. It is unthinkable that there is no intimate and necessary connection between them.

However, as Hegel interprets both the general form of working and the laws of dialectics in a mystical fashion, then does it not also follow that Hegel’s view of contradiction is also interpreted in a mystical fashion? Is this connection a logical consequence given that these core elements are not only fundamentally interrelated, but that the analysis of contradiction is itself the very source of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics?

Does stripping the mystical veil from Hegel’s dialectic entail stripping the mystical veil from his analysis of contradiction also? If so, then how does this affect Hegel’s account of

¹⁰³ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) (Footnote.) P.559. Spinoza’s dictum that “the foundation of all determinateness is negation” is taken up and fully endorsed in Hegel’s analysis of contradiction and expressed in the form of the dialectic of negativity, as the moving and generating principle of all being.

contradiction? Or, are the general form of working and the laws of dialectics, the positive forms and rational element of the legacy of Hegel according to Marx and Engels, retained by them with an unreconstructed Hegelian view of contradiction?

Given that Marx tells us that his dialectical method is not only different from Hegel's but that it is, in fact, the "direct opposite", then the question that is posed by this is whether this inverted and direct materialist contrary of the Hegelian method is also reflected in the analysis of contradiction itself? On the other hand, as Hegelian contradiction is the source of all dialectic, is it not then also the source of Marx's dialectic?

Before we can even begin to adequately answer the question of the nature of contradiction in Marx, the Hegelian analysis and application of the concept of contradiction has, first of all, to be attempted to be understood in Hegel's own terms. Disregarding then, for the present moment, whether Marx's view of dialectical contradiction is, or is not the same as Hegel's, the following question still remains. What we are to make of Marx's assertion that Hegelian contradiction is the source of all dialectic?¹⁰⁴

That contradiction is the driving force of dialectics, in whatever variation and hue, whether materialist or idealist, should not in itself be that controversial a question. Most sympathetic commentators of the relation of Hegel to Marx would at least pay lip service to this; but here, contradiction is itself quite often taken as a presupposition; moreover, one that begs for a subsequent and deeper analysis of its determinate and specific nature.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ The emphasis of the analysis at present is focussed primarily on what Hegel's account of contradiction actually is, and secondly to elucidate the essentials of the rational element of Hegel's dialectic. To understand and comprehensively outline the nature of the materialist supersession of Hegel's dialectic requires having a thoroughgoing comprehension of Hegel's thought. Both in its own idealist terms, and through Marx's critique. Only then is it possible to adequately develop dialectical thought from this foundation and historical legacy; the horse has to be put before the cart in order for further movement and progress to take place.

¹⁰⁵ That it is contradiction that is the motor force of the process, is, in one respect, generally held, not only in non-Marxists like T. Pinkard and K. Hartmann, but also by Hegelian influenced Marxists such as C. Arthur, T. Smith, and B. Ollman. The weakness in all their interpretations, in my reading, is in their inadequate understanding of the nature of Hegel's account of contradiction, and in the consequent application of Hegelian contradiction to the analysis of a substantial system. This weakness in their accounts is further exposed, in my view, in the connection that I make in the relation of contradiction and law.

Furthermore, the analysis of what makes a contradiction a contradiction, rather than its operation, which, I think, *can* be outlined without necessarily understanding the ontologically necessary nature of its polar forms, will in turn provide deeper ground for our spades to dig.

By posing the foundational question of what the nature of contradiction actually is in Hegel's account, then a more comprehensive understanding of the rational aspect of Hegelian dialectics may emerge. This question is, surprisingly, a little investigated issue considering its primary centrality to a rational comprehension of dialectic itself.

3. Contradiction and Method.

“Contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity.”¹⁰⁶

If, according to Hegel, contradiction is “the root of all movement”, and existence itself is only possible through the movement of a contradiction, it then logically follows that it holds a principal meta-logical and ontological role in Hegel's account of dialectic. As such, the understanding of its specific nature is essential to gain greater clarity into the Hegelian explication of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics.

The principles of change and alteration contained in all substantial form activity are, when logically and conceptually developed into a systematic subject, the expression of the movement of the laws of motion of a developing contradiction. Contradiction then, as the very moving principle of all being, has to be regarded, when properly cognised, as a higher

The work of T. Smith and C. Arthur, on the relation between Hegel's Logic and Marx's value theory is, even if critically assimilated, still quite heavily influenced by the work of K. Hartmann and T. Pinkard on the nature of Hegel's logical-dialectical account of a structured and conceptual totality. See, for example, the journal *Science and Society* Volume 62. Systematic Dialectic by C. Arthur. In particular, pages 448-452.

¹⁰⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.439.

expression of thought than an abstract and formal law of identity that seeks to avoid contradiction.

“On the one hand, it is to be considered as the positive nature of something; on the other, it is related to an opposite, and every nature emerging from its innocence, from its indifferent self-identity, spontaneously relates itself to its other and thereby falls to the ground or, in the positive sense, withdraws into its ground. . . . It is of the greatest importance to perceive and to bear in mind this nature of the reflective determinations we have just considered, namely, that their truth consists only in their relation to one other, that therefore each in its very Notion contains the other; without this knowledge, not a single step can really be taken in philosophy.”¹⁰⁷

As motion is itself the movement of a contradiction, then the general form of working of the dialectic is elucidated through revealing how “opposite determinations” can be demonstrated as being predicated of the same subject. Accordingly, the dialectic that is the dynamic behind speculative thought for Hegel consists in the ability of thought to go beyond an abstract form of identity and to engage with the real determinations and opposite relations in their interconnected movements.¹⁰⁸

A dialectical form of cognition, by contrast to the fixed and contingently related opposites of the “abstract understanding” of metaphysics, consists “in the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative.” That the object is a rational determination of opposites is due to the fact that the concept behind that determination exemplifies a dialectical unity in thought.

¹⁰⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.437 and 438 respectively.

¹⁰⁸ “To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other, and apart from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antithesis For him a thing either exists or does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in rigid antithesis one to the other.” F. Engels. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. Marx Engels. *Selected Works*. Volume Two. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.120.

Abstract and formal thought does not analyse the necessary connection between these opposite determinations that are contained within the unity of the subject. It seeks to avoid, by the nature of its own philosophical presuppositions, any rational engagement with contradiction as a principle.

“But formal thinking makes identity its law, and allows the contradictory content before it to sink into the sphere of ordinary conception, into space and time, in which the contradictories are held *asunder* in juxtaposition and temporal succession and so come before consciousness without reciprocal contact. On this point, formal thinking lays down for its principle that contradiction is unthinkable; but as a matter of fact the thinking of contradiction is the essential moment of the Notion. Formal thinking does in fact think contradiction, only it at once looks away from it, and in saying that it is unthinkable it merely passes over from it into abstract negation.”¹⁰⁹

Abstract understanding, in the Hegelian critique, sees in this opposition a fixed and static external relation, not one that is inherent and immanent to the specific nature of the subject and its activity. Abstract understanding consequently view contradiction as an impediment to rational thought, as unthinkable to the abstract universal form of identity that marks external reflection in its cognitive standpoint.¹¹⁰

“It must not therefore be considered the fault of a subject matter or of cognition that these determinations, through their constitution and an external connexion, show themselves dialectical. On that assumption, the subject matter or the cognition is

¹⁰⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.835.

¹¹⁰ “If in the light of the present discussion we cast one glance more on the metaphysical method as a whole, we find its main characteristic was to make abstract identity its principle and try to defend the objects of reason by the abstract and finite categories of the understanding. But this infinite of the understanding, this pure essence, is still finite: it has excluded all the variety of particular things, which thus limit and deny it. Instead of winning a concrete, this metaphysic stuck fast on an abstract, identity. Its good point was the perception that thought alone constitutes the essence of all that is. It derived its materials from earlier philosophers, particularly the Schoolmen. In speculative philosophy the understanding undoubtedly forms a stage, but not a stage at which we should keep forever standing. Plato is no metaphysician of this imperfect type, still less Aristotle, although the contrary is generally believed.” G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 36z. P.59.

represented as a subject into which the *determinations* in the form of predicates, properties, self-subsistent universals are introduced in such a manner that, fixed and correct as they are by themselves, they are brought into dialectical relationships and contradiction only by extraneous and contingent connexion operating in and by a third thing.”¹¹¹

For Hegel, this opposition reflects a necessary internal division and determination expressed in the particular form of the universal. This is manifested in a necessary relation that allows that specific difference to realise its nature against its own determinate form of opposition, its own form of contradiction. The opposite is, in this dialectical view of contradiction, the *other* of itself. As such, for Hegel, it thus includes its own other, and by doing so is the contradiction or posited dialectic of itself.

Thus all oppositions that are assumed as fixed, as for example finite and infinite, individual and universal, are not in contradiction through, say, an external connection; on the contrary, as an examination of their nature has shown, they are in and for themselves a transition; the synthesis and the subject in which they appear is the product of their Notion’s own reflection. If a consideration that ignores the Notion stops short at their external relationship, isolates them and leaves them as fixed presuppositions, it is the Notion, on the contrary, that keeps them steadily in view, moves them as their soul and brings out their dialectic.”¹¹²

The genuine dialectical element that allows the logical, ontological, and conceptual categories to advance is the negative determination that they contain as a fundamental element in their inner nature. It is “the inwardness of the content, the dialectic which it possesses within itself, which is the mainspring of the advance”. All determination contains negation, and it is through its negation that it becomes that specific form of determination.

¹¹¹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.833.

¹¹² G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.833.

“If then the negative, the determinate, relationship, judgement, and all the determinations falling under this second moment do not at once appear on their own account as contradiction and as dialectical, this is a solely the fault of a thinking that does not bring its thoughts together. For the material, the *opposed* determinations in *one relation*, is already posited and at hand for thought.”¹¹³

Formal thought, with its conception of identity in the form of an abstract universal, seeks vainly to avoid contradiction. If the entity, thing, or concept exhibits a contradiction, then abstract identity posits this contradiction either as an error in the thought process or the concept or as the result of an external connection or relation in the entity.

Things, in the form of abstract universality either contain one of the poles of the contrary predications or do not; it does not, and cannot, contain both forms of the contrary predications. It has no way of conceptualising that the thing, concept, or entity embodies that contradiction as part of its nature and process of change itself.

“Contradiction is the very moving principle in the world: and it is ridiculous to say that contradiction is unthinkable. The only thing correct in that statement is that contradiction is not the end of the matter, but cancels itself. But contradiction, when cancelled, does not leave abstract identity; for that is itself only one side of the contrariety. The proximate result of opposition (when realised as contradiction) is the Ground, which contains identity as well as difference superseded and deposited to elements in the completer notion.”¹¹⁴

Identity is, for Hegel, a form of “simple self-negativity.” That is, identity contains not only difference, but also that difference is itself cognised as an inner difference, one that is expressed in its substantially necessary form activity. As the difference is a difference contained within the universal form, it then assumes the status of a universal difference, one

¹¹³ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.835.

¹¹⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 119 Zusatz. P.174.

that is particularised and expressed as a specific difference or contrariety contained in that universal.¹¹⁵

The distinction I made earlier between outlining the movement of a contradiction and understanding what makes a contradiction a contradiction, though fundamentally connected, may not necessarily be distinguished and united in thought. Given that we have said something about the necessity of contradiction for all processes and movements according to Hegel, and as a necessary ontological characteristic of all being, the question now is, what does Hegel understand by a contradiction, what is its specific nature for him?¹¹⁶

4. Polarity and Contradiction.

What is it, according to Hegel that makes an opposition into a contradiction? In the Science of Logic, Hegel outlines what he regards are the conditions where an opposition could be regarded and described as a form of contradiction. These conditions take the following forms.

¹¹⁵ "If the superficial conception of what the Notion is, leaves all manifoldness outside the Notion and attributes to the latter only the form of abstract universality or the empty identity of reflection, we can at once appeal to the fact that quite apart from the view here propounded, the statement or definition of a notion expressly includes not only the genus, which itself is, properly speaking, more than a purely abstract universality, but also the specific determinateness. If one but would reflect attentively on the meaning of this fact, one would see that differentiation must be regarded as an equally essential moment of the Notion." G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.588-589

¹¹⁶ T. Smith (L.M.C.) S.U.N.Y. Press. (1990.) Smith's book contains the following footnote on the nature of contradiction itself (P.227-228). Here he expresses the following view; "In general there are two standard types of dialectical contradictions. The first occurs when something (either a category or a material reality) is asserted to be a simple unity, but upon closer inspection is seen to include implicitly a moment of difference that is not unified. The second occurs when a category or a material reality is asserted to involve difference only, and then upon closer inspection an underlying unity is seen to be implicit. Both of these "contradictions" can be formulated in a manner that does not involve a denial of the law of contradiction."

The key point of contradiction is missing here, that of polarity. Moreover, it is the polarity that is the source of the dynamic activity and law, manifested in the principle of change and alteration that is inherently contained in the motion of a substantial entity and form. Furthermore, the polarity or "difference" is predicated on a common nature or quality as the parameters of the expression of that commonality. It is only in the following sense that it does not involve a denial of the law of contradiction. For example, a determinate commodity either expresses its use or value forms, not both at the same time. The real point is that of grasping the inherent contradiction in the opposite predicational motions of the subject.

“Opposites, therefore, contain contradiction in so far as they are, in the same respect, negatively related to one another or *sublate each other* and are *indifferent* to one another. Ordinary thinking when it passes over to the moment of the *indifference* of the determinations, forgets their negative unity and so retains them merely as ‘differents’ in general, in which determinations right is no longer right, nor left left, etc.”¹¹⁷

What do these definitions and forms of relation, expressed by Hegel, entail for the analysis of the movement of a contradiction as being that of polar opposition? Furthermore, what is the nature of this error that “ordinary thinking” lapses into when focussing on the indifference of the poles that it, at the same time, forgets their “negative unity”? Just what does it mean to be negatively related to your opposite in the same respect?

Opposition, in the form of contradiction, is a “negative unity” that contains both a common content and a difference, this further entails that “its moments are different in one identity and thus are *opposites*.” Opposition, as a self-excluding difference, is more properly cognised, in Hegel’s account, as a form of polarity, where the positive and the negative poles of the relation share a common content that mediates the oppositional forms of the relation.

Each pole of the relation is the opposite or negative determination of the other, and both poles are contained as moments or determinations that are the expression of the unity of the common mediation or content that underpins their relation.

“But the positive or negative *in* itself essentially implies that to be an opposite is not merely a moment, does not stem from comparison, but is a determination belonging to the sides of the opposition themselves. They are therefore not positive or negative *in themselves* apart from the relation to other; on the contrary, this relation – an

¹¹⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.441.

exclusive relation – constitutes their determination or in itself; in it, therefore, they are at the same time explicitly and actually [an und für sich] positive or negative.¹¹⁸

The polar opposition is not just the expression of a relation to something external, that externality is itself only the manifestation and expression of its own specific and determinate nature; the relation to its polar opposition then is inherently contained within itself. As the opposition is contained within itself, then the opposition takes the form of an “inner difference.” There is, in a dialectical relation of opposition, both an identity and sameness as well as a specific difference or contrariety, in the movement of the polar opposites.

“Difference as such is already *implicitly* contradiction; for it is the *unity* of sides which are, only in so far as they are *not one* – and it is the *separation* of the sides which are, only as separated *in the same relation*. But the positive and negative are the *posited* contradiction because, as negative unities, they are themselves the positing of themselves, and in this positing each is the sublation of its self and the positing of its opposite.”¹¹⁹

Polarity as a form of “explicit contradiction” means not only that both poles are negative to each other, but that each of the poles contains, in itself, both its own expression and its connection and relation to its opposite. Both poles of the relation thus express, in this account, not only their own specific or positive form, but also their own opposite or negative form, as the contrariety inherently contained within that specific and positive form of its determination; a contrariety that is, moreover, mediated by a common content. This commonality of content entails, for Hegel, that the opposition can then be characterised as one where “the antithesis is contained within the antithesis itself, or contradiction.”

¹¹⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.427.

¹¹⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.431-432.

Here the poles are a contradictory content of “opposite determinations in one relation.” Polarity is also expressed by Hegel in the form of a “specialised contrariety and in that way a contradiction.” What is it that makes polarity and contradiction a form of “specialised contrariety”? To be a “specialised contrariety” or to be “in the same respect, negatively related to one another” means the opposition is founded upon a specific and essential form of twofold difference.

The reason that the opposition is a specific contrariety of a twofold difference is that the polar opposites are the contrary extremes that are contained within a common genus or kind, as the expressions of the contrary predicational relations contained within that common genus or kind. Opposition, in the form of contradiction, is then a “negative unity” that contains both a common identity, and at the same time, a common difference. This entails for Hegel that “its moments are different in one identity and thus are opposites.”

Difference as opposition, and opposition as contradiction, only operates, as a contradiction, when the opposites are reciprocally related poles, where each of the poles are “intrinsically conditioned by one another, and are only in relation to each other.” As the expression of a “specialised contrariety” that shares a common content or identity, that is both manifested in and contains, both poles of the reciprocal relation. As the parameters that both inform, limit and determine the nature of the principle of change and alteration, manifested in the contrary forms contained within a common identity.

Each of the poles, as Hegel expresses it, both includes and excludes the other “in the same respect”. How does that dialectic of inclusion and exclusion actually operate “in the same respect”? Each of the contrary poles of the relation is not only the negative of an other, an other with an independent form of existence; that negative is contained as the privative state of the positive pole itself. What are the consequences of this self-contained antithesis?

A dialectic of independence and dependence, of exclusion and inclusion, is then generated by the content of this relation. Polarity, as positive and negative, posits the independence of

the positive and negative poles. The independence of each of the poles, their exclusiveness, further develops from this posited nature of the poles of the contrariety being fixed, static, or only contingently related; they are driven to relate themselves to their own opposite form. What moves them, according to Hegel, is their self-negation, it is this internal dynamic that “transcends the positedness of independence.”

What becomes exclusive to it is that its own privative form, the inclusive sense of its own negation, is manifested in an external relation, as the exclusive sense of its own negation. In consequence of this, each of the poles of the relation then both includes and excludes the other, accordingly, it follows then for Hegel that in a way it also both includes and excludes itself; in this sense, for Hegel, it is a living contradiction.

The polarity and contradiction involved in the movement is that the self-exclusion, the self-existent unity and independence of the polar opposition, gives way to its opposite; by doing so, the independence also excludes its own independence; to put it another way, it necessarily has to relate to its own opposition. The dialectic of self-negation entails that the poles, viewed as fixed and unrelated qualities and entities, cannot remain so.

“The reflection-into-self whereby the sides of opposition are converted into self-subsistent self-relations is, in the first instance, their self-subsistence as *distinct* moments; as such they are only *implicitly* this self-subsistence, for they are still opposites, and the fact that they are *implicitly* self-subsistent constitutes their positedness. But their excluding reflection sublates this positedness, converts them into explicitly self-subsistent sides, into sides which are self-subsistent not merely *implicitly* or *in themselves* but through their negative relation to their opposite; in this way, their self-subsistence is also posited. But further, through this their positing, they make themselves into a positedness. *They destroy themselves* in that

they determinate themselves as self-identical, yet in this determination are rather the negative, an identity with self that is a relation to other.”¹²⁰

It is this self-subsistence and unrelated and indifferent nature of the polar opposites, their posited independence for Hegel, “which in truth perishes in contradiction.” Each of the poles, both gains its determination in relation to its own negative pole, and maintains itself only through its relation to this polar opposite. The parameters of the process of movement and change are thus founded in Hegel’s view on a dialectic of sameness and difference.

This dialectical polarity of sameness and difference allows the specific difference of the relation, as the contrary species of a common content, to be cognitively comprehended, this is achieved by pairing difference with similarity; with the reciprocal relation of the polarity of this dialectic of identity and difference constituting the grounds upon which scientific generalisation of the nature and activity of the common content of the subject matter can now rest upon.

Here is Hegel’s expression of reciprocity as a form of necessary polarity; it is worthwhile noting that the specific difference has no real substantial being on its own, it cannot be regarded as an isolated abstraction that is self-subsisting. It contains a necessary connection to its contrary pole in a reciprocal and reflexive relation of a twofold common content.

“Positive and negative are supposed to express an absolute difference. The two however are at bottom the same: the name of either might be transferred to the other. Thus, for example, debts and assets are not two particular, self-subsisting species of property. What is negative to the debtor is positive to the creditor . . . In opposition, the different is not confronted by any other, but by its other. Usually we regard different things as unaffected by each other . . . Everything is thus put outside of every other. But the aim of philosophy is to banish indifference, and to ascertain the necessity of things. By that means the other is seen to stand over against *its* other.

¹²⁰ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.433.

Thus, for example, inorganic nature is not to be considered merely something else than organic nature, but the necessary antithesis of it. Both are in essential relation to one another; and the one of the two is, only in so far as it excludes the other from it, and thus relates itself thereto.”¹²¹

The basic elements for the operation and understanding of the law of the interpenetration of opposites have already been roughly sketched and outlined. The details of which shall be developed as the investigation of the thesis further unfolds. The basic nature of the law is that the opposition is viewed as a polar relation that is itself the reciprocal expression of an essential and specific difference. With the polar extremes, as the contrary poles of a common content and relation, defining the specific and determinate parameters of the identity.

This relation of reciprocity or correlation is the basis for the Hegelian law of the interpenetration of opposites; expressed in the alternation and interpenetration of the polar motions. The reason that the polar extremes reciprocally interpenetrate for Hegel is that there is “one identical content, which continues in the two correlatives.” This, in turn, means that they “suspend themselves in the immediate transition, the one in the other. The content is itself, nothing but their identity.” Alternatively expressed, they are negatively related to each other in the same respect.

Here each of the poles maintains its nature and form by interpenetrating with its direct opposition. Likewise, without a universal foundation for the contrariety, the “one mediation” of Hegel, there would, in turn, be no basis for the reciprocity or interpenetration of opposites inherent to the specific difference expressed in this dialectical law. As such, the polar parameters contain the determinate forms and expressions of the movement and process of the subject.

¹²¹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 119z. P.173 and 174 respectively.

The contradiction in the movement is not only posited but also resolved in the movement and transition between the poles. Not only then is the opposition and polarity manifested in the difference between the poles, but each of the poles sublates itself by its movement to the other, the self subsistence of the poles are thus shown to be mediated, each by and through the other. To put it another way, the contraries necessarily reciprocally act upon each other, their polar opposition interpenetrates and passes into and out of each other.

What has to be analysed now is the notion of the polar forms as being not just a negative unity of opposites, but as poles that are also self-relating and self-moving. This identity, as simple self-relating negativity, is characterised by Hegel as an “intro-reflected difference”; this is the source for the dialectical process of being-for-self. As movement itself is an “existent contradiction” for Hegel; then self-movement is therefore, if you will excuse the inference, the movement of a self-existent contradiction.

5. The Negation of the Negation.

“Similarly, internal self-movement proper, *instinctive urge* in general, (the appetite or *nisus* of the monad, the entelechy of absolutely simple essence), is nothing else but the fact that something is, in one and the same respect, *self-contained* and deficient, *the negative of itself*. Abstract self-identity is not as yet a livingness, but the positive, being in its own self a negativity, goes outside itself and undergoes alteration. Something is therefore only in so far as it contains contradiction within it, and moreover is this power to hold and endure the contradiction within it.”¹²²

The polarity of dialectical contradiction is resolved through the substantial form activity, and the form of motion inherent in this process is expressed in the law of the negation of the negation. It is resolved contradiction as a self-transcending relation, as the expression of the form activity that realises and actualises the substantial nature of the determinate subject, by affirming itself through its opposition.

Self-exclusion now becomes a process of self-mediation. It necessarily has to determine and relate itself to its opposite through its own substantial form activity. Substance, as a dialectical unity of form and its privation is the ground for that activity. As the external expression of its own contradiction, it has to contain that opposition as a moment and determination of itself. By doing so, contradiction resolves itself. Self-movement, for Hegel, “is nothing else but the fact that something is, in one and the same respect, *self-contained* and deficient, the *negative of itself*.”

Again we see, and here Hegel applies it to the process of substantial self-movement, that the polar contrarities inherent to the substantial form activity are necessarily related to each other “in one and the same respect”. The form and the privation, its “deficient” negation are intimately bound together as the parameters of the substantial process. It is that mediation through the other that becomes in the course of the process, self-mediation as substantial activity.

Being-for-self, in Hegel’s terms, “is the polemical or negative attitude against the limiting other.” This negation of the other, because it is already contained within itself as an inner negation or privation, is also a negation of itself, a negation of its own negative condition. This is why, as the substantial activity is the common ground for the polarity of the contrary forms, it is designated as an “intro-reflected” difference.

Identity is, for Hegel, a negative self-relation that draws a distinction between it and itself, this it does by relating itself to its own external opposition. As Hegel expresses this, it is “the negative as determined in the sphere of essence, the principle of all self-movement”, which consists solely in an exhibition of contradiction.

In order to affirm itself, as the subject, as the positive pole of the relation, it has to negate and contain the other polar form. In one sense, (of the concept of *aufheben*), it is by negating

¹²² G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.440.

its negation that it, at the same time, both negates and affirms itself. This is resolved contradiction as substantial ground; as this self-subsistence, it is the unity of essence.

“The resolved contradiction is therefore ground, essence as unity of the positive and negative. In opposition, the determination has attained to self-subsistence; but ground is this completed self-subsistence; in it, the negative is self-subsistent essence, but as negative; as self-identical in this negativity, ground is just as much the positive. Opposition and its contradiction is, therefore, in ground as much abolished as preserved.”¹²³

This is the basis for the law of the negation of the negation. This negation of the negation is the affirmation of self, the process of being-for-self. It first of all posits its negative then negates it; the negative other becomes contained and becomes a moment or a determination of the self. The idea of containment here is twofold, it means that each pole is contained as a moment or determination of the contradictory pole. It also means that in order for either pole to affirm itself it must contain its own negation and sublate it as a negative moment of itself.

This gives us not only contrary motions between the poles, the interpenetration of opposites, but this interpenetration, where they both negate and affirm themselves, produces a result. The movement and the interpenetration of the poles allows both poles to not only express the independence of their polarity, by containing and negating its opposite pole, it also posits that the polar extremes are defined by their relation to their specific opposite; this it does as it is the negation of itself.

The fact that it contains both moments entails that the positive result of the process is through negating the other, their dialectical opposition, becomes, in fact, a moment of its own active self. The polarity and interconnection of the dialectical categories are brought out in their reciprocal relation and higher unity; in the resolved dialectic that is the realisation of the substantial form activity and hence of its determinate and specific nature.

This gives us a third form of containment, the result of which is the expression of the common content as the subject with a twofold polar form; the unity within the diversity that affirms itself as a specific subject. The mediation of the common content between the extremes becomes the autonomous subject of the process, which takes and casts off both forms in turn, in order to posit itself as a being-for-self. The polar reciprocity is manifested in its necessary form of being, in the fundamental concept of the essential activities that express what it is to be just that kind of thing.

“In general, our consideration of the nature of contradiction has shown that is not, so to speak, a blemish, an imperfection or a defect in something if a contradiction can be pointed out in it. On the contrary, every determination, every concrete thing, every Notion, is essentially a union of distinguished and distinguishable moments, which, by virtue of the *determinate, essential difference*, pass over into contradictory moments. This contradictory side of course resolves itself into nothing, it withdraws into its negative unity. Now the thing, the subject, the Notion, is just this negative unity itself; it is inherently self-contradictory, but it is no less the *contradiction resolved*: it is the *ground* that contains and supports its determinations.”¹²⁴

6. Summary.

To summarise some of the points raised so far in the analysis of this chapter; Hegel defines contradiction as a polar opposition, with the poles being negatively related to each other in the same respect. Similarly, self-movement is viewed as a process of change and alteration with something being both itself and the negative of itself in one and the same respect.

A specialised contrariety or contradiction entails that the contrary poles are related as a twofold form of identity and a difference; this is the source of both their unity and

¹²³ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.435.

¹²⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.442.

opposition. Their polar opposition only qualifies as a contradiction if they share a common content and ground, that is, if they in fact are negatively related to each other in the same respect.

The nature of “the same respect” is the common identity, the genus, quality, or kind. With the subject of the process, as a negative unity, containing this specific difference as the poles of its contrariety; as the greatest specific difference contained within that common identity or universal form. Or, alternatively, as the parameters of the process of movement and change of the substantial subject.

The central point that has been argued for in the present analysis is the importance of polarity as the essence of Hegel’s dialectical account of contradiction, and its consequent central role as the basis for his dialectical account of law as the movement of a contradiction. Hegel’s systematic development of this is here combined with some important and generalised dialectical propositions of Marx and Engels. Propositions that lead to the following consequences for a dialectical viewpoint and analysis.

1. That the polar opposites are both mutually exclusive and mutually related.
2. That the polar extremes remain as the parameters of the subject in process.
3. That the self-identity of each of the poles is also the result of the relation to its specific opposite. [Spinoza’s all determination is negation].
4. That each pole contains, in itself, its relation to its other, as its negation or privation, its direct contrary.
5. That the poles are in a mutually reciprocal relation, where the polar extremes have a mutual action and reaction from and to each other.
6. That the polar opposition rests on their mutual connection.
7. That the mutual connection rests on the common identity of their polar opposition.
8. That the polar opposites then, are both separate and mutually connected, as such, they interpenetrate, being the extremes and the parameters of the subject in process in its substantial and systematic form activity.

9. That by negating its negation, by overcoming its own internal and external contradiction, it realises its nature and affirms itself as the subject of the process.

The essential thing to grasp and hold on to, with regard to a dialectical viewpoint, is the centrality of movement, change, motion, and process. What dialectics as a method seeks to do is to outline the general form of working of the laws of dialectical motion that are universally valid for analysing the change through contradiction that is a fundamental part of the central categories inherent in all substantial ontology.

This fundamental distinction sets a dialectical view apart from what Hegel describes as the metaphysical and abstract forms of thought. This form of abstract philosophical thought operates, in the dialectical critique, with fixed and abstract categories that have no necessary inner connection or movement towards its fundamental relational opposite.

The basis for a dialectical account of nomological activity rests upon the understanding of the movement and development of the contradiction contained in the specific difference of the characteristic form activity of the subject. The laws of dialectics, in this essentialist account, apply to the substantial form activity of the subject, as the motor force behind its principle of change and alteration. These laws pertain to both the substantial whole and to its parts, in their universal, particular, and individuating relations and manifestations.

What is central to this form of analysis is to ascertain the source of the principle of change and alteration that is inherent in the subject's characteristic motion and substantial form activity. There is dialectical motion and causation because there are, at the same time, two opposing polar forces and forms giving rise to contrary and reciprocal motions in operation.

The source of this process of movement, change and development is the result of the interaction and interconnected unity of the polar parameters contained in the expression of the laws of dialectics. It is to the analysis of these laws of motion that the investigation will now turn its attention towards.

In a letter to J. Dietzgen, (9th May 1868.), Marx states that the “true laws” of dialectics are already contained in Hegel, but in a mystified form that has to be divested or stripped from that idealist framework. Marx and Engels conscious aim was to divest these laws of motion of dialectics of their mystical Hegelian form and content. Engels outlines what he and Marx considered to be a necessary task in order to extract the rational kernel of dialectics from Hegel’s idealist thought.

“The laws which Hegel developed in all-embracing but mystic form, and which we made it one of our aims to strip of this mystic form and to bring clearly before the mind in their complete simplicity and universality.”¹²⁵

Furthermore, the systematic exposition of dialectics postulates that a rational account of law is grounded on the movement inherent within a contradiction. Contradiction and law are thus inseparably bound together for, not only Hegel, but also Marx.

Given acceptance of the above elucidation of Hegel’s views on contradiction as the source of, not only a dialectical methodology, but also of nomological activity, it still leaves us with one central task to perform. The remaining question to be answered is what exactly is the nature of Hegel’s analysis of law and its essential relation to contradiction? This subject matter is now the topic for further investigation.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

LAW AND CONTRADICTION: A PERMANENCE OF IMPERMANENCE.

1. The Limits of Abstract Understanding.

“Two philosophical tendencies, the metaphysical with fixed categories, the dialectical (Aristotle and especially Hegel) with fluid categories; the proofs that these fixed oppositions of basis and consequence, cause and effect, identity and difference, appearance and essence are untenable, that analysis shows one pole already present in the other *in nuce*, that at a definite point the one pole becomes transformed into the other, and that all logic develops only from these progressing contradictions.”¹²⁶

Hegel's account of nomological activity or law is one of the most difficult aspects of Hegel's thought to grasp and assimilate. It is, however, necessary, in order to ascertain a more comprehensive understanding of dialectics, that, at the very least, an attempt be made on this key question. To omit this task would inevitably lead to a failure in gaining a fuller understanding of dialectics.

It is, however, notable that this aspect of Hegel's thought is largely side-stepped by commentators of whatever shade of opinion; nevertheless, in my view the bullet has to be bitten on this one as its nature is of central importance for a clearer understanding of what a

¹²⁵ F. Engels. *Anti-Duhring*. Lawrence and Wishart (1969) P.16.

¹²⁶ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.202-203. Engels then goes on to say that this process is “mystical in Hegel himself, because the categories appear as pre-existing and the dialectics of the real world as their mere reflection. In reality it is the reverse: the dialectics of the mind is only the reflection of the forms of motion of the real world, both of nature and of history.”

scientific account of dialectics entails. The analysis of polarity and contradiction, contained in the previous chapter, will provide an important foundation for extricating the mystifying nature of his argument here.¹²⁷

The argument contained in the *Phenomenology* is a highly complex and tortuous one; developed by Hegel in his own inimitable and abstruse fashion. It is further complicated by the fact that there is a twofold argument going on at the same time.

Hegel's intention is to criticise what he characterises as the "Abstract Understanding" and the partial and inadequate account of law that this form of metaphysics generates; the abstract account of law, produced by this form of thought, Hegel designates as the "first supersensible world". The ultimate aim though is to positively set out his own dialectical account of nomological activity, characterised by him as the "second supersensible world", precisely through a dialectical critique of this abstract account.

Laws of motion require forces to be in operation; a central component and aim of Hegel's account of law is, therefore, to ascertain the nature of the relation between the specific force, and the laws of motion expressed in the active subject. This development of the intimate connection between force and its dialectical form of expression, and its relation to the explication of law, is at the core of his argument.

Force, as the active source of both the laws of motion, and the principle of change and alteration of the subject are, as one would expect if Hegel's thought is to be logically consistent, powered by the dynamic of polar contradiction. There is then, for Hegel, an intimate connection between polarity and law.

Whilst the argument is a highly complex and difficult one to follow, there are some key issues that arise from it that can be analytically set forth. The summary of the argument

¹²⁷ The account of nomological necessity and the relationship between force and law is contained, in its most condensed form, in Chapter Three of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as "Force and the Understanding:

presented here is of the general criticisms that Hegel's analysis develops of the abstract account. The fundamental problems with this abstract and metaphysical view of law centres then on the following areas for Hegel.

Firstly, the contradiction that is expressed between the "incessant change" and the "unstable appearance" of the world, and the abstract view of law which is characterised by him as an "inert realm"; the "direct tranquil image of incessant change". This sets up a dichotomy for Hegel between the external, phenomenal world and the force that is exerted in it, in contrast to the concept of law generated by the "abstract understanding".

Secondly, this contradiction between the force exerted as an "incessant change" and the law, which interprets the "absolute flux" of the appearance as a simple, abstract universal form of unity, inevitably produces, for Hegel, a "defect in the law".

Thirdly, and following on from the above, what is missing in the content of the law, its "defect", is the absolute flux of appearance itself. What the abstract account of law lacks is the principle of change and alteration that is exhibited in the perceived or sensuous world.

Fourthly, this "defect" in the "abstract understanding" and its account of law, entails that the polar expression of the force when cognised in this account of law, is interpreted in a form that is abstractly universal and indeterminate. The polarities of the forces involved are collapsed into an abstract simple unity that neither explains the necessity of that division, nor its specific difference.

The polar forms that express the parameters of the force behind the incessant change are seen, at best, as the product of an external property and/or relation that manifests itself in the form of an external cause and effect. This is due to the fact that the two sides of the relation are not necessarily connected as an antithetical opposition, as an intrinsic interconnection

Appearance and the Supersensible World".

contained in a contradictory polarity. The polar divisions are not understood and cognised as being related through their own essential nature and inner connection.

This abstract account of law of the “first supersensible world” cannot therefore explain the necessity of the polarity manifested in the expression of force, as it fails to account for it as a necessary inner difference exhibited in the law. As such then, there is a divergence and contradiction between the manifest expression of force and this abstract account of law. The relations of force and law are, according to Hegel’s critique of this abstract account, indifferent to one another when they should have or share a common identity.

Finally, for the analysis at present, the abstract account of law also “transcends law” itself for Hegel. This is due to the fact that the determinateness of the specific expressions of the law, necessary to conceptually capture the flux of the external changes, “still belongs to appearance or rather sensuous being”. This puts the abstract account in contradiction with its desired aim, of conceptualising the nomological activity that can rationally explain the external phenomenal flux of the appearance.

Hegel’s strategy is to show that this outcome of the “abstract understanding” cannot, due to its own metaphysical presuppositions, fully capture the changes in the appearance in its conceptual content of the law. This gives rise, in the Hegelian account, to a fundamental problem for the abstract understanding in its elucidation of law.

The central problem for Hegel, in this account of law, is its confusion over the relation between its own generated abstract universal view, and the specific differences that are contained in the manifestation of the law. The abstract understanding is driven beyond the external play of forces to what it regards as the principle or law inherent or underlying the phenomenal expression; this being the law that governs all the manifestations of force. The differences contained in the force, and expressed in the law, accordingly become in this account, abstractly universal and indeterminate in their nature.

The dialectical difference manifested in the force is lost in the abstract unity, and this process of abstraction, which, according to Hegel, “absorbs the differences and is indifferent to its law – to be positive and negative”, means that this view of law and its relation to force is thus indifferent to its external manifestation and determinate being. This “abstract law” is therefore characterised by Hegel as “only the immediate raising of the perceived world into the universal element.”

In this sense then, for Hegel, this generalised abstract view of law is a “tranquil kingdom of law.” The “absolute flux” of appearance in the manifestation of force remains external to scientific cognition. The reason this is the case is that it collapses the specific expressions of the law into an abstract universal unity. The result of this abstract law is then, “not the unity of these specific laws, but a law which leaves out their specific character.”

By doing so it thus separates force and its specific expression in the phenomenal world, from the conceptual understanding of the law of the phenomena. The central problem being that this view of law expresses an indifference to this inner difference contained in the law, and manifested in the play of forces in the phenomenal world; consequently, the nature of the principle of change and alteration inherent in the manifestation of the force remains outside of this abstract cognition of the nomological activity pertinent to the subject.

What an “abstract understanding” account fails to achieve for Hegel is to sufficiently cognise and explain the necessity of the inner difference that is contained in the force, and which has to therefore find its expression contained within the law. As such, it fails then to explain the nature of the specific difference that is contained within its own abstract universal form. The difference, as such, is interpreted as remaining constantly selfsame in its abstract unity, in that way the difference is abstractly sublated and set aside in the search for the abstract simple universal that governs this account of law.

This is characterised by Hegel as the realm of the “first supersensible world”, the “immediate copy” of the perceived world, where the external relation and difference is not

cognised as a specific difference belonging to the nature of the thing itself. What is missing then in this abstract account of law is the “absolute flux” of appearance itself; this is the central reason why it is a “tranquil kingdom” of law and only the “immediate copy” of the perceived world.

The characteristic principle and feature generated by this account of law is that “differences arise which are no differences”. The central problem for this view is that we are left with an abstract and inert unity that does not allow the change, motion, and alteration that takes place in the external world to be fully cognised and integrated into the account of the nomological activity of the subject.

To summarise Hegel’s argument so far, there is a twofold problem with this abstract universal account. The twofold problem generated by the “abstract understanding” is that firstly, whilst it may recognise that there is a difference contained in the universal, the differences are abstractly absorbed. The law then does not capture the nature of that difference; in not doing so, it also transcends both the specific form of the expression of the law, and thus transcends a rational account of law itself.

The second problem generated by “abstract understanding” is that if it does concede that the universal is divided in itself, the difference of the polar forms are not then related to one another through their own essential nature and universal connection. The determinate differences that are phenomenally expressed as independent and externally related determinations of force are sublated by the abstract universal unity. The difference is then not cognised in the form of a process of movement and change inherent to the subject under investigation.

As this principle is a specific difference, a contrariety contained within the universal itself, it is also then a form of universal difference, one that is expressed in the form of a polar relation; it is, in a nutshell, a form of universal contradiction. Negation, according to Hegel,

“is an essential moment of the universal, and negation, or mediation in the universal, is therefore a *universal difference*.”

The resultant problem, stated in the following form by Hegel, is that the abstract universal account of law entails that the external manifestation of force is indifferent to this abstract and inert division in the law, and the differences, the parts of the law, are, for the same reason, indifferent to one another. Law then collapses that inner difference into a form of abstraction that itself absorbs the differences.

The difference is a difference cognised within the orbit of an abstract universal form. The difference, like the universal, is perceived as an abstraction, as an inert and fixed predication or quality that is merely attached to or falls under an abstract universal form. As an inert unity where the “differences arise that are no difference” for the “difference remains constantly self-same” in this abstract universal principle of unity.

Force and law are thus not reconciled and cognitively united in the active specific difference contained in them both; the mutual reciprocity and mutual exclusivity of the poles are not connected in their common content, as the determinate parameters inherent to the subject under investigation. The specific difference contained in the subject is not understood in its reciprocal motions and interrelations, as the expression of a universal difference, as an “inner difference” contained within the universal expression of the force in its twofold form.

The central point of Hegel’s critique and his resolution of this problem lies then in the explication of this “inner difference” contained in the expression of force and law, and the need for it to be interpreted as a universal containing a specific and determinate opposition. By cognising this we can cognise the principle of change and alteration that operates in the external world.

To take an example from Marx to help illustrate this Hegelian account of law, classical political economy were, in a sense, correct in positing labour in the abstract as the source of value, but inadequate in that it could not explain the specific difference contained within

labour that could explain the determinate social nature and expression of value. That labour is the source of value is formally correct, but not in this case strictly true or scientific, for it is a specific mode of expression, a historical and transient social form of labour that is the source of the value inherent within the commodity.

Classical political economy, for Marx, makes this very error when analysing the relation of the use value and the value creating aspects of labour, which, of course, is itself the expression of a force, one that has a twofold character. Classical political economy, due to its abstract and inert uniting of the use and value forms of the commodity, could not engender a rational account of the specific difference and relation between the dialectic of concrete and abstract labour that is generated by this bifurcation of the labour power embodied in the commodity.

Its account of labour in the abstract is not the same concept as Marx's analysis of abstract labour. The difference, for example, between the labour embodied within the commodity, as an inner difference, is not exposed in this analysis; it is an analysis that collapses them into an abstract unity of human labour as the source of all value.

Marx's specific form of expression of abstract labour, and its dialectical relation with concrete labour, was beyond the comprehension of the methodology employed in the classical analysis of political economy; that is why, from the perspective of Marx's dialectical critique, it can be designated as a form of expression of Hegel's "abstract understanding".

Whilst there is a very real difference manifested in the social interactions of use value and value, of commodity and money, the phenomenal forms of the "play of forces" to use Hegel's term, the source for both these forms is cognised within the generalised ahistorical abstraction of labour. That labour was the source of value was not the immediate problem, on that there was general agreement; but how, and in what specific form labour is the source that creates value remained an unsolved problematic.

Smith and Ricardo's ahistorical and fixed abstraction of labour and value did not allow the specific difference of value, as a particular and historically limited species of social production, to be analysed correctly.

“It is one of the chief failings of classical economy that it has never succeeded, by means of its analysis of commodities, and, in particular, of their value, in discovering that form under which value becomes exchange value. Even Adam Smith and Ricardo, the best representatives of the school, treat the form of value as a thing of no importance, as having no connexion with the inherent nature of commodities. The reason for this is not solely because their attention is entirely absorbed in the analysis of the magnitude of value. It lies deeper. The value form of the product of labour is not only the most abstract, but is also the most universal form, taken by the product in bourgeois production, and stamps that production as a particular species of social production, and thereby gives it its special social character. If then we treat this mode of production as one eternally fixed by nature for every state of society, we necessarily overlook that which is the *differentia specifica* of the value form, and consequently of the commodity form, and of its further developments, money form, capital form, &c. We consequently find that economists, who are thoroughly agreed as to labour time being the measure of the magnitude of value, have the most strange and contradictory ideas of money, the perfected form of the general equivalent.”¹²⁸

What was posed by classical political economy as the eternal source of value was the abstract universal of labour; an abstract concept of labour that could not capture the contrary and opposing forces, the “*differentia specifica*” behind the phenomenal forms of the expression of labour in its commodity and money forms.

¹²⁸ K. Marx. *Capital*. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P. 85. (Footnote.)

Whilst it was a necessary first step in understanding the law of the phenomena, it is inadequate, in its own terms, of generating a more concrete analysis of the specific difference contained within the law of value. To paraphrase Hegel, it is only the raising of the perceived world into the universal element.

Hegel, not unsurprisingly, is also critical of the viewpoint, which posits that a necessary intrinsic relation and interconnection is viewed as merely the expression of an external property, connection, or relation. The specific difference, for example, of the positive and negative poles inherent in magnetism, is not cognised as an inner essential difference. In the abstract account, the specific difference expressed in the force is nullified and absorbed in the external manifestation and relation.

“Even when the specific determinateness – say one like Magnetism, for example, - is in itself concrete or real, the Understanding degrades it into something lifeless, merely predicating it of another existent thing, rather than cognising it as the immanent life of the thing, or cognising its native and unique way of generating and expressing itself in that thing. The formal Understanding leaves it to others to add this principle feature. Instead of entering into the immanent content of the thing, it is forever surveying the whole and standing above the particular existence of which it is speaking, i.e. it does not see it at all. Scientific cognition, on the contrary, demands surrender to the life of the object, or what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity.”¹²⁹

Consequently, the twofold polarity manifested in the force is not understood as a necessary connection; the positive and negative poles of their nomological expression are thus left essentially unexplained, as there is no account of the necessity of their intrinsic interconnection in the subject. This further entails that as the polar forms have no explainable necessary connection, they appear indifferent to the inner relation.

Moreover, the universal form is also then apparently indifferent to its own polar manifestation. They merely exert their forces and nomological activity in their external relations; the appearance of force and its nomological corollary are thus cognitively divorced.. This "notion of force" is then, for Hegel, "an abstraction which absorbs the differences of what attracts and what is attracted." Force and its expression in law are inevitably then, a cognitive failure for the critical dialectic of this abstract view.

What Hegel is essentially driving at here, in his critique of abstract understanding, is that the ontological contradiction has to be viewed as an inner difference in the subject's activity that determines the nature and parameters of that subject's activity. The polar forms interact and interpenetrate through the dynamic contradiction contained in the twofold relation of the substantial force that is expressed in its phenomenal manifestations and relations.

The principle of change and alteration, the movement of the interpenetration of the polar parameters, represents not only the specific difference and division within its being, but the force expressed in that necessary inner division of the substantial relation has to be reflected in the understanding of its nomological form activity. This dialectic inherent in force and law for Hegel, is thus the key to Marx's critique of classical political economy and his resolution of the nature and substance of value itself.

Marx's account of the value form will reject the value relation being analysed as merely the result of an external property and relation; value is not based on external accident or relational contingency, but on a substantial nature that is expressed in its necessary determinations and objective relations.

There is a distinction made in the dialectical critique, between the necessity of the division, for example, that the commodity has both a use value and an exchange value form, and the necessity of the twofold nature of that division, their nomological division. Classical political economy had the former but not the latter in its abstract analysis of value.

¹²⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) Preface. P.32.

This was due to the lack of understanding of the specific difference and expression of the dialectic of the twofold concrete and abstract forms of labour, the substantial dialectical force and power contained within the twofold nature of the generalised commodity form.

Value is the product of the development of the twofold character of the labour power, both concrete and natural, abstract and social, that is embodied within the commodity form. It is the substantial activity of abstract human labour power, as an alienated social form of labour manifested in the product of labour, the commodity, that explains the apparently contingent and accidental appearance of the simple value form and its twofold expression in the relation of the relative and equivalent forms of value.

How though does Hegel attempt to dialectically resolve what he sees as the inherent problems of abstract understanding in its account of law? By attempting to elucidate this essential aspect of Hegel's dialectical account of law, it should in turn, provide valuable connections with Marx's value theory that will allow his dialectical method and critique of political economy to be more thoroughly investigated and understood.

2. A Permanence of Impermanence.

“We have to think pure change, or *think antithesis within the antithesis itself*, or *contradiction*. For in the difference which is an inner difference, the opposite is not merely *one of two* – if it were, it would simply *be*, without being an opposite – but it is the opposite of an opposite, or the other is itself immediately present in it.”¹³⁰

The resolution of the nature and relation of the specific and inner difference lies in not only accepting that there is a common unity that is the underlying source of the twofold form, but that this twofold polar form has to be integrated into the account, as a dialectic of identity and difference. Hegel's formulation of this transition is quite mystical in its expression,

however, there has to be some attempt to make sense of his argument here as it is crucial for a fuller account of dialectic.

What Hegel generates is a second principle, which both supersedes the first principle generated by the “abstract understanding” and contains it as moment or determination; this is the realm of the “second supersensible world”. The aim of the analysis here is to integrate the principle of change and alteration into the account of law in order to adequately capture the principle of movement and change in the phenomenal expression of the force underpinning the law.

This dialectic inherent in appearance has to be integrated into what Hegel calls the “law of appearance” in order to explain the flux of change in the phenomenal play of forces. The “law of appearance” states, like its abstract predecessor that “differences arise which are no differences”; this is alternatively expressed by Hegel in the form of the universal abstraction that the “*self-same repels* itself from itself”.

What is also contained in the “law of appearance” for Hegel is “that the differences are only such as are in reality no differences and which cancel themselves; in other words, what is *not self-same* is *self-attractive*.” Here, we have a principle of dialectical change and alteration expounded as a process where “like becomes unlike and unlike becomes like.”

The dialectic of the forces of repulsion and attraction, as we shall analyse later in the thesis, provides the source for this Hegelian account of the phenomenal manifestation and polar interaction of the force and law. This dialectic generates a new principle of law that is in opposition to that previously generated by abstract understanding.

“And thus we have a second law whose content is the opposite of what was previously called law, viz. Difference which remains constantly selfsame; for this new law expresses rather that *like* becomes *unlike* and *unlike* becomes *like*. The

¹³⁰ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.99.

Notion demands of the thoughtless thinker that he bring both laws together and become aware of their antithesis. The second is certainly also a law, an inner self-identical being, but a selfsameness rather of the unlike, a permanence of impermanence.”¹³¹

Only then is it difference as an “inner difference”, as a difference in its own self, or, for Hegel, difference as “infinity”. That is, only then is it a form of nomological and universal difference; only then is it a form of universal contradiction. The cognising of the principle of change and alteration, as an inner difference, is then the key element of Hegel’s dialectical resolution and analysis of the relation of force and its expression and law.

Taken together, both these principles are, for Hegel, the inverted expression of the phenomenal world. In this “inverted world” the inner difference contained in the law now reflects the contrary forms of the phenomenal play of forces. The result is an “inverted world” where the essence is the inversion of the flux in the appearance; an appearance where the contrary play of forces were cognised by the “abstract understanding” as externally and not intrinsically related.

The difference in the flux of the twofold force of external appearance is now cognised as being both an inner difference and identity between the polar forces; that difference is both posited and cancelled in their dialectical movement and relation. For Hegel, the polar reciprocity now contained in the relation of force and law entails that “it is itself and its opposite in one unity.”

“Each of the two worlds is really the opposite of itself. The *selfsame* really repels itself from itself, and what is not selfsame really posits itself as selfsame. In point of fact, it is only when thus determined that the difference is *inner* difference, or the difference *in its own self*, the like being unlike itself, and the unlike, like itself.”¹³²

¹³¹ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.96.

¹³² G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.96.

The result of this for Hegel is that “the inverted world” of the universal law is now the direct opposite and corollary of the phenomenal world through the raising of cognition to the level of the “second supersensible world.” As the first “supersensible world” was only the “*immediate* raising of the perceived world into the universal element” or law, the problem was that the perceived world “retained *for itself the principle of change and alteration.*”

This principle of change and alteration is now reflected in the law itself, in the movement of the universal whose active dialectical process consists of the subject, in its phenomenal expression of a twofold force, being characterised in its activity as “self-sundering and becoming self-identical.” The polar opposition is now characterised as an “inner difference” of the universal, as a universal difference that contains a twofold external expression whose polar independence is cancelled in the relation and higher common unity.

The principle of change and alteration, inherent in the process of phenomenal change, is the contradiction that is posited and resolved in the contrary movements of force as the active polar expression of the substantial form activity. An activity that both posit the opposite poles of the relation as independent moments, and resolves that external contradiction through the mutual interpenetration and transformation of those opposites.

By doing so the subject manifests itself in the higher unity of that common content that mediates the inner difference of the polar extremes that are the parameters of the substantial form activity of the subject. This it does through the positing and superseding of the specific difference and division of the substantial form activity in relation to its own privation and negation, as the expression of a “specialised contrariety.”

This account of nomological activity directly ties in with the essentialist analysis of substance and contradiction in Hegel that was analysed earlier; as a specific difference that is expressed in the dialectic of its internal and external forms of polar opposition. The two

combined elements, of a substantial force in its twofold dialectical forms of expression, now give us a nomological foundation for the rational account of substantial activity.

This dialectical process of the nomological activity is established as the stable ground and existence for the opposition contained within the substantial subject to posit and resolve its contradiction. This is essentially why, for a scientific account of law, we have to, according to Hegel, "*think antithesis within the antithesis itself, or contradiction.*"

At the end of the Hegelian analysis of this process, the result of the interpenetration of these opposite laws of motion that are contained as an inner difference in a dialectical account of a systematic subject, is that the fusion of the contrary movement between the poles is resolved in the affirmation of the identity of the subject.

"The different moments of *self-sundering* and *becoming self-identical* are therefore likewise only this movement of *self-supersession*."¹³³

This movement of self-supersession is achieved through the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle; this dynamic is expressed in the process as a determinate negation, and resolved as the self-affirmation through the negation of that determinate negation. It is precisely by analysing the nature of the determinate negation or the "inner difference" involved in the form activity that allows the cognition of the substantial nature of the specific difference in its polar division and dynamic expression to be cognised and outlined.

This contrariety in its essential character, as the parameters of the external process of change, is the source for the laws of motion of the subject. This is the dialectical principle of change and alteration that Marx applies to the dialectic of labour and its subsumption under the forms and mediations of value. Alternatively, it is how value arises and becomes the

¹³³ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.100-101.

subject of the movement and process through the self-mediating dialectic of abstract and concrete labour as the source of its principle of change and alteration.

Hegel's criticism of abstract understanding, and its account of law, centred then on its inability to capture that a concrete analysis of a universal kind and nature required understanding that its particular and specific forms are expressed in the contrary parameters and motions inherent in their process of change.

Hegel's trenchant criticisms of an abstract understanding of force and law finds, in my analysis, its materialist resonance in Marx's critical conception of the limitations of classical political economy. Value, as abstract human labour power, the social form of the product of commodified labour power, actualises itself by duplicating itself; by self-sundering and becoming self-identical.

This general dialectical account of law developed by Hegel and applied to the specific forms of labour contained in the value relation by Marx, is now the subject matter of the argument. A further analysis of this twofold character of labour power as a force, in this case a force that is both natural and social in its expression and its relation, to the substance and form of the law of value is therefore necessary in order to tease out and further develop the present line of investigation.

What is of importance to bring out is the connection that I am trying to make between Marx's analysis and usage of the concept of labour power, and Hegel's view of the relation between force and law.

3. Force and Labour Power.

What separates Marx from his predecessors in classical political economy is the twofold character of labour, or to be more precise in my analysis, the twofold character of the labour power that is embodied in the commodity. The specific expression of labour power in the

form of abstract human labour, as the force and substance of value, is the key to Marx's scientific understanding of the law of value.

This dialectical conception of the diremption and specific difference contained in the twofold character of the labour embodied in the commodity is the source of the expression of a force and law. The law that is in operation is the law of value, and the force underpinning this is the twofold character of the labour power embodied within the commodity form.

The connection between labour power and the law of value is thus imperative for a clearer comprehension of value, as it is the foundation and the social force behind the expression of the law of value. It thus has to be, in my view, necessarily reflected and located in the analysis of the very nomological nature and substance of value itself. As we shall see, this strategy is at the core of Marx's dialectical analysis of value.

Classical political economy, by not having a clearly defined dialectical distinction and difference between concrete and abstract labour, could not fully ascertain both the nature of value, and consequently coherently explain the contrary motions of use and exchange value, of concrete and abstract labour, contained in the expression of the law of value.

The exercise and expenditure of labour power under the specificities of the value form produces a twofold result. It also produces a twofold content and form. The commodity form expresses this in its dual nature, being both a use value and a value. The concrete labour producing a use value form, and the abstract universal labour producing a value form, the twofold natural and social expressions of the commodity form itself. A twofold result, like a twofold effect, requires a twofold cause, given that, as Aristotle expresses it, contrary effects need and require contrary causes.

Concrete labour power, expressed as a force, is relatively unproblematic; it forms the use value from the materials and instruments of labour employed in the productive activity.

What the exact nature of the type of labour that produces value, and how it comes to subsume its dialectically opposite form, concrete labour, as a moment and determination of itself, is however a little more problematic to ascertain.

Labour itself is a power and the specific social and value form of labour power, abstract human labour power, according to Marx, is the force and substance behind the phenomenal expression of the law of value. The analysis of the specific nature of this substance and force that is the source of the value form, itself congealed and objectified in the product of materialised concrete labour, is the key to unlocking the nature and operation of value and the laws of motion of value.¹³⁴

It is, as Marx notes, a fundamental peculiarity of labour under the value form that the amount of labour power expended and embodied in the commodity and measured in time becomes an objective social quality of the product of labour. This “*differentia specifica* of the value form” marks it out from all other forms of human social labour.

Now abstract labour, or abstract human labour power, is, for Marx, the source of the social substance of value. As such, it has a substantial form activity, but this still begs the question as to what the exact nature of this peculiar and specific social substance actually is, and how it realises this active and peculiar social nature?

The labour power that forms the substance of value is social rather than physiological in its nature, it is the totality of the expenditure of the labour power of society reduced to its average form, its general and universal form of simple human labour power. It is simple

¹³⁴ Marx, in a letter to Engels (8th January 1868.), states that there are three fundamentally new elements in his analysis of capital. These new elements, in contrast to classical political economy, show that firstly Marx begins, unlike his predecessors, by dealing with the *general form* of surplus value.

Secondly, the double character of labour, which Marx informs us, is “in fact the whole secret of the critical conception.”

Thirdly, that he reveals how wages are the irrational outward form of a hidden relationship. Marx Engels. *Collected Works. Letters. Volume 42.* Lawrence and Wishart. (1987.) P.514. It is this second element that is of special interest at the moment, though, it should be noted, that the general form of surplus value will

unskilled human labour power that is the source of all the values of both the products of labour and the cost of labour power itself.

The emphasis that I place on the importance of labour power is a surprisingly novel interpretation of Marx's account of abstract labour and the role of labour power in the process of value creation and realisation. However, there are two possible objections to this analysis and stress on labour power as the key to unlocking the nature of Marx's account of the law of value and abstract labour.

These are based firstly on the idea that labour power is not in itself value, a point that I agree with, and which is itself clearly expressed by Marx. However, though labour power is not in itself value, it is, in its objective expression and embodiment in the commodity form, its "jelly" or "congealed state", the creator of value.

Secondly, and related to the former, is that Marx does not have a physiological or materio-technical conception of value. This view has been most forcefully expressed in the work of I.I. Rubin. Again I agree that this is the case; my view of abstract labour as simple human labour power is not fundamentally natural and anthropological but social in its nature and expression.¹³⁵

Rubin assumes that labour power has to be viewed either solely physiologically, as an ahistorical and natural characteristic, or in a material-technical sense when, in fact, Marx

be generated and derived from the application of the general form of working of dialectic to the twofold character of the labour power that is embodied in the commodity.

¹³⁵ I.I. Rubin. *Essays on Marx's Theory of Value*. Black and Red. (1972.) See the chapter on Abstract Labour for his argument against a physiological conception of value as abstract labour. Pages 131-158. The position I am attempting to put forward is based on a critical account of the following view. Labour power is not itself value however it is the source that creates value. At the same time, value is a social entity or form, and independent and atomised concrete labour only produces a use value. It would seem then that value, though it presupposes physical and concrete labour, couldn't be based on that independent concrete labour employed in the productive process, for value is a social and not a physiological product, and labours are socially equated as values only through exchange. This view of Rubin's, expressed in his book, contains a problem however, that value only then seems really to exist and manifest itself in exchange.

also has a social characterisation of labour power in the process of both value creation and realisation.

This, social nature and reified expression of labour power however, is specific and peculiar to the commodity form of the product of labour and no other social form of labour. Otherwise, value would exist in all forms of human society, as labour power is expressed in all modes of social labour, as the active nature of the human subject.

What abstract labour betokens is the fact that all the determinate products of private or individual labour manifested in the world of commodities have a value. This social value form of the expression of human labour power is only manifested and realised in the circulation and exchange of commodities. The further question generated by this though, is where is the value substance of the commodity created?

In particular, this has expressed itself in the following question; that of the relation between the process of value creation and value realisation in Marx's analysis of the operation of capital as a mode of production and circulation of value and surplus value. This social characterisation of the category of labour power in Marx is missing from Rubin's account, and is, in my view, the hidden source and solution to the debate over this vexed question that has been generated by his work.¹³⁶

Marx himself, in my view, gives the answer to this question in volume one of *Capital*, and I will address this answer of Marx to the dilemma derived from Rubin's work later in the thesis. To summarise the investigation so far, the advantages, in my view, of laying stress on

¹³⁶ I.I. Rubin. *Abstract Labour and Value in Marx's System*. *Capital and Class*. Number 5. (Summer 1978.) P.107-139. In this later article, he does attempt to rectify this problematic area and argue for the view, contained in Marx, that value is created in production and realised in exchange. The problem is that he offers no adequate account of how this process is realised that would avoid us from the tendency of lapsing into a physiological or material-technical argument for the creative source of value and not, as he correctly points out, a social origin. This lacuna in his argument notwithstanding, much of Rubin's analysis has been both an important and rightly influential contribution in developing a more rigorous understanding of Marx's fundamental concept of abstract labour.

the importance of labour power for a more comprehensive understanding of Marx's analysis consists largely, but not exhaustively, in the following points.

Firstly, it allows the intrinsic relation between a force manifesting itself and the laws of motion of the substantial subject in its characteristic activity, to be more fully brought out into the open in the analysis. Laws of motion require forces, and these forces have both a substantial form activity and a materialised content. The analysis of the twofold form and content of the force allows its nomological activity to be better comprehended. This general nature is central to the strategy that Marx employs in his critical conception of all the relations that are subsumed under the value form.

Secondly, the dialectical basis for this movement of an interpenetrating contradiction, where the force receives its due expression in the account of law, provides the basis for a deeper understanding of that substantial form activity of value. The integration of force with law allows for a more penetrating connection to be made in the dialectical understanding of the law of value.

Thirdly, the pivot for a scientific comprehension of value, as Marx stresses, lies in the analysis of the twofold character of the labour power that is embodied within the commodity form. This distinction within labour finds its origins in the bifurcation of the labour power that is expressed in the natural and social forms of the commodity.

Fourthly, by introducing the importance of the category of alienated labour power early on in the analysis, it highlights its importance for not only a fuller understanding of the social substance of abstract labour and value; it also lays the basis for a better comprehension of Marx's later usage of it in the labour process itself. That way the category of alienated labour power has not fallen from the sky to enter the production process of capital, but has

already been logically introduced from the outset as a central core element; as the essence of the analysis of the substance of value itself.¹³⁷

Last, and by no means least for the comprehension of a rational form of dialectic, it allows for a deeper understanding of the importance of Hegel for Marx's thought to be further developed.

With the above points in mind, what is now necessary is to further elaborate this relationship between Hegel's account of force and law, and Marx's employment of it in the analysis of abstract labour, the value form, and the law of value in chapter one of volume one of *Capital*. It is now time to further analyse how Marx develops his unique concept of abstract labour as the social substance of value, and the role of labour power in the explication of a scientific account of the law of value itself.

¹³⁷ Marx also seems to indicate the importance of establishing this relation in the following passage from the Marginal Notes on Wagner. Here he is explaining the importance of the twofold character of labour embodied in the commodity. "the concrete modes of labours which create use-values, and of abstract *labour*, of *labour as expenditure of human labour power*, irrespective of what 'useful' manner it is expended in (which is the basis for the presentation of the process of production, later on); . . .the fact that surplus-value itself is derived from a *use-value of labour power* which is 'specific' and applies exclusively to it, etc., etc." K.

CHAPTER NINE.

FORCE, LAW, AND VALUE.

1. Abstract Labour.

“Where science comes in is to show *how* the law of value asserts itself.”¹³⁸

Value, for Marx, does not stalk about with a label telling us what it is. Moreover, as it is a reified social form of labour, value thus seems to be an inherent property of all labour, as natural and material as the use value of the commodity itself. Value, though, is exclusively social in its nature and origins, and its social foundations are revealed in Marx's concept of abstract labour. What is though, the mysterious nature of this peculiar social substance?

Value, as abstract human labour power, is a historically specific social form and result. It then has, however, a historically specific and determinate social nature, and that peculiar nature is fundamentally related to the social form of expressing the objectification of the labour power embodied within the commodity.

What determines its specific social nature and content is, at the same time, the common source that universalises and generalises the myriad and specific forms of concrete labour itself through the act of exchange. Part of the peculiarity of grasping the mystifying nature of value as abstract labour lies in the concept, developed by Marx, of homogeneous and simple human labour power; the socialising source and substantial force behind the expression of the category of value.

Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park Publications. (1976.) P.216. The development of this relation provides the solution to the dilemma in Rubin's account.

A social category, which posits that human labour power has been embodied within the commodity in the production process, and can thus be equated and exchanged for all the other myriad forms of concrete and privately produced labour. The essence of the value relation of the commodity form is that it expresses, in an abstract and homogeneous social form, that human labour power has been expended in their production.

“The commodities social form is their relationship to one another as *equal labour*; hence - since the equality *toto coelo* (utterly) different labour can only consist in an abstraction from their inequality - their relationship to one another as *human labour* in general: *expenditures of human labour power*, which is what all *human labours* - whatever their content and mode of operation - actually *are*.”¹³⁹

In the value form, all labour is equateable with all other forms of labour. This historical evolution and development of all labour as having the character of being abstract human labour, only fully establishes itself in a system based on capital accumulation; as the mode of commodity production and exchange that expresses its more completely formed nature. The social totality of labour thus manifests itself as a world of commodities.

Abstract human labour power is labour power that is, by its very nature, indifferent to its particular concrete manifestation. What abstract labour is saying in its social relation, in the value language of commodities, is that all the myriad of particular concrete forms of labour can be socially equated by dint of the fact that they are all particular embodiments and expressions of human labour power. This social equalisation of all concrete labours can only be socially expressed by homogenising and reducing them to their common denominator, as expressions of simple human labour power.

How though does Marx's analysis of the labour power embodied in the commodity manifest itself as a dialectical process? The twofold nature of a commodity, as having both a use and

¹³⁸ K. Marx. Collected Works Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart (1987) P.68.

a value form can logically only be a result of a dialectic expressed within the labouring activity itself, where the *one* labouring activity specifies itself in a twofold form of the product of labour.

Labour as genus, as a universal activity, specifies itself as a social value form in and through this twofold character, its diremption into its concrete and abstract forms of natural and social labour. A polar opposition that is the expression of the determinate and essential form activity for realising its universal nature as a thing with a social value; this being the case only by dint of the presupposition that it is a thing with a social use.

“It follows from the preceding not that there are two differing kinds of labour lurking in the commodity, but rather that the *same* labour is specified in differing and even contradictory manner – in accordance with whether it is related to the use value of the commodity as labour’s product or related to the commodity value as its merely objective expression. Just as the commodity must be above all else an object of use in order to be a value, just so does labour have to be before all else useful labour – purposeful, productive activity – in order to count as expenditure of human labour power and hence as simple human labour.”¹⁴⁰

Labour as genus takes on a twofold specific difference, as a reciprocal and reflexive movement of a contradiction contained within the product of labour itself in its natural and social forms of expression. This twofold contrary expression of labour requires a twofold contrary force in the characterisation of the labour power embodied in the commodity. Marx expresses the specific difference of the twofold character of the labour power contained in the value relation of the commodity, in the following comments that differentiate labour power in its abstract social and concrete natural forms of expression.

¹³⁹ K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. Capital Volume 1. (First Edition) Chapter 1. New Park Publications. (1976) P.32.

¹⁴⁰ K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park. Publications. (1976.) P.16.

“On the one hand all labour is, speaking physiologically, an expenditure of human labour power, and in its character of identical abstract human labour, it creates and forms the value of commodities. On the other hand, all labour is the expenditure of human labour power in a special form and with a definite aim and in this, its character of concrete useful labour, it produces use values.”¹⁴¹

At the same time then, the concrete labour power embodied in the commodity, becomes the congealed material expression of abstract human labour power, as the peculiar source of the social manifestation of the product of labour as having a social value. The social relation between the producers becomes expressed through the relation of their products of labour, with value as their alienated and reified social expression.

“The labour however, that forms the substance of value, is homogeneous human labour, expenditure of one uniform labour power. The total labour power of society, which is embedded in the sum total of the value of all commodities produced by that society, counts here as one homogeneous mass of human labour power, composed though it be of innumerable individual units. Each of these units is the same as any other, so far as it has the character of the average labour power of society, and takes effect as such; that is, so far as it requires for producing a commodity, no more time than is needed on average, no more than is socially necessary.”¹⁴²

The intimate connection between socially homogenised labour power in general or simple labour power and abstract labour as the substance of value has to be recognised for what it is. It is the reified social expression of the entire myriad and disparate forms of concrete labour, the totality of the labour power of society that socially expresses itself as the expenditure of one uniform labour power, “that forms the substance of value”.

¹⁴¹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.53.

¹⁴² K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart., (1974.) P.46.

The value form of the commodity is the manifestation of a specific social form of alienated labouring activity, where the exchange value of the commodity becomes the social form for the “expression of the human labour power expended in its production.” This reified form of labour power is fundamentally social in both its nature and form activity; the analysis of the specific manner and form of the particularising of this genus of social labour becomes the central scientific problem that requires a resolution for Marx.

“A coat is only *value* insofar as it is a *reified expression of the human labour power expended in its production*, and is thus a *coagulation of abstract human labour – abstract labour*, because *abstraction* is made from the determinate, useful, concrete character of the labour contained in it – *human labour*, because in this case labour counts only as *expenditure of labour power in general*.”¹⁴³

Value does not then contain an atom of use value, it is a social, or to use Marx’s employment of a Hegelian term, a “supersensible” substance. What is enigmatic is the specific social nature of the “supersensible” quality of value that is “congealed” and expressed in the commodity. As value is a purely social relation, value can only then acquire this equateable form by being the expression or embodiment of “one identical social substance, viz., human labour”.

It then has to, and can only, express itself in the active social relation of commodities, in the mutual and reciprocal alienation that is the essence of the exchange process. Value, as abstract human labour power, is then the social expression and product of the human labour power that is congealed and manifested within the commodity form.¹⁴⁴

Socially related, equated, and measured in the form of value, it is the social expression of the manifestation of the magnitude of the duration of the human labour power that is

¹⁴³ K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. Capital Volume 1. (Appendix to First Edition) New Park. (1976.) P.52.

¹⁴⁴“The value of the commodities, however, represents human labour in the simplest form, the expenditure of *human labour* power in general.” K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park. (1976.) P.14.

embodied in the production of the commodity. The substance of value, abstract labour, only fully manifests itself then in the totality of the relations that are expressed in the “world of commodities”; where the substance of value subsumes all the myriad forms and expressions of concrete labour and gives them a social value form.

How does Marx develop the dialectical relation that is inherent in the social expression of this substance of value? Moreover, how does his exposition of the value substance, form, and relation connect to Hegel’s account of force and its twofold expression, as the core of Hegel’s dialectical account of law?

Hegel presents the process of a substantial force, taking on a material form, as a substantial relation whose nomological content is expressed in its twofold determinate moments or polar forms of its manifestation. The mystical appearance of the Hegelian mode of expression here will have to be unpacked and divested of this form, in order for this relation of Hegel and Marx to begin to more clearly emerge. If this can be achieved then it should further expose and reveal his account as an important element of the rational kernel that is contained in the mystical shell of Hegel’s thought.

“In order, then, that Force may in truth *be*, it must be completely set free from thought, it must be posited as the substance of these differences, i.e. *first* the *substance* as this whole Force, remaining essentially *in and for itself*, and then its *differences* as possessing *substantial being*, or as moments existing in their own account. Force as such, or as driven back into itself, thus exists on its own account as an *exclusive One*, for which the unfolding of the [different] ‘matters’ is *another* subsisting essence; and thus two distinct independent aspects are set up.¹⁴⁵

The substantial force, in this case abstract human labour power, expresses itself by objectifying the contradiction contained within its nature. This is manifested in the exchange relation embodied in the commodity form. The force, as this whole substance, the “one

homogeneous mass of human labour power”, both dirempts itself and gives each of the twofold forms of its expression an independent existence, as the social expression of the value relation of the commodities manifested in the exchange process.

This it does by both positing and resolving its specific contradiction or twofold nature, through the determinate relations that it enters into with others of its own substantial kind; by equating the concrete commodities as social values, it thus realises the potentiality of the substantial form activity expressed in the twofold force. The elementary form of value is thus Marx’s application of the embryonic expression of this Hegelian dialectic contained in force.

The dialectical account of force in Hegel is conceived as a process where the force actualises itself by duplicating itself into two forces. If the concept of force become actual by its duplication into two forces, then entailed in this is that both sides of the relation are the result of this double and opposite form of the manifestation of force. This dialectical diremption and duplication contained within the expression of force requires yet further elucidation and analysis to draw out its connection with Marx’s expression of the law of value.

2. Force and the Elementary Form of Value.

“The whole mystery of the form of value lies hidden in this elementary form. Its analysis, therefore, is our real difficulty.”¹⁴⁶

“In general, to be for itself and to be in relation to another constitutes the nature and the essence of the content, whose truth consists in its being unconditionally universal; and the result is simply and solely universal.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.82.

¹⁴⁶ K. Marx. *Capital*. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.55.

What was shown to be fundamental to Hegel's approach, to the resolution of what he regarded as the inherent problem with the abstract understanding's account of law, was the notion that a substantial systematic subject contains an "inner difference." This inner difference, as the manifestation of a force, is objectively expressed in a twofold relational form; this twofold form has then to be exhibited and contained in the account of the operation of the law explaining the phenomena, as it is the dynamic source of the content of the objective expression of the law.

The idea that there is a doubling of form that produces an identity, one containing a specific difference, is a characteristic principle of a dialectical analysis of law and, consequently, of the general form of working of dialectic itself. The inner difference of the force is expressed in the substantial form activity; in the essential forms of determination that objectively makes the entity that specific form of subject. The contrariety or inner difference contained within the substantial form is reflected, in Hegel's analysis, in the contrariety contained in the objective expression of the force.

The contradictions contained within realising value in its commodity form, simply as it is a unity of use and exchange value, are resolved by externalising them, by duplicating them in a relation to another commodity. Moreover, this relation is itself an expression of the movement of a polar contradiction, as a dialectic whose inner difference is only expressed and manifested in an external relation.

"The commodity is right from the start a *dual* thing, use value *and* value, product of useful labour *and* abstract coagulate of labour. In order to manifest itself as what it is, it must therefore *double* its form. It possesses right from nature the form of a use value. That is its natural form. It only earns a value form for itself for the first time in circulation with other commodities. But its value form has then to be itself an

¹⁴⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.80.

objective form. The only objective forms of commodities are their use forms, their natural forms.”¹⁴⁸

This dialectic of self and other first exposes the polarity of the forms of the twofold expression of the labour power necessary for the comprehension of the value relation. The inner difference of the twofold character of the labour embodied in the commodity is contained in both of the commodities. The value relation is therefore first objectively expressed through the two bodily forms of the commodities brought together in the exchange relation. Each of the poles of the relation expressing a contradiction within itself that first manifests that twofold contrariety in its self, only in its relation to its other.

“The opposition or contrast existing internally in each commodity between use-value and value, is, therefore, made evident externally by two commodities being placed in such relation to each other, that the commodity whose value it is sought to express, figures directly as a mere use-value, while the commodity in which that value is to be expressed, figures directly as mere exchange-value. Hence the elementary form of value of a commodity is the elementary form in which the contrast contained in that commodity, between use-value and value, becomes apparent.”¹⁴⁹

The simple polar relation of value illustrates this negative unity of the twofold forms of the expression of the labour power embodied within the commodity. The dialectic of concrete and abstract labour is first brought out in the simple value form and relation. The human labour power embodied within the commodity thus embryonically expresses itself in the specific social form of value, as the relational expression of a social quality or substance, and the social manifestation of a force.

“Human labour power in motion, or human labour, creates value, but is not itself value. It becomes value only in its congealed state, when embodied in the form of

¹⁴⁸ K. Marx. *Value Studies by Marx*. New Park. (1976.) P.21-22.

¹⁴⁹ K. Marx. *Capital Volume 1*. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.67.

some object. In order to express the value of the linen as a congelation of human labour, that value must be expressed as having objective existence, as being something materially different from the linen itself, and yet something common to the linen and all other commodities.”¹⁵⁰

In the value relation of one commodity to another, the “one stands forth in its character of value by reason of its relation to the other.” The simple form of value is a specific and determinate manifestation and application of this generalised content of the Hegelian dialectic of self and other, as the initial and elementary expression of a substantial form. This embryonic form contains the key to its rational comprehension.

This process is expressed through the contrary motions and specific determinations of a common identity and substantial form activity; an activity that is contained in the manifestation of its necessary and reciprocal relation to others of its common kind. Here is how Hegel expresses that “inner difference” of a common unity inherent to the polarity that is expressed in the substantial force.

“Through the notion of inner difference, these unlike and indifferent moments are a difference, or only a difference of what is self-same, and its essence is unity. As positive and negative they stimulate each other into activity, and their being is rather to posit themselves as not-being and to suspend themselves in the unity. The two distinguished moments both subsist; they are implicit and opposites in themselves, i.e. each is the opposite of itself; each has its ‘other’ within it and they are only one unity.”¹⁵¹

The point that Hegel is driving towards is that a universal force and law, as the expression of a specific form activity, is manifested in the process of the particularisation and individuation of that form activity. As a substantial form that exercises a force in its

¹⁵⁰ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.58.

¹⁵¹ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.99-100.

characteristic activity, and this force, manifested in a determinate and necessary substantial form activity, operates in a nomological fashion, as the common content of the twofold relational expression.

This general content of the dialectic of self and other defines the universal conditions and parameters within which the substantial process operates in this its elementary fashion. With the force expressing itself as an identity that includes a specific difference, and, according to Hegel, "difference is nothing else than being-for-another." This inner difference or contradiction does not remain inner, but objectively expresses itself in a necessary external relation by doubling its form.

The inner difference and opposition of the contrary poles of the value relation, expressed in the social nature of the commodity, not only obtain their specific determination objectively in relation to its own form of internal opposition, but the opposition itself only obtains its specific nature in the ontological unity of the common genus of abstract human labour that sublates and contains the parameters of the specific difference of the twofold labour embodied in the commodity.

*"By equating the other commodity to itself as value, it relates itself to itself as value. By relating itself to itself as value, it distinguishes itself from itself as use value, at the same time. By expressing its magnitude of value in the coat (and magnitude of value is both things: value in general, and quantitatively measured value), it endows its reality of value with a form of value which differs from its immediate existence. By revealing itself in this manner as a thing which is differentiated within itself, it reveals itself for the first time really as a commodity – a useful thing which is at the same time value."*¹⁵²

This it does through the principle of change and alteration that is inherent within the dialectic of concrete and abstract labour whose contrariety manifests itself in the expression

of value. The twofold expression of labour power as a force takes a twofold form in the commodity, as a use value and a value, which itself doubles its form in the value relation, in its relative and equivalent forms of expression.

If the nature and the essence of the content for Hegel is a dialectic of being for self and being in relation to another, how then does the twofold content of this dialectic of self and other unfold and manifest itself as the expression of force and law?

“Here, these two sides are moments of Force; they are just as much in a unity, as this unity, which appears as the middle term over against the independent extremes, is a perpetual diremption of itself into just these extremes which exist only through this process.”¹⁵³

As Hegel further expresses this process, “what they are, they are, only in this middle term and in this contact.” This expression of force is the source of the twofold parameters of the qualitative nature of its active substantial activity. The question is though; does this Hegelian analysis help to reveal the manner in which Marx investigates how the law of value asserts itself? To answer this is to further elucidate the connection between Hegel’s account of force and law, and how Marx’s analysis of the simple value form, are further related.

The common feature of value inherent in both commodities is brought out in that x of commodity A is exchanged for y of commodity B. This manifests the value of commodity A in its relative opposite commodity B. The relative and equivalent forms are, in Marx’s account, both mutually related and mutually exclusive; in other words, they are the polar opposites of a contradiction that has a twofold form of expression; to borrow Marx’s phrase, they are as “necessarily opposite as they are connected.”

¹⁵² K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park. (1976.) P.19.

¹⁵³ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.82.

That “unity” of the “middle term” that mediates the “independent extremes”, the common content or ‘third’ that is value in Marx’s terms, is first expressed in the simple value relation between two commodities, as the poles of the “self-diremption” that is inherent to the social expression of the value relation.¹⁵⁴

In what sense, though, is the dynamic of Hegel’s view of a force that self-sunders and becomes self-identical further related to Marx’s analysis of the simple value form? In Hegel’s terms, the process of the manifestation of force and law is inherent with a principle of change and alteration that is expressed in the dialectical relation between its polar forms. How does this principle of change and alteration manifest itself?

The self-diremption of force, in Hegel’s account, splits into an antithesis of an active and a passive force; as a force that solicits and a force that is solicited, a force that repels and a force that attracts. The relationship is expressed in the repulsion and attraction contained within the force, and revealed in this opposition of the active soliciting and passive solicited sides; as the dual content of the dialectic of self and other.

Force, in this its expression, is a “perpetual diremption” of itself into these “independent extremes.” As the polar contrariety or specific difference of a shared common content; where the two poles of the force only exist within this determinate process; as the specific parameters that contain the contrary motions inherent to the principle of change and alteration that are initially expressed in this simple dialectic of self and other. Here is how Hegel expresses this dialectic “interplay” of self and other in the twofold manifestation of a universal force that both solicits and is solicited.

“The interplay of the two forces thus consists in their being determined as mutually opposed, in their being for one another in this determination, and in the absolute, immediate alternation of the determinations – consists i.e. in a transition through

¹⁵⁴ “What is present in this interplay is likewise merely the immediate alternation, or the absolute interchange, of the *determinateness* which constitutes the sole *content* of what appears: to be either a universal

which alone these determinations *are* in which the forces seem to make an *independent* appearance . . . The external soliciting Force appears as a universal medium, but only through its having been solicited by the other Force to do so; but this means that the latter *gives* it that character and is really *itself essentially* a universal medium; it gives the soliciting Force this character just because this determination is essential to it, i.e., because *this is really its own self.*"¹⁵⁵

This Hegelian expression of the specific nature and difference of the twofold forces in operation is encapsulated in the elementary or simple dialectical form of the value expression, where the polar relation is shared between the active relative and passive equivalent forms of value. By actively soliciting its value expression in the passive bodily form of another commodity, it repels its own value form, and by repelling its value expression it realises it only through the attraction of the bodily form of the other. Value thus manifests itself in the use value of an other commodity, and use value becomes the form of expression of value.

The actualisation of its movement being the substantial form activity positively resolving the contrary states of its being in its affirmative form. A form that is expressed through the polar parameters acting in a reciprocal and reflexive relation. Each of the poles of the contrary determination then gains its specific form of the relational identity through the opposite, and at the same time affirms itself as being of a like nature. Marx reflects this very process in the simple value relation.

"The relative form and the equivalent form are two intimately connected, mutually dependent and inseparable elements of the expression of value; but at the same time they are mutually exclusive, antagonistic extremes - i.e. poles of the same expression. They are allotted respectively to the two different commodities brought into relation by that expression . . . A single commodity cannot, therefore,

medium or a negative unity." G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.89-90.

¹⁵⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.84-85.

simultaneously assume in the same expression of value, both forms. The very polarity of these forms makes them mutually exclusive.”¹⁵⁶

This interpenetration is captured by Hegel’s formulation of the dialectic inherent in this process of force expressing itself in a nomological manner. That dual content of an active, soliciting, “negative unity” or one, a being-for-self on the one hand, and on the other hand, a passive, solicited, “universal medium of many subsistent matters”, a being-for-other on the other hand. Their universal difference and unity being expressed in the polar reciprocity of the relation and expression of the substantial force.

“They do not exist as extremes which retain for themselves something fixed and substantial, transmitting to one another in their middle term and in their contact a merely external property; on the contrary, what they are, they are, only in this middle term and in this contact . . . Force that solicits and force that is solicited. Consequently, these moments are not divided into two independent extremes offering each other only an opposite extreme: their essence consists simply and solely in this, that each is solely through the other, and what each is it immediately no longer is, since it is the other.”¹⁵⁷

The relation of simple exchange is itself the expression of a polar contradiction of identity and difference based on the reciprocity inherent in a contrariety that shares a common content, in this specific case the reciprocal polarity inherent within the expression of value. Their common content of self and other, itself based on the social substance of abstract human labour power, entails that, as the expression of a polar contradiction, they are both, to put it in Hegel’s terms, “negatively related to each other in the same respect.”

The simple value form and relation exemplifies this contrary form and content of a substantial universal force. The active relative form of value expresses its value form in its

¹⁵⁶ K. Marx. Capital Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.55 and P.57 respectively.

¹⁵⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.85-86.

other; it solicits its own value expression through its opposite, the equivalent form of value. The passive equivalent form, as a being for other, becomes the mode of being for the expression of the relative value of the other. Its status as an equivalent is, as Marx expresses it, “only a *reflection-determination* of linen.”

In this sense, each of the twofold forms of the labour power embodied in the commodities “passes over into” its own other. Alternatively posed, a la Hegel, it is the process where like becomes unlike and unlike becomes like. Abstract labour manifests itself in a different form of concrete labour, and concrete labour becomes the form of manifestation of its dialectical opposite, abstract labour.

“By means, therefore, of the value relation expressed in our equation, the bodily form of commodity B becomes the value form of commodity A, or the body of commodity B acts as a mirror to the value of commodity A. By putting itself in relation with commodity B, as value in propria persona, as the matter of which human labour is made up, the commodity A converts the value in use B, into the substance in which to express its, A’s own value. The value of A, thus expressed in the use value of B, has taken the form of relative value.”¹⁵⁸

The specific contraries contained in the universal form and its substantial expression as an active force are the parameters and poles of the process of movement and change. The self objectively requires an other, in a double form that reflexively and reciprocally reflects its own specific difference or polar contradiction, for the relation to manifest itself in its simple and germ form.

The value of commodities has a “purely social reality” that is only acquired in so far as they are expressions and embodiments of one identical social substance, namely abstract human labour power. This it does by showing the forms of development of the laws of motion and principle of change and alteration inherent to their specific form activity. An activity that

both abolishes their apparent unconnected immediacy of being and their fixed state and condition.

The substantial and essential activity itself is twofold; it both posits the determinate quality of a kind, and posits the identity of the two particulars as a single kind. That is, it is the expression of the particularity of the determinate difference contained in the substantial form activity that manifests itself in the relation between two members of the same substantial kind that exhibits them as having a common essence.

“But *for us*, as remarked above, something more was apparent, viz, that the differences, *qua differences of content and form*, vanished in themselves; and on the side of form, the essence of the *active, soliciting, or independent* side, was the same as that which, on the side of content, presented itself as Force driven back into itself; the side which was passive, which was *solicited* or for an *other*, was, from the side of form, the same as that which, from the side of content, presented itself as the universal medium of the many ‘matters’.”¹⁵⁹

In the simple form of value, the relative and equivalent form could be played by either of the two commodities that express the value relation. It is not yet developed into either a fixed opposition or a totality of relations. Each of the sides contains both antithetical poles, but a commodity cannot express both forms at the same time; the twofold forms are themselves contrary and mutually exclusive. This inverse reciprocity is solely due to the fact that the value substance and relation is here expressed in its elementary form.

“In the simple form of relative value or the expression of the equivalence of *two* commodities, the development of the *form* of value is *correspondent* for both commodities, although in each case in the *opposite* direction. The *relative value expression* is in addition *identical* with reference to each of both commodities, for

¹⁵⁸ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.59.

¹⁵⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.85.

the linen manifests its value in only *one* commodity (the coat) and vice versa, but this value expression is *double* for *both* commodities, different for each of the same. Finally, each of both commodities is only an Equivalent for the single other species of commodity, and thus only a *single Equivalent*.”¹⁶⁰

According to Hegel, the “essence of the active and passive forms is the same.” That is, they share a common content and quality, in the specific case of Marx’s analysis of value, abstract human labour power. Homogeneous human labour power takes the role of the mediating unity of the active universal form that is expressed in its relative and equivalent polarities via the dialectic of abstract and concrete labour; with value as the common essence behind the active and passive forms of commodity exchange.

Value, as the substantial force of abstract labour subsumes the concrete labour and makes it a moment or determination of its own substantial form activity. Private labour and its product, the commodity, becomes social through the mediation of the substance of abstract labour, by the social measurement of the quantitative determination of the labour power that is embodied in the commodity. As the process by which the labour time spent on creating it “becomes expressed as one of the objective qualities of that article.”

That all the products of labour have a value, as the social form of expressing that human labour power is embodied in them, is first manifested through the alienated and reciprocal act of exchange. This distinction within the twofold character of the labour power that is embodied within the commodity form is thus basis for Marx’s uniquely scientific account of value.

This notion, peculiar to dialectic, of contradiction as the expression of the specific difference within a common genus or kind; a difference that doubles its form in order to both posit and resolve its contradiction, is essential for grasping the dynamics behind the general form of working of dialectic, and consequently, Marx’s analysis of the value form and relation.

¹⁶⁰ K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park. (1976.) P.24.

This conceptual evolution of a substantial force, from this its elementary dialectical form, is the source for how it later becomes a more fully “developed actuality” and totality that is itself initially brought out and expressed as an alternation of the two moments or determinations of this its double form of expression.

This development of the subject in its essential determinations and relations universally connects them as an evolving totality of relations and determinations; each of those evolving and more developed determinations and forms are themselves based on the common driving contradiction inherent to its specific nature and difference, and expressed in the substantial twofold force contained in their form activity.

Value, expressed in this its simplest form and content as a dialectic of self and other, is the initial process of this universal and substantial form and content particularising and individuating itself in its universal and specific form of activity. By doing so it will further develop and evolve to subsume the totality of both concrete labouring activity itself, and its product.

The further development of the analysis, from this initial and elementary expression of a dialectic of self and other to a dialectic of one and many, will, as we shall see, both bring out that universality of value in the world of commodities, and at the same time, more fully develop abstract labour as a totality of homogeneous human labour power.

CHAPTER TEN.

THE VALUE FORM.

1. Abstract Labour and Pure Quantity.

“Pure Quantity must here be distinguished from determinate quantity, or Quantum. As the former, Quantity is, first, real Being for Self, which has returned upon itself and as yet has no determinateness; as infinite, homogenous unity which continues into itself.”¹⁶¹

“Let us now consider the residue of each of these products; it consists of the same unsubstantial reality in each, a mere congelation of homogeneous human labour, of labour-power expended without regard to the mode of its expenditure. All that these things now tell us is, that human labour-power has been expended in their production, that human labour is embodied in them. When looked at as crystals of this social substance, common to them all, they are – Values.”¹⁶²

Commodities, as Marx tells us, come in a myriad of different concrete forms and qualities, but in their exchange value form they are merely different quantities and “consequently do not contain an atom of use value.” The use value or material form of the commodity being merely the material depository of the exchange value. Yet, this quantitative expression of value manifests itself in the world of commodities as being their common and universal property.

¹⁶¹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Volume One. (Johnston and Struthers translation.) Allen and Unwin (1961.) P.198.

¹⁶² K. Marx. *Capital*. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.46.

Just as exchange value appears, at first glance, as an accidental and purely relative thing, something that is not intrinsic to the nature of the commodity form itself; then this intrinsic nature of value, as Marx puts it, "seems a contradiction in terms." How then can this purely quantitative expression of commodities assume a common qualitative nature?

We have already gone some way down the road to answering this question in the analysis of the substance of value and its elementary expression in the relation of two commodities. This elementary expression of value, however, does not fully bring into relief, both the substance of value, and the value relation in its entirety. Abstract labour and value have yet to prove themselves as a social totality.

In order for a fuller expression of how the substance and the form of value coheres itself into a world of commodity relations and exchange, based on the value form itself, the substance of value and its universal social form have to be shown how they manifestly emerge and assert themselves as the reified social expression of this totality of the product of labour, the commodity.

What the logical and conceptual relations that underpinned the analysis of value in Marx, have been shown to express and exemplify, are some core elements contained in the Hegelian account of the relation of force and law. This dialectical account of force and its twofold form of expression, both allowed greater elucidation and underpinned, in my view, the laws of motion of the twofold character of the labour power, both concrete and abstract, that are contained in the contrary relations of the expression of value.

By abolishing the immediacy of the use value form of the commodity, through the principle of change and alteration inherent in the dialectic of the active relative and passive equivalent forms of the expression of value, abstract labour both subsumes concrete labour, and makes it a subordinate moment or determination of its own activity.

Value overcomes its privative condition or state, its use value form, and realises its value form by transforming the bodily form of another commodity to act as its own value expression; through doing so, the potentiality of the substance of value actualises its peculiar and specific social nature.

These active-soliciting and passive-solicited poles of the twofold form of expression contained in Hegel's account of force and law, in my view, provide for a fuller understanding of Marx's dialectical analysis of how the value of a commodity is determinately expressed. In the analysis of value, the use value becomes a moment of value in process. This is the sole aim of the substantial form activity and process of the value inherent within the commodity form, to abolish its use value form and realise its value form.

We have also seen, at least in its initial expression, the importance of this Hegelian account of force and law for Marx's analysis of the substance of value, abstract human labour power, as the determinate content of the social nature of value. What other elements of Hegel's logical thought will prove useful for Marx's analysis of the fuller expression of both abstract labour, and its individuation into the single universal equivalent of the money form? For example, does the dialectic of quality and quantity, that are contained and employed in Marx's analysis of the expression of value, have its source in Hegel's account of quality and quantity?

There are two main areas of Hegel's analysis that I think are fundamental for a fuller understanding of Marx's account of the substance and form of value. These are, firstly, the dialectic of repulsion and attraction that coheres the different entities into a common but indifferent form that manifests the atomised elements into a unified totality; this specific contrariety of the expression of force provides the dialectical dynamic for Hegel's account of the transition from quality to quantity.

Secondly, Hegel's account of the category of measure as involving a series of measure relations. This dialectic is the inverse expression of the transition of quality into quantity, as

it provides the dynamic for the transition of quantity into quality. These twofold dialectical transitions of quality and quantity find their unity in measure, itself a “qualitative quantity” for Hegel; this provides the resolution of the dialectic in his exposition.

Both the above areas of Hegel’s thought will allow, in my view, greater insight into Marx’s account of the dynamic of abstract labour as the social substance of value, and its further development and embodiment into a single universal form of value, the money form.

The fundamental distinction and difference between the categories of quality and quantity for Hegel is that quality is primary and immediate determinateness and quantity is this determinateness that has become indifferent to this immediate being of quality. What is of central importance here, for the present study, is that in the Hegelian account of the transition from quality into quantity, quantity takes on an indifference to the determinate qualitative nature of the one or unit.

This is reflected in Marx’s distinction of the use and exchange value aspects inherent in the commodity form, where the commodity value is indifferent to its mode of expressing itself. In Marx’s terms, the particular qualities of the use value of the commodity are treated indifferently by the quantitative value relation; it makes no difference to the commodity which particular use value expresses the equivalent form, any bodily form of commodity would suffice for this.

It is through the logical unfolding of these ontological categories and relations, uniquely developed dialectically by Hegel, and applied by Marx to political economy, that will, to paraphrase Hegel (by replacing the category of being here with the category of value), both bring out the totality of value and abolish the immediacy of the form of value.

That is, in Marx’s terms, how the useful products of labour become a totality of commodity values and generate a universal form of value itself. Let us explore the first of these areas,

the dialectic of repulsion and attraction, before later considering the second, the analysis of measure.

Value, in its soliciting and solicited, its active-relative and passive-equivalent forms are, in my account, Marx's expression of the Hegelian modal forms of the forces of repulsion and attraction applied to the specificities of value. We have already seen their expression in the simple form of value relation. What are then, the determinate operational forms and relations, contained in the forces of repulsion and attraction in Hegel's analysis, that are useful for Marx's critical exposition of value in its more developed expressions of the expanded and general form of value?

Attraction, for Hegel, is the moment of continuity of quantity, and repulsion is the moment of discreteness contained in quantity. How does this unfolding dialectic of continuous and discrete magnitude, inherent within the category of quantity in Hegel, allow a fuller understanding of Marx's account of abstract human labour and the value expression? Let us investigate this relation a little further to see what it can reveal.

Hegel expresses a difference in the category of magnitude between what he calls "Pure Quantity" and "Quantum"; the differentiation is further posed in the following terms that correlate to the quantitative expressions of the forces of attraction and repulsion. Pure quantity is magnitude that is continuous, and quantum is magnitude that is discrete.

Quantity, as the generalised category of magnitude embodies both forms, it has then two moments or determinations; it is the expression of the dialectic of continuous and discrete magnitude. Quantum, as the discrete form of magnitude is, for Hegel, the determinate being of quantity, as a unit of quantity; it is then the determinate form of being that quantity takes, for example, as a single commodity with a determinate exchange value.

"Pure Quantity", as the continuous form of magnitude is, in my analysis, both akin to, and the source for, Marx's analysis of abstract labour as the social substance of value.

“Quantum”, as the discrete form of the magnitude of quantity, is then the source for Marx’s analysis of the determinate magnitude of the exchange value of the commodity. The continuous form of magnitude as the moment of attraction or “ideality” in Hegel, is the expression of the universal form that unites the many, the totality of the discrete forms of magnitude.

In terms of Marx’s value theory, abstract labour as one homogeneous mass of human labour power, is manifested in the totality of the discrete forms of the magnitudes of labour power embodied in the world of commodities. Let us see how Hegel further develops the relational forms of dialectic that are contained in the expression of the category of quantity; by doing so this will, at the same time, further reveal the basis for the elementary expression of value in Marx.

Quantity, in Hegel’s account, has “two sources”, these being “the exclusive unit and the identification and the equalisation of these units.” Hegel does not see these twofold relational determinations of the continuous and discrete forms as two species of magnitude that are unrelated, “as if the characteristic of one did not attach to the other.” They are understood, in my interpretation, as the specific difference and contrariety that is contained in the very modal expression of quantitative magnitude itself.¹⁶³

Furthermore, quantity, as this dialectical combination of discrete and continuous magnitude entails that the expression of the discrete unit progresses into its relation with continuous magnitude. That relation is first expressed in two discrete units. Quantum, in this its independent character for Hegel, “is external to itself”, this is expressed in its relation to an other; it is this relation that initially constitutes its quantitative quality. This external

¹⁶³ “Continuous and discrete magnitude can be regarded as species of quantity, provided that magnitude is posited, not under external determinateness, but under the determinatenesses of its own moments; the ordinary transition from genus to species allows *external* characteristics to be attributed to the former according to some *external* basis of classification.” G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.200-201. They are then, the twofold contrary and specific dialectical forms of the expression of magnitude itself, as its essential and necessary forms of determination intrinsic to its nature. That is, to pose it in Aristotelian terms, they are the contrary species of the common genus of magnitude.

“otherness” for Hegel is not “something indifferent and outside it but a function proper to it.”

The motor forces of repulsion and attraction, contained within quantity, with their discrete-continuous expressions of magnitude, are then manifested in their simplest form as a quantitative ratio. This mutual reciprocity of repulsion and attraction in its discrete and continuous forms first manifests itself in the relation between two quanta; expressed in the dialectic of self and other as the two sides of the quantitative ratio.

“Quantum is thus posited as repelled from itself, with the result that there are two quanta which, however, are sublated, are only as moments of *one unity*, and this unity is the determinateness of quantum. Quantum as thus *self-related* as an indifferent limit in its externality and therefore posited as qualitative, is *quantitative ratio*It has in this unity not an indifferent, but a qualitative, determination; in this its externality it has returned into itself, and in it quantum is that which it is.”¹⁶⁴

The quantitative ratio, which is a mode of being that, in its exponent for Hegel, is an immediate quantum, is also the expression of the qualitative nature of the mediation. It is the relation and reference of one quantum to another that form the two sides of the ratio. These two sides are, like the relative and equivalent forms of value, both mutually exclusive and mutually connected.

2. The Quantitative expression of the Simple Value Form.

Quantity, for Hegel, is not only magnitude that is continuous and discrete, each individual unit that repulses itself is also an expression of both an intensive and extensive magnitude. This entails that in the mutual relational repulsion and attraction of two discrete forms of magnitude, this further dialectic of quantity is relationally reflected in the internal and external determinations of magnitude contained within each unit. This dialectic is the source

for their determinate quantum and the external expression of relationship of similar magnitudes of quanta.

“Extensive and intensive magnitude are thus one and the same determinateness of quantum; they are only distinguished by one having the amount within itself and the other having amount outside itself.”¹⁶⁵

The two sides not only reflect the discrete and the continuous elements of magnitude that share a homogeneous unity of a pure quantity; they also represent the intensive and extensive determinations inherent to quantum. The dialectic of quantity here involves a quantitative ratio, this marks the “intensive” and “extensive” aspects of determinate quantity or quantum, as opposed to the discrete and continuous elements of magnitude at the start of Hegel’s quantitative analysis.

The difference is that the latter apply to the category of quantity in general, and the former applies to the limit or determinateness of it; hence its expression as both a quantum and a direct ratio. The quantitative expression is now further specified and manifested as a determinate relation of two quantum, in the unity of the intensive and extensive aspects of quantum in its determinate relation.

This relation of intensive and extensive magnitude, contained within each commodity, is first expressed in the relation between two commodities, as a quantitative dialectic of self and other. This provides the basis for the equal quantitative determinations of the magnitude of the exchange value relations between two qualitatively different forms of commodities. Hegel expresses this relation in a manner that clearly foreshadows Marx’s account of the value relation.

¹⁶⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.240.

¹⁶⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.220. “A quantum, therefore, in accordance with its quality, is posited in absolute continuity with its externality, with its otherness.” *Ibid.* P.225.

“In Ratio, Quantum is external to and different from itself: this its externality is the relation of one Quantum to another, each of which has value only in this its relation to its Other; and this relation constitutes the determinateness of Quantum, which exists as such a unity. Here its determination is not indifferent, but qualitative: in this its externality it has returned upon itself, and in it is that which it is.”¹⁶⁶

What determines their similarity of quantitative expression is the magnitude of the human labour power that is embodied within their production. This abstract social form and relation provides the source for the common quality that unites them both. This embryonic expression of a quantitative quality is the result of the relation between the two quanta, in Marx's terms this is first manifested in the simple value relation between two commodities.

The properties that a thing exhibits are, as Marx expresses it, not the result of an external relation but only manifest themselves in that relation. This distinction of discrete and continuous magnitude is further expressed and reflected in the intensive and extensive determination of the two sides of the relation that expresses the determinate exchange value of the commodity. With repulsion, as the active expression of the relative form of value, and attraction, as the passive equivalent form of value.

Again the intensive and extensive magnitudes for Hegel are not two separate species of which one involves a character not possessed by the other; they share a common nature. Hegel expresses this very process, that of the qualitative form of a quantitative relation, in his description of the determinate expression of one quantum to another quantum.

“Quantum in qualitative form is quantitative relation. Quantum merely passes beyond itself; in relation it passes over into its otherness in such a way that the latter, which forms its determination, is posited simultaneously, and is another Quantum;

¹⁶⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Volume one. (Johnston and Struthers translation.) Allen and Unwin (1961.) P.256. Hegel also expresses this relation as a qualitative one that brings out the value in the relation in the *Logic*. “But the two quanta are not reckoned at their immediate value: their value is only in this relation.” Paragraph 105. O.U.P. (1975.) P.156.

we then find that it has returned to itself and that it is related to itself (namely in Otherness).”¹⁶⁷

In its externality, and through its quantitative relation to an other, it expresses its own quality; as a quality, which, as it is quantitatively expressed in and through the other, it has in common with the other. Marx also expresses this same qualitative nature that underpins the quantitative equality of the determinate magnitudes of two commodities in their common value expression.

“What does this equation tell us? It tells us that in two different things – in 1 quarter of corn and x cwt. of iron, there exists in equal quantities something common to both. The two things must therefore be equal to a third, which in itself is neither the one nor the other. Each of them, so far as it is exchange value, must therefore be reducible to this third.”¹⁶⁸

Value, as abstract labour is this ‘third’ that initially brings out the common content of the social form of labour embodied within the two related commodities. This value relation finds its determinate expression in the exchange value of the commodity only when it is expressed through another commodity body.

As we have seen, according to Hegel, the *qualitative* nature of *quantity* is that *quantity is external to itself*. The analysis of the simple value form and relation of Marx is derived from this Hegelian form of dialectical analysis. The essence of value, as abstract human labour power, is the source for the expression of the common content of both.

“One forgets that magnitudes of different things are only quantitatively comparable after their reduction to the same unit. Only as expressions of the same unit do they have the same denominator, and are hence commensurable quantities. In the above

¹⁶⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Volume one. (Johnston and Struthers translation.) Allen and Unwin. (1961.) P.199.

expression, the linen relates itself thus to the coat as to something like itself, or the coat is related to the linen as a thing of the same substance, having a like essence. It is set qualitatively equal to the linen.”¹⁶⁹

Two forms of the expression of the same quality, both in equal but discrete quantities, are in a measured relation. What it is continuous with, and what it passes over into, is itself. The value quality is, and can in fact only be expressed, in and through that dialectical relation of self and other. The substantial social force of commodified human labour power and its alienated product can only be expressed in the reified form of abstract labour or value through the relation of one commodity to an other.

The relation between two quanta, each of which expresses the same qualitative determination of quantum, is the result of Hegel’s analysis of direct ratio. In this form of direct ratio, which could be the product of an accidental relation, the qualitative nature of the expression of quantity is not obviously revealed in this simple quantitative relation of two discrete quanta. Here is how Hegel expresses this embryonic qualitative relation of direct ratio.

“In this, the qualitative moment does not yet emerge explicitly as such; its mode is still only that of quantum, namely, to be posited as having its determinateness in its very externality.”¹⁷⁰

Like Marx’s account of the simple or accidental form of value, it appears to be the result of a merely contingent relation, as the expression of an indifferent and external quantitative relation. It is though, the initial but yet to become more fully emergent expression of, a qualitative and common form and unity.

¹⁶⁸ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.45.

¹⁶⁹ K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park. (1976.) P.52.

¹⁷⁰ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.315.

Let us see how Hegel further develops the dialectical dynamics and motor forces necessary for comprehending this evolution, from its simplest expression of a dialectic of self and other into an emergent quantitative and qualitative totality. At the same time, this will reveal its important influence in Marx's exposition of the process of the subsumption of labour and its product by the social substance of abstract labour and value, their common essence.

3. The Dialectic of One to Many or the Expanded form of Value.

The simple form of value, as it appears as an accidental and quantitative relation, does not fully manifest the value creating substance that underpins the exchange relation. It is, as Marx puts it, through the expression of equivalence between different sorts of commodities, that "alone brings into relief the specific character of value creating labour."

This it does by reducing the different varieties of concrete labour to their common social quality, namely abstract human labour power. This value creating substance of abstract labour is more fully manifested with its further development into the expanded form of value.

As a commodity finds its relative value expression in a particular quantity of another commodity, it can then potentially express its relative value in a myriad of quantitatively determinate relations with other commodity forms. This quantitative aspect of value can thus be expressed not only in one other commodity, but also in a whole series of other commodities.

The dialectic of self and other, expressed in the relative and equivalent poles of the simple form of value, now makes the transition and becomes a more evolved dialectic of one to many; as a series of expressions of the relative value form of a particular commodity. The equivalent form of the relative expression of value can now be expressed in potentially limitless acts of exchange relations, with the same relative form of value expressing itself in a series of equivalent forms.

Hegel also expresses this dialectical dynamic of the development of a single to a series of measure relations, inherent in Marx's account. It is this development into an expanded series of quantitative relations that more fully brings out the "distinctive character" of its qualitative nature for Hegel.

"The qualitative exponent, as one immediate quantum, expresses only one relation. The distinctive character of the self-subsistent measure finds its true expression in the characteristic series of exponents which it, taken as unit, forms with other self-subsistent measures; for one of these measures when brought into relation with the rest of them and taken as unit forms another series. Now it is the interrelationship of the members of such a series that constitutes the qualitative aspect of the self-subsistent measure."¹⁷¹

The motor force for this evolution into a more expanded form of quantitative relation lies in the further development of the dialectic of the forces of repulsion and attraction. The relation of the one and the many that Hegel develops here, is a dialectic of mutual exclusion and mutual connection, with repulsion as the positing of each single unit, and attraction as the positing of their relation as a many. This process is exhibited through the further development of the dialectic of the discrete/intensive and continuous/extensive forms of magnitude.

"Continuity is only coherent, compact unity as unity of the discrete; *posited* as such it is no longer only a moment but the whole of quantity, *continuous magnitude* This continuity in the discrete consists in the ones being the same as one another, or in having the same *unity*. Discrete magnitude is, therefore, the asunderness of the manifold one as self-same, not the manifold one in general but posited as the *many of a unity*."¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.352.

¹⁷² G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.199 and 200 respectively.

The discrete unit finds that the quantitative expression of its own quantitative nature is manifested externally through relating to an other discrete unit. The further quantitative relations, that the discrete unit enters into with a series of other discrete units, brings out the continuous unity of magnitude, and posits that continuity as the expression of a common unity or equality.

This quantitative relation of equality belies a common qualitative expression that links the one to the many. This undifferentiated many is the homogeneous totality that is now determinately expressed as continuous magnitude, a continuous magnitude that is the totality of all the discrete magnitudes or single units.

“In continuity, plurality is posited as it is in itself; each of the many is what the others are, each is equal to the other, and hence plurality is simple and undifferentiated equality.”¹⁷³

For Hegel, the negative relation of one to itself is the manifestation of the force of repulsion; it posits itself as itself, this it does, and can only do, in its relation to others. Each of the individual units repel themselves from themselves, repulsion is their common relation. This positing of the individual unit by repulsion, is then, also the positing of many individual units; the “mutual repulsion is the posited determinate being of the many ones.”

To put it in Marx's terms, each single commodity seeks to express its relative exchange value. The relative expression of value presupposes another commodity that it can express its inherent value form in; the development into the expanded form of relative value presupposes many commodities that it can express its inherent value in. This develops a whole series of measure relations contained in the developed expression of the relative exchange value for each commodity.

¹⁷³ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Volume one. (Johnston and Struthers translation.) Allen and Unwin. (1961.) P.201.

The self-existing unit both excludes the others and at the same time relates itself to the many which it excludes; this they all do. Repulsion thus posits both the individual unit and also a multitude of individual units, each of which relates itself in the same fashion. By doing so, quantity shows itself to be both discrete, as a one, and continuous, as a many, at the same time they express their qualitatively common nature and sameness. This manifested in their commonality or “ideality” of attraction.

“Both repulsion and attraction are in the first place distinct from one another, the former as the reality of the ones, the latter as their posited ideality. The relation of attraction to repulsion is such that the former has the latter for *presupposition*. Repulsion provides the material for attraction. If there were no ones there would be nothing to attract; the conception of a perpetual attraction, of an absorption of the ones, presupposes an equally perpetual production of them.”¹⁷⁴

All commodities actively express themselves in the evolution of the simple to the expanded form of value relation, as it is their common social substance and driving force. The active nature of the commodity form is to divest itself of its privative state, its use value form, and realises its true social form of activity as exchange value; value is thus the “ideal” form of the concrete commodity.

The evolution of abstract labour into the value form for Marx is thus driven by the further development of the relative form of value where each commodity seeks to express its value in relation to all other commodities. The development of the value form for Marx takes then, its starting point from the active relative expression of the value form of the commodity.

Attraction is, however, also inseparable from repulsion; in the same way that the value expression of a single commodity could take either the relative or the equivalent form, but not both at the same time, this being dependent on which side it takes in the value

expression. The commodity form presupposes other commodities that it can reciprocally alienate itself in and expresses its own value nature. This mutual repulsion or exclusion dialectically inverts and turns into its opposite, mutual attraction or relation.

“In starting, however, with the repulsion of the determinately present ones and so, too, with attraction posited as externally connected with it, the two determinations, although inseparable are held apart as distinct; but it has been found that not merely is repulsion presupposed by attraction, but equally, too, there is a reverse relation of repulsion to attraction, and the former equally has its presupposition in the latter.”¹⁷⁵

This self-presupposition of the relative and equivalent forms of value entails, as in the Hegelian account of the relation of repulsion and attraction, that the “two determinations each for itself, means that each contains the other as a moment within it.” The binding together of the two sides lies in their common nature, both being values.

The relation for Hegel is such that in repulsion, “the self-negating of each in itself” turns into its opposite, attraction, as “the self-positing of each as its own other.” This dialectic of repulsion and attraction is therefore expressed, or shared between, the two polar forms of the value relation.

Repulsion and attraction turns out to be a relation whereby each presupposes the other as its own negative determination and mediation; this negative self-relation is expressed in the mutual independence and mutual relation of the one with the many; in the relation of the individual to the common kind. One determines itself as a many and the many determine themselves as a one.

“Their independence consists in this, that in this mediation they are posited as *another* determining for each other (Repulsion is the positing of the Many,

¹⁷⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.173.

¹⁷⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.175.

Attraction of the One; the latter is also the negation of the Many, the former, the negation of their ideality in the One), and in that Attraction is Attraction only by the mediation of Repulsion, and Repulsion Repulsion only by the mediation of Attraction.”¹⁷⁶

This development of the dialectic of quantity and quality is driven by the universality of the forces of repulsion and attraction, manifested in both the discrete and continuous, and intensive and extensive expressions of the forms of magnitude, and more fully revealed in the expanded dialectical relation of the one and the many. What constitutes the “moment of continuity” in quantity in Hegel’s analysis is the force of attraction.

This homogeneous nature, of an indifferent plurality externally related to each other, is the qualitative element contained in the relative expression of quantity. What that continuity depends upon for Hegel “is the common element.” Attraction, for Hegel, is then the moment of not only continuity, but also ideality, as the positing of the many in an undifferentiated homogeneous unity, as an expression of one common substance.

Hegel has the view that it is this externality of many ones, as discrete self-repulsing units, in which atomism “remains entangled.” They are then viewed as being merely externally and contingently related as self-acting individual units. For Hegel the opposite is the case, and this is shown in the qualitative relation that is inherent in the continuity of the one.

“We saw, when examining the One that, in its own true nature, it passes over into its ideality, which is Attraction, and that thus continuity is not external but peculiar to it, and founded in its essence.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Volume one. (Johnston and Struthers translation.) Allen and Unwin. (1961.) P.189.

¹⁷⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Volume one. (Johnston and Struthers translation.) Allen and Unwin. (1961.) P.202. See also Hegel’s *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 100z. P.148-149.

This is the motor force and expression of the dynamic movement of the contradiction contained in the specific determination of an individuated substance to the rest of its kind. This qualitative relation of the many to each other is the source for both its “forth-putting” and its “passing over into the other”; this is the determinate characteristic that, for Hegel, “brings out the totality” in the sphere of being. It is the dialectical activity of the forces of repulsion and attraction that both ties them together and brings out their common unity, quality, and nature.

This dialectic of one and many that produces a common homogeneous unity is also the motor force behind the expression, in Marx’s value theory, of the fuller development into the expanded form of the value relation that is manifested in the more evolved exchange relations between commodities. This further brings out the social nature of the force underlying the value creating substance, abstract human labour power. This reified form of labour power, measured in time, is the source for the determinate exchange value inherent within the commodity.

“Our analysis has shown, that the form or expression of the value of a commodity originates in the nature of value, and not that value and its magnitude originate in the mode of their expression as exchange-value. “¹⁷⁸

That common pole of attraction in Hegel’s analysis of quantity is expressed as the social form of value in Marx. It is also the development of the dialectic from its initially apparent quantitative to expanded qualitative expression of the common element necessary for an understanding of the development of Marx’s concept of abstract labour; as the one homogeneous mass of human labour-power in the reified form that the social substance of value takes.

This development of the dialectic from the simple or accidental form of self and other, to the expanded form of self and many others, more fully brings out that abstract labour is the

social substance that is the essence of the value form and expression. This it does as it is now cohered in a more expanded social relation and form that unites the one with the many, "with the whole world of commodities."

"It is thus, that for the first time, this value shows itself in its true light as a congelation of undifferentiated human labour. For the labour that creates it, now stands expressly revealed, as labour that ranks equally with every other sort of human labour, no matter what its form."¹⁷⁹

This expanded form shows that the relative form of the expression of value remains unaltered in magnitude, regardless of which other commodity form its value is expressed in. Furthermore, it also confirms that value is no accidental expression manifested in the exchange relations of commodities, but it is, on the contrary, value that manifests itself in the exchange relation between different and contingently related commodities. The inverse of the phenomenal appearance is revealed in the essence that underlies it.

"The accidental relation between two individual commodity-owners disappears. It becomes plain, that it is not the exchange of commodities which regulates the magnitude of their value; but, on the contrary, that it is the magnitude of their value which controls their exchange proportions."¹⁸⁰

The products of human labour have always had the potentiality of being reciprocally alienated, of being mutually exchanged. This potentiality only and necessarily actualises itself through the homogeneous quality and substance of abstract human labour; this social form of the universalisation and equalisation of all concrete forms of labour and its product is expressed in all the evolving determinate forms that abstract labour as value takes.

¹⁷⁸ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.66.

¹⁷⁹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.68.

¹⁸⁰ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.69.

4. Bad Infinite.

How does this analysis of the expanded form of value in Marx tie in with Hegel's concept of a "bad infinite"? The core of the problem here for Marx is that the substance of value is not yet a totality, it is "deficient in unity." What prevents the full development to the money form in this expanded series of measure relations is that abstract labour, as the universal substance, has yet to individuate itself in a single form. This single universal form has not yet congealed itself through these dialectical relations; this now results in a myriad of particular relative and equivalent forms of value.

"In the first place, the relative expression of value is incomplete because the series representing it is interminable. The chain of which each equation of value is a link, is liable at any moment to be lengthened by each new kind of commodity that comes into existence and furnishes the material for a fresh expression of value. In the second place, it is a many-coloured mosaic of disparate and independent expressions of value. And lastly, if, as must be the case, the relative value of each commodity in turn, becomes expressed in this expanded form, we get for each of them a relative value-form, different in every case, and consisting of an interminable series of expressions of value."¹⁸¹

It is a "bad infinite" for Marx because every commodity can not only express its value in an ever-expanding series of measure relations, but, every other relative form of value can, at the same time, play this role of universal equivalent for all other commodities in their developed expression of value. The other related problem with this is that every new form of commodity also has the potential to do so. This defect of the simple and expanded forms is also encapsulated in Hegel's analysis of measure as a series of measure relations.

"But further, those measures which together with the two, or rather indefinitely many self-subsistent measures of the first series – measures which are compared

only with each other – yield a series of exponents of the ratios between the members of that series, are similarly in themselves self-subsistent measures, each being a specific something with its own intrinsic measure ratio.”¹⁸²

The simple and expanded forms of the value expression cannot, in themselves, cohere this expanding totality of the products of labour, into a fully developed universality of a value form. Marx expresses the “bad infinite” of the expanded form of value and its impact on the equivalent form in the following fashion:

“The defects of the expanded relative value-form are reflected in the corresponding equivalent form. Since the bodily form of each single commodity is one particular equivalent form amongst numberless others, we have, on the whole, nothing but fragmentary equivalent forms, each excluding the others. In the same way, also, the special, concrete, useful kind of labour embodied in each particular equivalent, is presented only as a particular kind of labour, and therefore not as an exhaustive representative of human labour generally. The latter, indeed, gains adequate manifestation in the totality of its manifold, particular, concrete forms. But, in that case, its expression in an infinite series is ever incomplete and deficient in unity.”¹⁸³

The list of potential universal equivalents, like the commodity form itself, is therefore continually growing and ever-expanding. The continuous and discrete forms of magnitude, contained in the expanded form of value, though a more developed totality and generality, a totality that is now a more adequate, but not yet a fully formed expression of one homogeneous mass of human labour power. This is expressed in Marx as the defects that are inherent within the simple and expanded forms of value.

¹⁸¹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.69.

¹⁸² G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P. 353. Hegel further expresses this deficiency in unity in the following form. “The exponents of these ratios are not exclusive determinations of measure; their progress is continuous but it contains an immanent specifying law which is distinct from the formally progressive ratios in which the amounts are combined and makes the former progress incommensurable with the latter.” (Ibid.) P.366.

¹⁸³ K. Marx. Capital Volume one. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P. 69-70.

“The two earlier forms either express the value of each commodity in terms of a single commodity of a different kind, or in a series of many such commodities. In both cases, it is, so to say, the special business of each single commodity to find an expression for its value, and this it does without the help of the others.”¹⁸⁴

Moreover, as each commodity has to seek out its own expression of value, the totality, and hence abstract human labour power in the universal form of value, forever remains, in these forms, “incomplete and deficient in unity.” What is needed to fully actualise this potentiality is a generalised social form, based on the commodification and universalisation of labour power, as the single source of the exchangeability of all concrete products of labour through the market.

It becomes this totality only when abstract labour actively individuates itself, by all other commodities excluding a single commodity form of value. How then does this dialectic change its qualitative and quantitative nature and become a unifying totality?

5. The Dialectic of Many to One or the Money Form.

“The *positing* of the totality requires the *double* transition, not only of the one determinateness into its other, but equally the transition of this other, its return, into the first. The first transition yields the identity of both, but at first only *in itself* or in principle; quality is contained in quantity, but this is still a one-sided determinateness. That the converse is equally true, namely, that quantity is contained in quality and is equally only a sublated determinateness, this results from the second transition – the return into the first determinateness. This observation on the

¹⁸⁴ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.71.

necessity of the *double* transition is of great importance throughout the whole compass of scientific method.”¹⁸⁵

The real infinite, according to Hegel, “consists in being at home with itself in its other, or, if enunciated as a process, in coming to itself in its other.” This consists, for Hegel, in a passing over into the other, but a passing over that is, in the passage, self-related, or to put it negatively “what is altered is the other.” This dialectic is completed through the totality of the relations now generated by the forces of repulsion and attraction.

The repulsion of the many ones now reciprocally transforms itself into its opposite, what Hegel calls the one one of attraction. “This positing of themselves by the many ones into a single one is *attraction*.” Attraction is, for Hegel, the force whereby the dialectic is realised through the common repulsion that leads to the many ones positing a single one, that single one is “ideality realised.” Here, this process of the dialectic of repulsion and attraction is realised when the repulsion of the many is, by their own activity, inverted into its opposite; here repulsion “passes over into attraction, the many ones into *one one*.”

“It is only attraction itself that is a *positing* of a one distinct from other ones; these are only immediate ones which should maintain themselves through repulsion; but through their posited negation arises the one one of attraction, which is consequently determined as mediated, the *one posited as one*. The first ones, as immediate, do not in their ideality return into themselves but have this ideality in another one.

The one one, however, is the realised ideality, posited in the one; it is attraction through the mediation of repulsion, and it contains this mediation in itself as *its determination*.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.323. Hegel then continues in the following vein. “Quantum is now no longer an indifferent or external determination but as such is sublated and is quality, and is that by virtue of which something is what it is; this is the truth of quantum, to be Measure.” (Ibid. P.323-324.)

¹⁸⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. Science of Logic. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.174. Hegel also expresses this process in the following form. “But in the relative repulsion and attraction, which presupposes immediate, determinately existent ones, it is posited that each is in its own self this negation of itself and is thus also the

This reciprocal exclusion of repulsion, through its own dialectical negation, is turned into its opposite, attraction, where the reciprocal exclusion of the many is shown to be based on a necessary connection. That connection, "the nexus binding the many with one another is by no means a mere accident: as we have already remarked, the nexus is founded on their very nature."¹⁸⁷

Hegel expresses the further development of this qualitative aspect, inherent within the further development and expansion of quantity, as a form of "elective affinity." This process leads to the development of an "exclusive measure." This marks a change from the self-subsistent series of measure relations that characterises the bad infinite of the expanded form of value in Marx. This process, for Hegel, the transition of quantity into quality and vice versa, is represented through the development of a nodal line of measure relations. One that itself posits a measure relation that is qualitatively distinct from the preceding series of measure relations.

"Here we have a measure relation, a self-subsistent reality which is qualitatively distinguished from others. Such a being for self, because it is at the same time essentially a relation of quanta, is open to externality and to quantitative alteration; it has a range within which it remains indifferent to this alteration and does not change its quality. But there enters a point in this quantitative alteration at which the quality is changed and the quantum shows itself as specifying, so that the altered quantitative relation is converted into measure, and thus into a new quality, a new something. The relation which has taken place of the first is determined by this, partly according to the qualitative identity of the moments which are in affinity, and partly according to the quantitative continuity."¹⁸⁸

continuity of itself in its other. The repulsion of the determinately existent ones is the self-preservation of the one through the mutual repulsion of the others." G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.177.

¹⁸⁷ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 98z. P.144.

¹⁸⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.367.

This process exemplifies Hegel's dialectic of quality to quantity and the result of this dialectic being that of the transition to the category of measure and essence. Both contrary motions, of quality into quantity and quantity into quality, are in operation at the same time. The dialectical evolution of this categorial development into a single universal form; a form, whose result is itself measure, is itself described by Hegel as a "qualitative quantity."

"This transition of the qualitative and the quantitative into each other proceeds on the basis of their unity, and the meaning of this process is only to show or to posit the determinate being of such a substrate underlying the process, a substrate which is their unityIn this unity of the substrate with itself the measure determination is sublated and its quality is an external state determined by the quantum. This process is equally the progressive determination of measure in its realisation and also the reduction of measure to the status of a moment."¹⁸⁹

In Marx's value theory that dialectic of one to many, as the expanded value expression of each single commodity, becomes an inverted dialectic of many to one, where all other commodities now exclude a single commodity as the measure of the totality of the quantitative value relations contained in the world of commodities. That commodity is now the universal form of the commodity itself, the money form. That exclusive and excluded one is the general individuation of abstract labour, as the "substrate underlying the process" into the unity and totality of the value form in a single entity.

This it has achieved through the quantitative and qualitative changes inherent in the nodal line of measure relations in their dialectically evolving simple and expanded forms of value. What has revealed itself in Marx's application of this dialectic of Hegel's is the objective manifested form of the substance of value, or, alternatively expressed, value as the subject of the activity has now assumed an independent and common universal form.

“The general form of value C, results from the joint action of the whole world of commodities, and from that alone. A commodity can acquire a general expression of its value only by all other commodities, simultaneously with it, expressing their value in the same equivalent; and every new commodity must follow suit. It thus becomes evident that, since the existence of commodities as values is purely social, this social existence can be expressed by the totality of their social relations alone, and consequently that the form of their value must be a socially recognised form.”¹⁹⁰

The evolution and transition of these two forms, the simple and expanded into the general form, marks a dialectical shift and transition from the development of a quantitative homogeneous totality into the development of a new quality; or, to be more precise, they mark the transition into the qualitative quantity that is the category of measure for Hegel.

The first function of money, as the universal form of value for Marx, is the role of money as measure. Hegel expresses this process in the following form; it “is the very essence of being to characterise itself, and its complete characterisation is reached in measure.” Moreover, for Hegel, measure “is implicitly essence; and its process consists in realising what it is implicitly.”

This process in Marx has been shown to be the product and result of an underlying and substantial essence, abstract human labour power. What has now fully expressed itself is, not only the substance of value, but also the specific and determinate form that this individuated substance of value takes, the money form.

This process, as the evolving contradiction that is contained in a potential totality, is itself resolved, as a totality, by separating the value quality of the commodity form from itself and individuating its universality of exchange in a single and general form, the money form.

¹⁸⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Science of Logic*. Humanities Press. (1993.) P.373 and 374 respectively.

¹⁹⁰ K. Marx. *Capital*. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.71.

“In this manner the labour realised in the values of commodities is presented not only under its negative aspect, under which abstraction is made from every concrete form and useful property of actual work, but its own positive nature is made to reveal itself expressly. The general value form is the reduction of all kinds of actual labour to their common character of being human labour generally, of being the expenditure of human labour power.”¹⁹¹

Value, in terms of its evolution from direct barter, has now become the money form. This is achieved through objectively separating the use values of the commodities from their inherent exchange value, and positing value in an independent form that now dialectically interpenetrates with the whole world of commodities. This separating off, of the commodity form of value from a single universal equivalent form of value, a process that does not manifest itself in substantial nature, has its own particular social expression of reification for Marx.

“It is as if alongside and external to lions, tigers, rabbits, and all other actual animals, which form when grouped together the various kinds, species, subspecies, families, etc. of the animal kingdom, there existed also in addition *the animal*, the individual incarnation of the entire animal kingdom. Such a particular, which contains within itself all really present species of the same entity, is a *universal* (like *animal*, *god*, etc.).¹⁹²

In exchange, the commodity and money forms now become independent moments or determinations of the exchange process itself. What we now have is the posited contradiction between the commodity and the money form as the twofold phenomenal forms

¹⁹¹ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.72.

¹⁹² K. Marx. Value Studies by Marx. New Park. (1976.) P.27. This hiving off of a particular commodity to represent all forms of appearance of value as “*the universal materialisation of abstract human labour*” entails that the “*specific labour materialised in it now thereby counts as universal form of realisation of human labour, as universal labour.*” (Ibid.).

of the expression of value itself. Measure, as Hegel expresses it, “is the reduction of measure to the status of a moment.”

Marx achieves this in the analysis of value by the logical and conceptual explication of the process of the separation and doubling of the forms of value from the primary commodity form and its evolution into the money form. In terms of Hegel’s Logic we have now moved on to the sphere of essence where the contradiction, implicit in the sphere of being, is now made explicit. This dialectical process is also reflected, in Marx’s account, in the evolution of value into the generalised contradiction between the commodity and money forms.

“The antagonism between the relative form of value and the equivalent form, the two poles of the value form, is developed concurrently with that form itself.”¹⁹³

Value, as a process, actualises itself by separating itself, by duplicating or doubling its form. This as we have seen, it does through the evolution of the dynamic dialectic of the twofold character of the labour-power embodied within the twofold form of the commodity. It resolves this contradiction by generalising it, by externalising its twofold form in the relation of the commodity and its own universal form of expression, the money form. The germ of the money form has been shown to be contained in the commodity form in Marx’s dialectic.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

DIALECTICAL MOTION AND PROCESS.

1. Doubling of Form.

“What constitutes dialectical movement is the co-existence of two contradictory sides, their conflict and their fusion into a new category.”¹⁹⁴

The central source and principle of motion contained in the general form of working of the dialectic has proven to be that of polar contradiction. This twofold character of polarity has also been manifested in Hegel's analysis of force and law, and reflected in Marx's analysis of value. This dialectical doubling of form, manifested in an external relation, is the result of the twofold diremption of the force characteristic of the substantial form activity.

The necessity for grasping the Hegelian principles inherent to this nomological unfolding has consequentially proven to be pivotal for the comprehension of the substantial and dialectical activity of the subject in process. The principle of change and alteration underlying the interpenetration of the polar parameters of the process were analysed as the product of not only their specific form of inner difference, but also as the expression of their universal nexus.

This universal nexus is also characteristically expressed as the common unity or genus that mediates the specific difference exhibited in the reciprocity of the contrary polar extremes of that common identity. This is the core dynamic of Hegel's essentialist account of the laws of

¹⁹³ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.73.

¹⁹⁴ K. Marx. Poverty of Philosophy. Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 6. Lawrence and Wishart. (1976.) P.168.

motion, of the principle of change and alteration contained in the universal form activity of a substantial subject expressed through its dialectical doubling of form.

This dialectical kernel of the source of motion and movement expresses itself at the outset of the analysis of the process, from the simplest forms of determination to the more complex forms of relations that expresses its systematic nature and universal interconnections. This conceptual evolution is, as we shall further investigate, also reflected in Marx's application of the dialectic to political economy.

From the dialectical nature of the twofold character of the labour power embodied in the commodity all the subsequent contradictions of capital will ensue. Marx's analysis thereby starts from this simple and universal difference expressed in the commodity form of use and exchange value, of concrete and abstract labour, and proceeds to analyse the substance and form of the commodity value in order to develop the movement of this dialectic contained within the expression of human labour power.

This relation between the dialectical law of the interpenetration of opposites, expressed in this notion of a doubling of form, is further exemplified and dialectically reflected in Marx's view of how value, as subject, develops a *modus vivendi* for resolving the inner contradiction and connection pertaining to its nature. This it does by objectifying the contrary opposition inherent within the commodity form in and through an external relation.

“The exchange of commodities implies contradictory and mutually exclusive conditions. The differentiation of commodities into commodities and money does not sweep away these inconsistencies, but develops a *modus vivendi*, a form in which they can exist side by side. This is generally the way in which real contradictions are reconciled. For instance, it is a contradiction to depict one body as constantly falling towards another, and as, at the same time, constantly flying away

from it. The ellipse is a form of motion which, while allowing this contradiction to go on, at the same time reconciles it."¹⁹⁵

The conflict and fusion inherent within the polar reciprocity is resolved in the dialectical movement of the contradiction, through the unity and difference contained in the interpenetration of opposites. This resolution is now expressed in a new and more developed category, in this case the evolution of the simple form of circulation that now posits the money form of value in its dialectical relation with the commodity.

The dialectical doubling of form is now on a more evolved and higher level, with the internal contradiction in the commodity between use and exchange value now objectively expressed in the relation between the commodity form and its universal equivalent, the money form. The contradictions within the exchange process, inherent in the barter form, are resolved by generalising them.

“The process then differentiates them into commodities and money, and thus produces an external opposition corresponding to the internal opposition inherent in them, as being at once use values and values. Commodities as use values now stand opposed to money as exchange value. On the other hand, both opposing sides are commodities, unities of use value and value. But this unity of difference manifests itself at two opposite poles, and at each pole in an opposite way. Being poles they are as necessarily opposite as they are connected.”¹⁹⁶

Here Marx is clearly expressing the view that a polar contradiction, a “unity of difference” is both necessarily opposite, and at the same time, necessarily connected. Here he is also expressing the Hegelian position that the antithesis is contained within the antithesis, in this specific case the twofold character of the labour, and the twofold character that the form of

¹⁹⁵ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.106.

¹⁹⁶ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.106-107.

that labour takes within the commodity, is now dirempted and expressed in an objective and generalised relation.

Value itself, and this is of some importance, mediates between the extremes of the commodity and money forms. It sunders itself in two, to paraphrase Hegel, in order to express itself as value, in order for value as the substantial subject of the process to become self-identical. This process is reflected in the following comments of Marx.

“A law of capital in general that, in order to realise itself, it must posit itself doubly, and must realise itself in this double form, . . . While the general is therefore on the one hand only a mental [*gedachte*] mark of distinction [*differentia specifica*], it is at the same time a *particular* real form alongside the form of the particular and individual.”¹⁹⁷

In Hegel’s account of force and law, the nomological expression of the dialectic contained within the twofold expression of force, entails that the independence of the two forces is the result of the “self-diremption” or “self-sundering” of the force itself. Force splits itself into an antithesis in order to express itself as a unity, as being self-identical and self-moving in its activity of change and alteration. Force manifests and expresses itself externally in a double and opposing form. However, this, as Hegel himself recognises, does seem to pose a potential problem and barrier to be overcome.

“There are at the same time two forces present; the Notion of both is no doubt the same, but it has gone forth from a unity to a duality. Instead of the antithesis remaining entirely and essentially only a moment, it seems, by its self-diremption into two wholly *independent* forces to have withdrawn from the controlling unity.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.449-450.

¹⁹⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.84.

This external diremption into two independent forces opens the possibility, for the materialist critique, of an absolute or irreconcilable antagonism between the inner difference and contradiction rather than its idealist conceptual reconciliation. It is not, for the materialist, a matter of idealistically balancing dialectical concepts, but of expressing the development and evolution of the real contradictions that are expressed within the real relations.¹⁹⁹

The fact that value, in order to resolve the contradictions inherent within barter, has to be expressed objectively in the exchange relation in two independent and antithetical forms, the commodity and money form, lays open the possibility of crisis. Value, then, manifests itself in its own material forms of Hegelian self-sundering.

This dialectical doubling of form into the commodity and money forms not only resolves the contradictions within barter; it raises those contradictions onto a higher objective form, in the circulation relations between the twofold forms. The process of circulation itself now develops its own *modus vivendi*, its own forms of dialectical separation and fusion, at the same time it also poses their potential non-interpenetration and resultant crisis in its laws of motion, as a material expression of the law of the interpenetration of opposites.

Here, it not only “seems, by its self-diremption into two wholly independent forces to have withdrawn from the controlling unity”, value both can, and does, lose the struggle for its “controlling unity”. This dialectical diremption and doubling of value into the commodity and money forms manifests itself, in opposition to its ideal conceptual positing and resolving of the contradiction, into what Marx expresses as an “absolute contradiction”.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹The consequences for this twofold objective form of polarity will have significant repercussions for not only a materialist critique of absolute idealism, but also the materialist account of an evolutionary form of dialectic itself. This requires that both poles are not in a fixed relation where the opposition between them is not only reciprocal and self-reflexive, the polarity itself is also subject to a movement and development in the relationship between the poles. This, will, in turn, alter the nature of the subject that expresses itself in this twofold polar form.

²⁰⁰ “In a crisis, the antithesis between commodities and their value form, money, becomes heightened into an absolute contradiction.” K. Marx. *Capital*. Volume 1. P.138. Abstract human labour power or value, as a manifestation of a social force, not only splits into an antithesis in order to express itself; by doing so it

2. The Twofold Forms of Circulation.

But that it does *exist* in these opposite ways simply means that the two moments are at the same time themselves *independent*. It is therefore this movement of the two moments in which they perpetually give themselves independence and then supersede themselves again which we are now to consider.”²⁰¹

The exchange process of simple circulation between commodity and money posits that purchase and sale are the positive and negative poles of the exchange relation. In simple commodity circulation there are two antithetical and opposing motions that interpenetrate and pass into their opposites. Buyer and seller act out the contrary forms of the exchange relation of the two mutually exclusive and mutually connected forms of value.

The commodity and money forms interpenetrate and pass into their polar opposite forms. They each negate themselves in the other, but by doing so they also actively express value and the value relation in that process. The conversion of a commodity into money, is the simultaneous conversion of money into a commodity. M-C, a purchase, is, at the same time, C-M, a sale. From the pole of the commodity owner it is a sale, from the pole of the money owner it is a purchase. As Marx expresses it, “the apparently single process is in reality a double one.”

What in an exchange relation is a single act by two poles of the relation, become two contrary acts when expressed in the activity of a single subject. The starting point of commodity is negated in money, only to return to itself as the commodity form. What we have in the motion of simple circulation is the social relation between three “dramatis personae”, one of whom sells in the first transaction and buys in the second transaction.

also has to, at least in some form, necessarily maintain itself in a dialectical relation to its opposing pole, concrete labour. This substantive relation being due to the presupposition, inherent in the value relation, of concrete labour as the predicated and necessary condition of its own social nature and form of existence.

²⁰¹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. O.U.P. (1977.) P.82.

This gives us a circular movement that contains four extremes. The process of C-M-C can then be represented as a circular motion that is completed through two contrary rectilinear motions, C-M and M-C.

In the process of circulation there are however not just one form of circulation, that of the simple commodity form; this form will itself further evolve and give rise to its own opposite form of circulation, namely M-C-M. With the separation of value into the commodity and money forms, capital can now first manifest itself in the process of circulation. As itself the expression of two forms of rectilinear motion, only this time, M-C and C-M.

What we now have is the doubling of the forms of circulatory motion contained in the further development of the value relation. Both forms are themselves the result of two contrary motions: C-M and M-C and its direct opposite: M-C and C-M. What the two forms of circulation have in common is that both circuits are resolvable into the antithetical poles of sale and purchase, and each circuit is the unity of the same two antithetical phases.

What distinguishes and fundamentally differentiates the circuit C-M-C from M-C-M is the inverted order of succession of the two phases of purchase and sale. Simple commodity circulation begins with a sale and ends with a purchase; in the circulation of capital we still have four extremes and three dramatis personae, but the one subject this time buys in order to sell. The circulation of capital therefore begins with a purchase and ends with a sale.

We have then, two contrary forms of circulation with opposite starting points and results. Simple circulation begins and ends with a commodity via the intervention or mediation of money, the money changes its place twice. The circulation of money as capital begins and ends with money mediated through the double change of place of the commodity form. In sum, we have two contrary forms of motion in relation to each form of circulation, and we also have two contrary forms of circulation as a whole, expressed in the substantive opposite motions and ends that characterise them.

Simple commodity circulation, selling in order to buy, has consumption as its aim; the commodity falls out of circulation and its use value consumed. The money is continually transferred into the hands of another personage.²⁰² The circulation of money as capital, buying in order to realise a profit, has the expansion of itself, more exchange value, as its aim and characteristic activity. The money, moreover, returns to its initial subject and agent.

In simple circulation, money acts as measure and medium of circulation, the aim is consumption, in the circulation of money as capital, value, in this its highest form is the subject of the process; it is the point of departure and return of the whole activity.

“The circulation of money as capital is, on the contrary, an end in itself, for the expansion of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The circulation of capital therefore has no limits.”²⁰³

What fundamentally separates the circuit C-M-C from M-C-M is that in the latter, it is a complete activity of a single subject. Marx expresses this self-returning activity inherent in the law of the negation of the negation, in the form of a *reflux* back to the point of departure; in this case money as capital is the active subject of the process. This it does through the self-mediation and subsumption of itself, by assuming a dual mode of expression, as the unity of the extremes of its determinate and specific twofold content and form.

“In simple circulation, C-M-C, the value of the commodities attained at the most a form independent of their use values, i.e., the form of money; but that same value now in the circulation M-C-M, or the circulation of capital, suddenly presents itself as an independent substance, endowed with a motion of its own, passing through a

²⁰² This would be a further example of Hegel's “bad infinite” applied to political economy; as the money form continually transforms itself into new hands, it is continually moving away from its starting point, as Marx expresses it. Money as capital, however, expresses a unity that money, as medium of circulation does not, it refluxes back to its starting point, as the unity of activity of a single subject.

²⁰³ K. Marx. *Capital*. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.150.

life process of its own, in which money and commodities are mere forms which it assumes and casts off in turn. Nay, more: instead of simply representing the relations of commodities, it enters now, so to say, into private relations with itself. It differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus value."²⁰⁴

The circulation process of capital is actively expressed in the movement to the negation of its form, M-C, and in turn, the negation of that negation, C-M, where it is the realised affirmation of itself expressed in the return to its own point of departure. In this process the magnitude of M "expands spontaneously." The active self-movement of adding surplus value from original capital is its own fundamental nature that is manifested as an active and "automatic expansion."

However, circulation in and of itself has no principle of self-renewal; it has to be constantly mediated by the extremes of commodity and money, but it does not posit those extremes. What circulation really presupposes, as its mediation, is commodity production that creates exchange values to be realised in circulation. As circulation does not have its own principle of self-renewal, it has to rely on its dialectical opposite and mediation, namely production, to carry this principle within it.

Circulation not only presupposes production; it necessarily ensues from this that it, as Marx notes, "returns into it as into its ground." The drive is for capital to create its own mode of production and thus replicate and self-expand in accordance with its evolved and mature form of activity; the activity that can adequately express its own substantial social nature, the creation of value and surplus value.

"This is their point of departure, and through its own motion it goes back into exchange-value-creating production as its result. We have therefore reached the point of departure again, production which posits, creates exchange values; but this time, production which presupposes circulation as a developed moment and which

²⁰⁴ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P. 152-153.

appears as a constant process, which posits circulation and constantly returns from it into itself in order to posit it anew.”²⁰⁵

3. Negation of Negation as Being-for-self.

Capital, as a system of self-expanding value, requires that it becomes a systematic unity of both production and circulation, with value accumulation as its own specific form of activity. Value, as active capital, is now the substance and ground of the activity that itself takes the twofold form of production and circulation. By doing so it resolves the contradiction within its nature, by subsuming production as a determinate moment of its own form activity and realising itself in its own presupposition, circulation.

Resolved contradiction, according to Hegel, is ground as essence, as the unity of positive and negative. The unity of this polarity for Hegel, as we saw earlier, is based on a universal nexus; the “middle term” that stands over and against the “independent extremes”, and is a “perpetual diremption” of itself into just these extremes. The movement of self-supersession contained and expressed in the law of the negation of the negation is encapsulated then for Hegel in this process of its systematic self-sundering and becoming self-identical.

“That the self-identical divides itself into two means, therefore, just as well that it supersedes itself as *already* divided, supersedes itself as an otherness .. The different moments of *self-sundering* and *of becoming self-identical* are therefore likewise only this movement of *self-supersession*.”²⁰⁶

The substantial subject in its nomological activity exemplifies this Hegelian view of contradictory change as a “permanence of impermanence” as it takes, and in turn casts off, its twofold form in order to express its true substantial nature. Substance, as essence is the ground of all determinate being; this it is because substance has now shown itself to be both

²⁰⁵ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.255.

²⁰⁶ G.W.F. Hegel. Phenomenology of Spirit. O.U.P. (1977.) P.100-101.

self-causing and self-acting. This essential activity can alternatively be expressed as the process whereby substance becomes subject.

This process and movement of the dialectical subject “necessarily develops” from its mediating position to where the category or subject mediates itself through the polar extremes. Marx expresses this very dialectical process of the coming to be of value as capital; a process that is expressed here in an unambiguous and largely unrefined Hegelian manner.

“It is important to note that wealth as such, i.e. bourgeois wealth, is always expressed to the highest power as exchange value, where it is posited as *mediator*, as the mediator of the extremes of exchange value and use value themselves. This intermediary situation [Mitte] always appears as the economic relation in its completeness, because it comprises the opposed poles, and ultimately always appears as a one-sidedly higher power vis a vis the extremes themselves; because the movement, or the relation, which originally appears as mediatory between the extremes necessarily develops dialectically to where it appears as mediation with itself, as the subject [Subjekt] for whom the extremes are merely its moments, whose autonomous presupposition it suspends in order to posit itself, through their suspension, as that which alone is autonomous.”²⁰⁷

Substance, according to Hegel, as the “absolute form-activity and the power of necessity” is “the wealth of all content.” In order to be so, it has to have a systematic form of activity that returns to itself, to the subject as both the point of departure and result; that is, it has to be self-replicating and self-moving in the essential and necessary activity that makes it that specific subject.

²⁰⁷ K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P. 331-332. We saw Hegel’s formulation of this same process earlier on in the thesis, when we were investigating his account of force and law and its importance for the understanding of Marx’s concept of value. As Hegel expressed it, the “unity appears as the middle term over against the independent extremes, is a perpetual diremption of itself into just those extremes which exist only through this process.” G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit* O.U.P. (1977.) P.82-83.

This it becomes when the subject subsumes both the polar forms of the relation and manifests its own self-activity through these polar forms. Central to this process of self-movement is how the Hegelian law of the interpenetration of opposites leads to the law of the negation of the negation.

“In Reciprocity, although causality is not yet invested with its true characteristic, the rectilinear movement out from causes to effects, and from effects to causes, is bent round and back into itself, and thus the progress *ad infinitum* of causes and effects is, as a progress, really and truly suspended. This bend, which transforms the infinite progression into a self-contained relationship.”²⁰⁸

This dialectical interpenetration of opposites, here expressed by Hegel as the reciprocal dialectic of two rectilinear movements of cause to effect and effect to cause, are the sources of the active twofold form activity and force behind the interpenetration of opposites. That reciprocal causation, when the interpenetration of opposites turns into the substantial form activity of a self-returning subject, both subsumes and transforms the reciprocal polarity into a self-contained activity, into a circular form of motion.

This “bend” which transforms the infinite progress of the rectilinear movements of cause and effect into a self contained relationship is the “bend” of circular motion; but circular motion that refluxes back to its point of departure. Here the movement from cause to effect and effect to cause is both suspended and united in the reciprocal nature of the “self-contained” relation.

As the self-activity of a substantial subject containing a nomological activity with a principle of change and alteration, whose laws of motion and determinate forms of interaction encapsulate the necessary form activity and nature of the self-replicating and self-expanding subject. This was achieved by capital in circulation returning to production

and positing the unity of capital as these twofold contrary forms and determinations of production and circulation. Here circulation does "bend" back into itself with capital becoming the subject of the whole process.

Capital has now become the result of these dialectical processes of the interpenetration of opposites that now, instead of having their own specific forms of rectilinear movement, now becomes the circulatory movement of a subject that is the unity of both forms of polar interpenetration. The progress *ad infinitum* of the rectilinear motions is suspended into the circular motion of systematic replication and self-movement. Like the activity of capital, it returns into it as into its ground.

Hegel further expresses this dialectic of causality and reciprocity, inherent in the substantial dialectical activity of a subject in process, in the following form. As the process of the substantial form activity self-sundering and becoming self-identical through a circular movement that returns to itself. As the unity of production and circulation in Marx's account of capital, or as the unity of causality and reciprocity as Hegel expresses this movement of the subject of the process.

"The circulation of substance through causality and reciprocity therefore only expressly makes out or states that self-subsistence is the infinite negative self-relation – a relation *negative* in general, for in it the act of distinguishing and intermediating becomes a primariness of actual things independent one against the other – and *infinite self-relation*, because their independence only lies in their identityAn independence which, though self-repulsive into distinct independent elements, yet in that repulsion is self-identical, and in the movement of reciprocity still at home and conversant only with itself."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ G.W.F. Hegel. Logic. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 154. P.217.

²⁰⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. Logic. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 157 and 158 respectively. P.219-220.

It is through this process that the interpenetration of opposites becomes transformed into the law of the negation of the negation, as the nomological activity of the subject of the whole process. The twofold forms of motion, from production to circulation and from circulation back to production, become a unitary circular motion; a form of motion that unites the same subject as point of departure and terminus of the whole activity.

“In the circulation of capital, the point of departure is posited as the terminal point and the terminal point as the point of departure. The capitalist himself is the point of departure and of return. He exchanges money for the conditions of production, produces, realises the product, i.e. transforms it into money, and then begins the process anew. The circulation of money, regarded for itself, necessarily becomes extinguished in money as a static thing. The circulation of capital constantly ignites itself anew, divides into its different moments, and is a *perpetuum mobile*.”²¹⁰

In this form of circular motion based on two contrary and reciprocal forms of rectilinear motion, we have the general form of working of the Aristotelian and Hegelian account of nomological activity, as an infinite circular motion that returns upon itself. This process has been reflected, albeit with a materialist foundation and application, in Marx’s dialectic of value and in the form of circulation that expresses its more developed concept as capital, expressed in the laws of motion of the twofold determinate forms that underpins its circular movement.

This development of the substantial form activity is the process where the common quality, as Marx expressed it, which originally appears as mediatory between the extremes, necessarily develops dialectically to become the autonomous subject of the process. This process and movement is expressed in the reciprocal action involved in the polar alternation of the conditions of its systematic replication and self-expansion.

²¹⁰ K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.516.

The result is the circular motion that exemplifies the negation of the negation as the self-active process of a substantial subject that systematically reproduces itself, and its conditions of existence, through its own substantial form activity. Force self-sunders in order to become self-identical as Hegel puts it. Value duplicates itself in order to realise itself as capital, in order to act as the self-expanding value subject of the whole process.

In Hegelian terms, it suspends its presuppositions in order to presuppose itself as the autonomous subject, a subject that is now shown to be the common expression of the twofold form of the polar relation. The subject, in turn, now presupposes itself as the starting point and return of the whole process. The motion inherent in the law of the interpenetration of opposites thus intrinsically leads to the law of the negation of the negation; expressed as the realised substantial form activity of the subject.

“The total production process of capital includes both the circulation process proper and the actual production process. These form the two great sections of its movement, which appears as the totality of these two processes. On one side, labour time, on the other, circulation time. And the whole of the movement appears as a unity of labour time and circulation time, as unity of production and circulation. This unity itself is motion, process. Capital appears as this unity-in-process of production and circulation, a unity which can be regarded both as the totality of the process of its production, as well as the specific completion of *one* turnover of the capital, *one* movement returning into itself.”²¹¹

The systematic result of capital as the unity of its own twofold forms of specific difference and determination, namely production and circulation, is itself the historical result of an evolving process. Here capital, as Marx expresses it, posits itself “as a specific unity of circulation and production.” Value, in the form of capital has now become the subject of the process, as a relative form of the Hegelian expression of law as a permanence of impermanence.

“Capital posits the permanence of value (to a certain degree) by incarnating itself in fleeting commodities and taking on their form, but at the same time changing them just as constantly; alternates between its eternal form in money and its passing form in commodities; permanence is posited as the only thing it can be, a passing passage – process – life. But capital obtains this ability only by constantly sucking in living labour as its soul, vampire-like. The permanence – the duration of value in its form as capital – is posited only through reproduction, which is itself double, reproduction as commodity, reproduction as money, and unity of both these reproduction processes. In its reproduction as commodity, capital is fixated in a particular form of use value, and is thus not general exchange value, even less realised value, as it is supposed to be. The fact that it has posited itself as such in the act of reproduction, the production phase, is proved only through circulation.”²¹²

Capital has to take on a historically evolving and universally interconnected series of twofold forms in order for it to be realised value as capital, as the systematic subject of its own self-process. Capital not only has to take the forms of commodity and money; it also has to take the forms of simple circulation and the circulation of money as capital. Furthermore, it has to take the twofold forms that encapsulates this whole process, as a specific and determinate mode of production and circulation based on surplus value creation and capital realisation and accumulation.

The systematic outcome is realised in the totality of the expressions of all the specific and determinate forms of the dialectic of negativity, of the polar contradictions and reciprocal relations of the interpenetration of opposites, that characterise each successive mode and determinate movement of the systematic subject. All these determinate modes and forms, along with the systematic whole itself, are cohered together, and resolved in their ongoing contradictions, as the result of the operation of the law of the negation of the negation.

²¹¹ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.620.

²¹² K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.646.

Here we have another key sense of Hegel's systematic employment of the concept of *aufheben*; where the autonomy of the poles are cancelled in all their dialectical forms and relations, and the unity of the polar forms and movements of all its determinate modes and forms of being, are retained as the dialectical activity of the systematic subject of the whole process.

This process is the dialectical outcome of the positing and resolving of the contradiction in all the determinate and specific forms that characterise the essential nature of the subject; characteristically expressed by Marx as a determinate form of *modus vivendi* that resolves the contradiction by both externalising and generalising it.

“The simultaneity of the process of capital in different phases of the process is possible only through its division and break-up into parts, each of which is capital, but capital in a different aspect. This change of form and matter is like that in the organic body . . . The important thing here above all is to examine capital as such for itself first of all; since the aspects being developed here are those which make value in general into capital; which constitute the specific distinguishing characteristics of capital as such.”²¹³

This process of dialectical movement receives its general form of categorial and conceptual reflection in Hegel's idealist but systematic logical thought process. It also, as we have attempted to show, finds its materialist reflection in Marx's analysis of the general form and concept of capital. Capital is now the subject of the dialectical process. As a systematic subject, its forms of motion are reflected within its own characteristic activities, forms of determination, and universal interconnections.

4. Spiral Development.

All these determinate forms and ongoing modes of expressions of the systematic relations are all united in the activity of value as capital, as a determinate whole with its own specific expression of the dialectical laws of motion. This is exemplified in the twofold nature of the circulation of capital as a whole, its two all embracing phases of its fixed and circulating forms, that become the determinant moments of the general form of capital itself.²¹⁴

As fixed and circulating forms of capital, each respectively representing the specific difference of the process in motion of production and circulation. These two moments or determinations are a moving unity of difference that interpenetrates in the circulation of capital as a totality. Circulating capital is transformed into fixed capital, and fixed capital reproduces itself in circulating capital. "As circulating capital it fixates itself, and as fixated capital it circulates." Both forms can do so only in so far as capital appropriates living labour.²¹⁵

But as it is in the process of going from one phase into the other, it is, "at the same time, within each phase, posited in a specific aspect, restricted to a particular form, which is the negation of itself as the subject of the whole movement."²¹⁶ When capital assumes then, any one of its phases or determinate and specific modes, it is also the negating of itself as the subject of a determinate and circular process.²¹⁷

²¹³ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.661.

²¹⁴ Marx also writes that "besides the distinction between constant capital and variable capital, which arises out of the *immediate production process* of capital, there is the further distinction between *fixed and circulating capital*, which arises out of the *circulation process* of capital." K. Marx, letter to Engels (2nd August 1862.). Marx Engels. Collected Works. Letters. Volume 41. Lawrence and Wishart. (1985.) P.397.

²¹⁵ "The distinction between *circulating capital* and *fixed capital* thus appears initially as a formal characteristic of capital, depending on whether it appears as the unity of the process or as one of its specific moments." K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.621.

²¹⁶ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.620.

²¹⁷ "It is extremely important to grasp these aspects of circulating and fixed capital as *specific characteristic forms* of capital generally, since a great many phenomena of the bourgeois economy - [would otherwise be] incomprehensible." K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.623. "Much confusion in political economy has been caused by this, that the aspects of circulating and fixed capital are initially nothing more than capital itself posited in the two aspects, first as the unity of the process, then as a particular one of its phases, itself in distinction to itself as unity - not as two particular kinds of capital, not capital of two

Both forms can only be mediated by capital dividing itself and alternating between its production as a commodity and its realisation as surplus value in circulation. These specific moments or determinations, as in the externalisation of value into the commodity and money form, may fail to reciprocally and reflexively interpenetrate; capital will then have failed to actualise itself as the unity of all its determinate moments, as the subject of the whole process.

Capital, however, as the unity of production and circulation, is value in that it not only reproduces itself, but also is value that posits greater value. Its movement consists of “relating to itself while it produces itself”; that is as the foundation of its own substantial self-activity, “as value presupposed to itself as surplus value, or to the surplus value as posited by it.”²¹⁸

Value, in its highest form of capital, is the subject predominant over the “different phases of this movement, as value sustaining and multiplying itself in it.” In this form of circulating capital, value, in this its highest form, acts “as the subject of these metamorphoses proceeding in a circular course – as a spiral, as an expanding circle – capital is *circulating capital*.”²¹⁹

particular kinds, but rather as different characteristic forms of the same capital.” K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.621-622. This distinction in Marx’s analysis is a further reflection, as we saw earlier in the twofold character of the labour embodied in the commodity, of the problem that political economy, due to its lack of dialectical method, had not scientifically grasped. Namely, the nature and substantial activity of value itself. Again, to reinforce the point, it has to be understood as the common genus that contains a specific contrariety, as its twofold form of specific difference and determination that expresses the parameters of the process of the subject.

²¹⁸ K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.745.

²¹⁹ K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.620. “Circulating capital is therefore initially not a *particular* form of capital, but is rather *capital* itself, in a further developed aspect, as subject of the movement just described, which it, itself, is as its own realisation process. In this respect therefore, every capital is *circulating capital*.” This concept of circulating capital as the twofold activity of fixed and circulating capital is the general activity of capital; this can also be expressed as the general concept of capital, the dialectic of capital in its general form of working.

The product and aim of capital is profit, its own form of self-measure; this is the characteristic activity of capital as subject of the process, “capital relates to itself as self-increasing value, i.e. it relates to surplus value as something posited and founded by it.” Each of the circulation of the determinate moments of capital, in the production of surplus value and its realisation of surplus value in exchange, expressed as the turnover time of the life process of capital’s cycle of reproduction and accumulation, is a twofold circular motion that takes the form of a self-expanding circle, a spiral.

“After it has distinguished the profit, as newly reproduced, from itself as presupposed, self-realising value, and has posited profit as the measure of its realisation, it suspends the separation again, and posits it in its identity to itself as capital which, grown by the amount of the profit, now begins the same process anew in larger dimensions. By describing its circle it expands itself as the subject of the circle and thus describes a self-expanding circle, a spiral.²²⁰”

5. Rubin Revisited.

The problem that arose earlier in the thesis with regard to abstract labour and the account of Rubin, was that of the exact nature of the relation of value creation in production and value realisation in exchange. The dilemma, inherited from Rubin’s work, is that value is only realised in the process of exchange, where all private labours become part of the totality of social labour, and achieve this status only through the exchange process.

We are then left with the tension that value does not really seem to exist except in the act of exchange, yet at the same time, value is created in production but only realised in exchange. The latter formulation is the correct one in my view, but the following question still remains to be answered. How then is this social substance of value created in private production and realised in exchange?

Rubin, following Marx in the C.C.P.E., posits that value is “latent” within the commodity form. Marx expresses this “latent” nature of value in this text in the following form. “Social labour time exists in these commodities in a latent state, so to speak, and becomes evident only in the course of their exchange.”²²¹

The point though is what is the nature of this potentiality of value that is latent within the commodity form, what does Marx mean here by latent? Marx in volume one of Capital gives us a definite solution to this very problem, but before going on to expound this solution in Marx, let us have recourse to an ancient predecessor of Marx that may shed some light on this dilemma.

A solution to this problem of the specific nature here of latent lies, in my view, in a distinction contained within Aristotle’s concept of potentiality that is expressed in De Anima; this distinction takes the following form. Knowledge of, to take Aristotle’s example, grammar is a potential that exists in a generic sense within humanity, each has the potential of acquiring this quality. There are also those who have already acquired this grammatical quality but it remains in an unexercised state or condition.

“Thus, both the first two, (being) potential knowers, (become actual knowers), but the one by being altered through learning and frequent changes from an opposite disposition, the other by passing in another way from the state of having arithmetical or grammatical knowledge without exercising it to its exercise.”²²²

This distinction, and here I opt for the latter form of Aristotle’s, seems pertinent to the question of value creation and realisation in Marx for the following reasons. Marx’s critique of value is not dealing with its elementary form of barter, nor for that matter with petty

²²⁰ K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.746.

²²¹ K. Marx. A Contribution to the critique of political economy. Progress Publishers (1970) P.45

²²² Aristotle. De Anima. Book two Chapter five. 417a21. Clarendon Aristotle Series. O.U.P. (1963.) P.23.

commodity production, but with value in the historically developed form of the capitalist relations of production, a form that presents itself as a world of commodities.

The earlier forms of the value expression, would be encapsulated in the first exposition of Aristotle's distinction within the latency of a potentiality, where the use value assumes its value form through a transition to its opposite in isolated or semi-developed forms of exchange. In the latter, more historically evolved form, this is no longer the case, even though it still manifests itself through the opposition of use and exchange value. However, it is now a fully developed process, the product of a determinate and specific mode of commodity production and exchange for capital accumulation.

The dilemma and lacuna, contained in Rubin's exposition, is that this distinction is conflated and not fully thought through and developed in his analysis. In particular, this is revealed in the nature of the social relations of production based on capital accumulation. Alienated and commodified labour power, as the direct dialectical opposite of capital, and the substantial social relation and form that value creating labour takes, provides the solution to this problematic contained in Rubin's analysis.

The reason it does so is that value, as a system, though it has evolved from petty commodity production, is no longer based on this earlier social relation. The social relations of production generated by capital are based upon the specific social relation of alienated and commodified labour. One, moreover, that presupposes the propertylessness of the labourers who are thus forced to sell their labour power; to alienate it in exchange to the owners of the means of production. This is achieved by alienating labour from its material conditions of production; by privatising them as an others alien property.

Alienated commodified labour power, and this is central to solving the lacuna in Rubin, itself becomes socially distributed as the source of the total labour power of society; it is only in this alienated social form of labour power that abstract universal labour becomes the substantial power that *creates* value in the world of commodities. This essential and

antithetical pole of capital and value is expressed in the ownership and command of the use value of commodified labour power itself by capital, and, as Marx observes, it “consists in the subsequent exercise of its force.”

As Marx also expresses this dialectic inherent in the social relation of production, it is not the worker who applies the means of production but the means of production that apply the worker. Capital thus universalises and commodifies human labour power and sets it to work, to create itself, to create value and surplus value. The twofold character of the labour power embodied in the commodity is not, however then, just manifested in exchange; it has its systematic source and roots in the determinate and specific social relations pertinent to the capitalist mode of production.

This production for value realisation and accumulation is the source of the twofold character of the labour power employed in capitalist commodity production; this is the essence of the social relation of production under value. This twofold character of the labour power embodied in the commodity is, and has to be, reflected in the productive process of value and surplus value creation.

Capital, within the confines of the productive process, takes the double form of constant and variable capital; that is, it takes the form of means of production and commodified labour power. This distinction within capital, unique to Marx, is a further reflection and development of the use and value aspects inherent in the twofold character of the labour embodied in the commodity. The only power that can both create and maintain value is commodified labour power, this alienated form of labour power is now a systematic power of capital itself.

The valorisation process has to take place in the process of production where both poles of the commodity, as a use value and a value, are created. This is generated in the privatised nature or ownership of the productive process, where labour not only maintains past value, but also takes on additional value in the finished product or commodity. Living

commodified labour power, in the form of variable capital, is incorporated into dead objectified labour, the constant part of capital. Value, as capital, valorises itself by “sucking in” living labour.

The two aspects of the production process; the creation of the use value and value, the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the commodity, are then reflected within the productive process of capital itself by Marx.

“If we proceed further, and compare the process of producing value with the labour-process, pure and simple, we find that the latter consists of the useful labour, the work, that produces use-values. Here we contemplate the labour as producing a particular article; we view it under its qualitative aspect alone, with regard to its end and aim. But viewed as value-creating process, the same labour-process presents itself under its quantitative aspect alone. Here it is a question merely of the time occupied by the labourer in doing the work; of the period during which the labour-power is usefully expended. Here, the commodities that take part in the process, do not count any longer as necessary adjuncts of labour-power in the production of a definite, useful object. They count merely as depositories of so much absorbed or materialised labour; that labour, whether previously embodied in the means of production, or incorporated in them for the first time during the process by the action of labour-power, counts in either case only according to its duration; it amounts to so many hours or days as the case may be.”²²³

This social foundation of value, of alienated commodified labour power, as a human social relation of production that is expressed in things, in the product of production; as the social manifestation of the duration of time that the labour power has been embodied within the commodity. As such, the determination of the social nature of its value does not contain an atom of use value; the specific concrete labour and the use value created by it do not determine its value.

The very peculiarity of value, as a specific social form of labour, is that the amount of labour power that is embodied in the product, and measured in time, takes an objective and abstract social form, as a value. This is not only true with regard to the product and the result of the production process, the commodity form, but this is also rooted within the production process itself for Marx.

“We now see, that the difference between labour, considered on the one hand as producing utilities, and on the other hand, as creating value, a difference which we discovered by our analysis of a commodity, resolves itself into a distinction between two aspects of the process of production.”²²⁴

The twofold forms of labour take on a twofold character as they are subsumed by value in the production process. From the point of view of capital in both its constant and variable determinations, subsumed labour manifests itself in the following respective forms in Marx’s analysis of the process of valorisation, that of “contained” and “applied” labour.

“The labour which is contained here in the means of production is a *particular quantum of universal social labour* and displays itself consequently in a certain *value-magnitude* or *sum of money*, ‘in fact’ in the *price* of these means of production. The labour which is applied is a particular *additional quantum of universal social labour*, and displays itself as additional *value-magnitude* and *sum of money*.”²²⁵

The social expression of that employment of the force of alienated labour power being the creation of both value and surplus value. This distinction is of fundamental importance as this alien social command over labour is the only source that has the ability, or the *power*, to

²²³ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.190.

²²⁴ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.191.

²²⁵ K. Marx. Results of the Immediate Process of Production. Contained in Value Studies by Marx. New Park. (1976.) P.95-96.

create the potentiality and reality of value and surplus value through its concrete productive activity. This it does, as we have just seen, in its specific manifestations of the dialectical doubling of form in the process of production, as the specific difference of constant and variable capital.

A process where that totality of human labour power is expressed socially as value, by its reduction to the simple human or average labour power pertaining to the specific market society in question, with each unit of value as a determinate quantum of exchange value. This employment and commodification of labour power in the production process is, as Marx notes, “the *differentia specifica* of capitalistic production.”

“Labour power is sold today, not with a view of satisfying, by its services or its product, the personal needs of the buyer. His aim is augmentation of his capital, production of commodities containing more labour than he pays for, containing therefore a portion of value that costs him nothing, and that is nevertheless realised when the commodities are sold. Production of surplus value is the absolute law of this mode of production. Labour power is only saleable so far as it preserves the means of production in their capacity of capital, reproduces its own value as capital, and yields in unpaid labour a source of additional capital.”²²⁶

In order to do so, capital must posit and overcome an essential barrier to surplus value creation, that between necessary labour time and surplus labour time. This driving contradiction, inherent to the process of surplus value creation and realisation, will have its determinate effects in the necessary changes within the organic composition of capital in its constant and variable components.²²⁷

²²⁶ K. Marx. Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.580.

²²⁷ “Capital, as the positing of surplus labour, is equally and in the same moment the positing and the not-positing of necessary labour; it exists only in so far as necessary labour both exists and does not exist.” K. Marx. Grundrisse. Penguin. (1974.) P.401.

The result of this dialectical shift in the organic composition of capital expresses itself in the historical tendency for the rate of profit to decline. This dialectical law is the most important law of political economy for Marx, and is also the fundamental expression of the finite and transitory nature of the existence of value and capital.

CHAPTER TWELVE.

THE CONTRADICTION OF METHOD AND SYSTEM.

1. The General Form of Working and Laws of Dialectics.

The thesis has attempted to locate and analyse some central issues in dialectics that could shed some light on not only the nature of Marx's materialist inversion of his idealist predecessor, but also what still remains rational in Hegelian dialectics, despite the mystical veil that it is enveloped within. Through the analysis of elements of the key primary theoretical texts and some written correspondence, the rational kernel that remained of Hegel's dialectic was posited as the combined relation of the general form of working and the laws of dialectics.

The thesis has consequently attempted to discover some of the fundamentals pertaining to the operation and relationship of both these combined elements. Two other primary constituents that were necessarily integrated into this investigation were the category of substance and the source of the principle of change and alteration that is immanent within it, namely contradiction.

This, in turn, gave us the basis and foundation for the laws of motion pertaining to a dialectical methodology. The core of the nomological analysis being applied to cognising the specific and determinate categorial and ontological forms of motion that make up the principle of change and alteration contained in the process of substantial change. Dialectics, as a method, is the attempt to theoretically analyse the interconnections of the ontological

categories necessary for understanding the nomological nature of substantial entities whose activity integrates them into an organic and systematic whole.

The thesis has therefore attempted to locate the general form of working and the laws of dialectics contained in the Hegelian account within these broad parameters; with the motor force of the dynamics fuelled by the interconnected movement and relation of the laws of dialectical contradiction. The analysis of these core elements of a dialectical process, contained in the laws of motion and change should, in turn, have allowed us to develop a better understanding of what constitutes, for Marx, the rational content that still remains of Hegel's dialectic.

The general form of working of dialectic being expressed, in its systematic form, in the ongoing and inclusive process of the nomological movement of the primary contradiction contained and developed within a substantial and systematic whole. It is through the positing and resolving of the determinate contradictions and specific differences, contained and expressed in the inclusive and interconnected forms of its substantial activity, that substance becomes subject. As the active, autonomous, and self-moving agent of its own substantial process of self-realisation.

Consequently, this methodological interconnection is also expressed in the relation of the parts of a system to the workings of the system as a whole. With the relation of part and whole manifested and sublated in the interrelationship of the laws of motion of dialectics. The main laws generated by dialectics in Engels account are expressed in the following laws of motion.

1. The law of the transformation of quality into quantity and vice versa.
2. The law of the interpenetration of opposites, that is, the mutual penetration of polar opposites and their transformation into each other when carried to extremes.
3. The law of the negation of the negation.

4. Spiral, or self-expanding form of development.²²⁸

In line with the above relation of the categories and the laws expressed by Engels, the evolving totality of these laws can also be interpreted as the systematic coherence of a substantial form in its principle of change and alteration. As a substantial totality individuating itself as a subject, and containing a specific difference that is the determinate manifestation of its universal nature and the expression of the contrariety contained within its laws of motion and form activity.

The logical and conceptual evolution of the subject aims at reflecting that systematic totality in its real process. This it does by way of outlining the generic forms of the substantial and essential categorial relations that allows the theoretical method to be both applied to, and explain, the phenomenal appearance in its specific and concrete determinations and laws relevant to the subject matter under investigation.

Thus, with the method divested of its mystical aura, and the logical systematic whole not forced on nature, society and history, then it can, in turn, be derived from and applied to, real nature and real society in their evolutionary and systematic changes. This required a revolutionary break from the idealist glorification by Hegel of his logical system; it also required the dialectical criticism of this idealist systematic whole itself from a materialist perspective.

This process was first undertaken by Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts. We have, though, come a long way from this earlier critical analysis of the dialectic of negativity in Hegel, and its inversion from the pseudo-essence of speculative thought to the real essence of objective labouring activity. The culmination of this long journey, undertaken by Marx, lies in his critique of political economy and the mode of production founded on capital accumulation.

²²⁸ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.17.

At the same time, and notwithstanding this, the application of the dialectical method to political economy by Marx, as I have also attempted to demonstrate, required digging deep into the resources contained in Hegel's systematic dialectical thought in order to begin to bear genuine scientific rewards.

The thesis has also attempted to elucidate that Marx's application of the dialectical method to political economy, is itself a logical and conceptual outcome of Marx's own critical inversion of this idealist dialectic of Hegel. Marx's development of the concept and general form of working of capital is an exemplar of this inverted form of dialectical method of Hegel applied to political economy.²²⁹

“It must be kept in mind that the new forces of production and relations of production do not develop out of nothing, nor drop from the sky, nor from the womb of the self-positing Idea; but from within and in antithesis to the existing development of production and the inherited, traditional relations of property. While in the completed bourgeois system every economic relation presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form, and everything posited is thus a presupposition, this is the case with every organic system. This organic system itself, as a totality, has its presuppositions and its development to its totality consists precisely in subordinating all elements of society to itself, or in creating out of it the organs which it still lacks. This is historically how it becomes a totality. The process of becoming this totality forms a moment of its process, its development.”²³⁰

The apparently fixed and ongoing activity of the system, in this case not only capital as a mode of production and circulation, but also Hegel's reified system of logic, were shown to both be relative historical products and not absolute truths about the human condition. Both

²²⁹ “The exact development of the concept of capital [is] necessary, since it [is] the fundamental concept of modern economics, just as capital itself, whose abstract, reflected image [is] its concept [dessen abstraktes Gegenbild sein Begriff], [is] the foundation of bourgeois society. The sharp formulation of the basic presuppositions of the relation must bring out all the contradictions of bourgeois production, as well as the boundary where it drives beyond itself.” K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.331.

²³⁰ K. Marx. *Grundrisse*. Penguin. (1974.) P.278.

of these systematic forms belied the real source of the movement and development of their own specific internal contradictions and laws of motion.

Marx was the only radical theoretician of the nineteenth century that was capable of combining the critiques of both the social forms and modes of capital, articulated in classical political economy, and the closed idealist philosophical system of Hegel. These two forms of theoretical advancement were amongst the highest intellectual products that were generated by the bourgeois social relations of that period.

Both of these forms of Marx's critique were, from 1844 onwards, fundamentally interconnected; the latter form, as the thesis has attempted to show, led to the development of a materialist methodology for the former. By synthesising both, Marx was able to make the theoretical advances that he did in the materialist understanding of human historical development.

The fundamental contradiction in Hegel's work, expressed by Marx and Engels, is that between the dialectical method and Hegel's idealist system. This contradiction is now the subject matter for further investigation; an investigation that can begin to draw together the elements already analysed in the contradiction between the rational and mystical sides that pertain to Hegel's dialectic.

2. The Contradiction of Method and System

Engels expressed what he regarded as his own and Marx's relation and debt to Hegel's philosophy, in the following fashion. The relation is described by him in terms of how he and Marx both "proceeded from as well as how we separated from it".

However, Hegel's "powerful" thought could "not be disposed of by simply being ignored." Nor could it be treated in the same manner as Feuerbach, who "broke through the system

and simply discarded it. But a philosophy is not disposed of by simply discarding it.” What was required, according to Engels, was the following strategy to be adopted.

“It had to be “sublated” in its own sense, that is, in the sense that while its form had to be annihilated through criticism, the new content which had been won through it had to be saved.”²³¹

The analysis of this contradiction lies at the core of Engels critical summation of Classical German Philosophy. Hegel then, was “not simply put aside” by Marx and Engels; their criticisms, themselves dialectical in their scope and nature, entailed going well beyond that of Feuerbach’s. “On the contrary, one started out from his revolutionary side”, that is, from the dialectical method. However, in its idealist form “this method was unusable” for application to a materialist account of science.²³²

This was due to two primary factors, firstly, the idealist point of departure and result, and secondly, the related problem of the apparent foreclosure of any further form of development. This twofold and combined error, expressed in both his cyclical account of nature, and in his cognising the evolution of human historical objectivity in the idealised form of spirit; both forms being enveloped in Hegel’s system of absolute thought.

As a result of these idealist presuppositions of Hegel, the dialectical method, in this form, bequeathed itself with some unresolvable contradictions and unforeseen evolutionary difficulties.

In Engels view, the central contradiction contained in Hegel’s idealism is the contradiction between the open-ended, the ever-changing and evolving nature that is the inherent logic of

²³¹ F. Engels. Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy. Marx-Engels Selected Works. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P. 325 and 333.

²³² “But these constructions are only the frame and scaffolding of his work. If one does not loiter here needlessly, but presses on farther into the immense building, one finds innumerable treasures which today still possess undiminished value.” F. Engels. Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy. Marx-Engels Selected Works. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.330.

the method, and the closed, final, and absolute nature of the system. The two are ultimately incompatible, and the unfolding of this primary contradiction of Hegel's idealism sowed the seeds and the groundwork for its logical and scientific supersession into a materialist form.

The Hegelian system was then suffering, in Engels criticism, from one internal and "incurable contradiction"; this being that it was working with the proposition that human history was the result of the process of evolution that was ongoing and lacked a final absolute form. Conversely, it also maintained that Hegel's system was the final and absolute form of knowledge of this systematic and universal whole.

This, in itself, is in contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectical reasoning, that of constant motion, change, and evolution. The inversion of this idealist method and content poses the logic of evolution as the new, open-ended, natural and social content of that dialectical method. The core of this "incurable contradiction" in Hegel's method is that the dialectic is, in its essence, critical and revolutionary; it is in this sense and in this sense only, that it is absolute.

"It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain. It has, of course, also a conservative side: it recognises that definite stages of knowledge and society are justified for their time and circumstances; but only so far. The conservatism of this mode of outlook is relative; its revolutionary character is absolute – the only absolute dialectical philosophy admits."²³³

This inherently revolutionary character, in an absolute sense, was a "necessary conclusion from his method" that Hegel, as Engels expresses it, "never drew with such explicitness."

²³³ F. Engels. Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy. Marx-Engels Selected Works. Volume two. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.328.

Consequently, this intrinsic logical dynamic of dialectics is not so “sharply delineated” in Hegel. This revolutionary result is the only logical conclusion of the application of a dialectical method to all processes of development whether natural or social for the materialist.

The Hegelian system is a system that regards the alienated form of the idea, nature, as a development in space but outside of time. The reason for this, according to Engels, is that he was compelled to fashion a philosophical system; a system that contained an absolute and eternal truth that itself marks the end of the idealist account of the historical process of spirit and mind.

Nature is, in the Hegelian cosmology, cyclical and eternal. Engels critique of this centres on this logical and idealist form of expression in Hegel, where nature “displays simultaneously and alongside of one another all the stages of development comprised in it, and is condemned to an eternal repetition of the same process.”

“This absurdity of a development in space, but outside of time – the fundamental condition of all development – Hegel imposes upon nature just at the very time when, geology, embryology, the physiology of plants and animals, and organic chemistry were being built up, and everywhere on the basis of these new sciences brilliant foreshadowings of the later theory of evolution were appearing (for instance Goethe and Lamarck). But the system demanded it; hence the method, for the sake of the system, had to become untrue to itself.”²³⁴

²³⁴ F. Engels. Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy. Marx-Engels Selected Works. Volume two. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.339. This viewpoint of Engels is also reflected in Trotsky’s criticisms of what he regards as the most important law of dialectical thought that is both contained in Hegel and discovered by him, the law of the transformation and interpenetration of quality and quantity.

“Hegel himself undoubtedly did not give the law of the transition of quantity into quality the paramount importance which it fully deserves. Hegel relied upon the Kant-Laplace theory, but he did not yet know either Darwinism or Marxism.” L. Trotsky. Trotsky’s Notebooks. C.U.P. (1986.) 1933-1935. P.88-89.

The historical irony of this is at the same time that Hegel imposes this system on nature, scientific developments were already blowing asunder a closed system that balanced the dialectical concepts in an absolute idealist manner and form. The deathblows that natural, evolutionary science inflicts on idealism exposes the contradictions of the hermetically sealed system of Hegel's dialectical thought. It also poses the conditions for the development of its contrary polar opposite and subsequent materialist supersession.

This idealist inversion of real nature and real human history took its heavy toll on the dialectical method. In that the idealist content of the system is both in contradiction with, and at the same time ideologically "smothered", the open-ended nature of the "revolutionary side" of the dialectical method of cognising the processes of development and change. "Thus", according to Engels, "ultimately, the Hegelian system represents merely a materialism idealistically turned upside down in method and content."²³⁵

What though, does Engels mean by this statement; what is the content and method posited by Engels a reference to here? Furthermore, how is this criticism integrated and understood in conjunction with his earlier criticism of the contradiction between system and method contained in Hegel?

To answer the questions posed by Engels remarks is also to develop Engels own variations on the central theme of the thesis; the issue of comprehending the nature and consequences of the inverted critique of Hegel's idealist dialectic. How though was this method rendered usable from its idealist and mystical form and applied to materialist science?

Well, the method is clearly dialectics, and the central contradiction here was the constraints of the idealist straitjacket on further development; one that is ultimately in opposition to the

²³⁵ F. Engels. Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy. Marx-Engels Selected Works. Volume two. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P336. This formulation by Engels is also the source and inspiration for Lenin's study of Hegel's Logic. "I am in general trying to read Hegel materialistically: Hegel is materialism which has been stood on its head (according to Engels) - that is to say, I cast aside for the most part God, the Absolute, the Pure Idea, etc." V.I. Lenin. Collected Works. Volume 38. Progress Publishers. (1972.) P.104.

inverted, open-ended and constantly changing evolution of the materialist model. In terms of method then the following is clear from Engels, the system subverts the method and makes it untrue to itself. The method becomes contained within the idealist parameters of the logical system.

The open-ended nature of the movement of a dialectical contradiction is therefore limited to the positing and resolving of the primary contradiction of the dialectic of subject and object contained and sublated within an idealist logical and systematic whole. A contradiction that is resolved by hypostasising thought and reason itself, as an absolute whose source ultimately lies outside nature and human consciousness.

The method for Hegel, as we have already seen, is both the general form of cognition and what he termed the objective substantiality of things. The method, as the self-movement and self-activity of the notion, is the universal form of the content; that content is the system of logic. The content of this idealist method is systematic logical thought treated as the absolute, as the autonomous subject of the process.

In terms of content, then the absolute idea is the movement behind the universal form of the categories of objective and subjective logic. Nature and society become inverted as the product of the systematic and universal interconnection of the logical thought categories. In this sense the system could be described as materialism turned upside down in content; that is, in its ontological presuppositions, as the laws of motion of the categories, and the point of departure and return of their idealist circularity of movement.

The categories generated by this logical expression are hypostasised outside of real time and imposed on real nature, but these same categories are derived from their objective, natural, and ontological expressions; the mystified content of the hermetically sealed idealist account of logic is thus nature and society. The categories, as Marx expressed it in 1844, being torn from real nature and real mind, and posited as the point of departure and result of

the whole process. Engels variation is, in my view here, merely reflecting this earlier critique of Marx.

The materialist dialectic, as the logic of evolutionary change and development, has for its content, not the idealist logical philosophical system of categories, but natural and social history. This is the new content that is generated from the materialist critique of Hegel's system; here substantial form activity no longer has an idealist-conceptual teleology, whether natural or social, but an evolutionary form of material, natural, and social development. In this sense the system could also be described as materialism turned upside down in terms of content.

Engels point is further stressed in that it is the idealist nature of the system that is imposed upon, and imposes the logical forms and laws on, not only nature, thought, and history, but on the dialectical method and the "new content" itself. That is, the idealist system also imposes itself on the general form of working and the laws of dialectics. It is, moreover, in this sense that the system is describable as materialism turned upside down in method and content.

On the other hand, to dialectically, but only partially, counterbalance the subverting nature of the materialist critique, Hegel's system entailed that for the first time, and here is its great merit for Engels, that the whole world, natural, historical, and intellectual is conceived as a process. That is, it is conceived as in constant motion, change, transformation and development; the attempt is then made to cognitively trace out the internal connections that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development.

This nomological absolute has then to be reflected in the analysis of a systematic form; but not as a systematic form that is a reified thought totality, a closed system of logical thought. The system, in its relation to nature and society becomes open-ended and evolving. Moreover then, not only does the systematic account have to be a reflection of the specific

form, whether natural and social, but it also has to be reflected and applied to the forms of decline, transition, and supersession that take place in both nature and human society.

The revolutionary side of Hegel's dialectic, for Engels, attributes the world as being composed of a complex series of processes of coming to be and passing away, that at the same time entails despite contingency, accident, and even retrogression, that a progressive development asserts itself in the end. This continual process of change and development through contradiction operates in a nomological fashion.

The mystified form of Hegelian dialectic, for Marx, glorified the existing states of affairs, but the "rational form" of dialectic, in line with the materialist methodological inversion, presented the direct opposite of this idealist conceptual apotheosis. The following is Marx's own variation on Engels distinction between the relative and absolute nature of dialectical change, here with regard to a systematic social form.

"In its rational form it is a scandal and an abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."²³⁶

The above remarks of Engels and Marx, in my view, also admit the following inference as regards the relation of the absolute and relative nature of necessity involved and inherent in all substantial and systematic being by the objective operation of the dialectical laws. Given that constant change is the only absolute of dialectics, as such it is the only absolute in terms of substantial necessity, whether natural or social.

²³⁶ K. Marx. Capital. Volume one. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) Afterword to the second German edition. P.29.

Consequently, all forms of substantial being are themselves relative and transitory; the laws of dialectics that apply to it apply then in a relative manner, the only absolute of the process is that substantial change is in a constant process of coming to be and ceasing to be, and no system, natural or social is immune from this form of change. Therefore, all other forms of substantial necessity based on a dialectical account of law are relative and transitory in their operation.

All motion and movement, are in this account, expressed as the dynamic combination of the relative and the absolute or constant; this is fundamentally entailed in the dialectical account of motion. For example, if human historical development is posited as the constant of the social process, the historical evolution and successive developments of the modes of productive activity of social labour are the relative and evolving forms of the expression of this historical constant.²³⁷

That there are laws that underpin all social forms are due to natural necessity, they do though, take on specific and evolving forms of development. The development of the social form of labour, for example, takes on an evolving and ongoing progression in Marx's historical account. This relative and, in so far as human social development still has potential for further evolutionary change, constant element contained in Marx, is itself founded and dependent upon the continuing operation of nomological and natural necessity.

Marx, in a letter to Kugelmann, makes a distinction between the historical constancy of natural laws, and the relation between this and their historically specific social and human forms of expression. This is reflected here in his view of the dialectical relation of the successive modes of production and their specific social forms of distribution of labour.

²³⁷ Lenin asserts a similar and related view in the following form. "The distinction between subjectivism (scepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics there is an absolute *within* the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute." V.I. Lenin. Notes on dialectics. Collected Works. Volume 38. Progress Publishers. (1972.) P.360.

“It is *self-evident* that this *necessity* of the *distribution* of social labour in specific proportions is certainly not abolished by the specific form of social production; it can only change its *form of manifestation*. Natural laws cannot be abolished at all. The only thing that can change, under historically differing conditions, is the *form* in which these laws assert themselves.”²³⁸

What is interesting in the above is the combination of natural necessity and its evolving social forms of expression. What changes is how the law asserts itself, what specific and evolving social forms it takes. The economic categories are then only the abstract expressions of the actual and real relations; they are neither the source for the real categories nor can they be posited as eternal laws as they are historical, specific, and transient in their forms of expression.

As such, they are the specific social expression of the natural and general laws that underpin human productive activity, relative laws that remain true only as long as these economic categories take that historically specific form of social expression. Only so long, that is, as the contradictions within its specific form of self-activity can continue to re-create and positively resolve the conditions of its existence, and thus affirm itself as the specific form of the subject of the movement.

The dialectic contained in value and its mode of organising the productive activity of social labour not only arises in opposition to all previous historical social forms, it has itself a limited historical life span and process. The laws of motion of dialectics aims to show how substantial systematic processes arise and establish themselves in their specific nomological forms of activity. It also shows how, in its rational form, through the further development of these very same laws of motion, the specific form of the substantial and systematic subject is ultimately subordinate to laws of decline and evolutionary transition.

²³⁸ K. Marx. Letter to Kugelmann. 11th July. 1868. Collected Works. Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart. (1988.) P.68.

“The one thing which is of moment to Marx, is to find the law of the phenomena with whose investigation he is concerned; and not only is the law of moment to him, which govern these phenomena, in so far as they have a definite form and mutual connexion within a given historical period. Of still greater moment to him is the law of their variation, of their development, i.e., of their transition from one form into another, from one series of connections into a different one The scientific value of such an inquiry lies in the disclosing of the special laws that regulate the origin, existence, development, death of a given social organism and its replacement by another and higher one.”²³⁹

The contradictions have their own inevitable logic of supersession contained within it, the dialectic sweeps away all existence that comes before it. There can be no idealist resolution of these objective material contradictions if one holds onto the logic of the material polarity and opposition as an ongoing and evolving development of a totality, without hypostatising or fetishising it as a closed and fully realised system.

These laws being historically specific and evolving, arise, mature, decline and develop into a higher mode and form of social organisation. Marx himself expresses the following theoretical consequence for the evolutionary criticism of an idealist account of a system when it is applied to a social form.

“But there is also something else behind it. Once interconnection has been revealed, all theoretical belief in the perpetual necessity of the existing conditions collapses, even before the collapse takes place in practice. Here, therefore, it is completely in the interests of the ruling classes to perpetuate the unthinking confusion.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ K. Marx. Afterword to the second German edition of Capital. Volume 1. Lawrence and Wishart. (1974.) P.27 and 28 respectively.

²⁴⁰ K. Marx. Letter to Kugelmann. 11th July. 1868. Marx Engels. Collected Works. Volume 43. Lawrence and Wishart. (1988.) P.69.

This materialist and evolutionary foundation for the dialectic also raises a central question of the critique of Hegel's idealist systematic form with regard to method and content. This question has been lurking in the background of the thesis almost since its inception. Does the nature of a dialectical view of contradiction itself become altered with its inversion of ontological foundation? How does the materialist grounding of the dialectic affect Marx's contention, expressed earlier in the thesis, that Hegelian contradiction is the source of all dialectic?

3. Dialectical Laws as the Logic of Evolution.

One can also pose this question, of the problematical nature of contradiction, in a way that ties in with the inference that was previously made from Engels critique. Namely, in terms of the status of substantial necessity in relation to the absolute nature of change itself, vis a vis the relative and transitory forms that it takes in social, natural, and material being.

Given that Hegel integrates the laws of motion of dialectics, the systematic movement of the positing and resolving of contradiction into a logical and idealist totality, as the explanation of the motor force of the logical and systematic whole actualising itself, then the following question can be generated from this.

How does the conceptual and reflexive integration of the objective operation of the laws of dialectics, into an idealist thought system, affect the fundamentally revolutionary content and form of those laws of contradiction? Hegel's idealist balancing of concepts entails the idealist balancing of the contradictions into a systematic whole.

Alternatively posed, in what way are the laws of dialectics, if you will excuse the phrase, perverted by the idealist system that is itself, to draw out the inference from Engels, the inverted and mystified form of a materialist method and content?

On the one hand, dialectical laws, as the laws of motion of a systematic totality, do operate in any given organic systematic totality. On the other hand, there is in a materialist form of dialectic, the view that any organic, natural and social system inevitably exhausts itself in its specific forms of motion and activity. If further development is to take place, then there are required laws of motion that can explain this evolutionary movement into a new specific form of nomological motion and activity.

This entails that there are also in any organic system the operation of laws of decline and supersession. This intermediate process of transition being a fundamental determination and category that has to be more fully integrated into the concept of processes of movement and change in the materialist account of nomological forms.

The laws of dialectics have to, in order to be consistently logical and rational in their materialised form, encapsulate this absolute form of change as a historical process; in the form of a materialised subject that has laws of being that arise, mature, decline, and supersede into a higher evolutionary form.

The relative necessity of the laws of motion of a systemic whole gives way, through the development of the contradictions contained within that specific form of relative necessity, to the conditions that allow the emergence of a new and higher form of systematic expression. The absolute nature of change thus manifests itself in the transition from one systematic relative form to a new systematic relative form; one that arises out of the conditions created by its predecessor.

The system, whether natural or social, itself posits its own demise and supersession; the system is thus, ultimately in contradiction with itself. The only other possibilities and parameters within this dialectical process being either that the evolutionary development is itself regressed, or the onset of stasis in the specific and determinate forms of nomological activity entails that, due to the contradictions remaining unresolved, its evolutionary possibilities have exhausted themselves and extinction ensues.

System and its supersession are outwith the scope of Hegel's dialectical laws and forms in the Logic; the aim primarily is to outline the universal categories and concepts in their polar forms of relations and universal interconnections that determine and make up a substantial whole. A substantial whole that Hegel contends is generated from this systematic logical totality.

The need to blunt the method favours the former at the expense of the latter. In the Logic, which is the main centre of attention here, there is no theory of the laws of motion of a system in decline and transition, only in its arisal and maturity into a conceptually evolved systematic whole. The absolute, as the logical idea, by its very divine nature, does not decline and give rise to a higher form.

The limiting of the dialectic to a system without supersession is due to the idealist necessity for enclosing the alienated philosophical expression as a speculative form of systematic totality that is infinite and eternal. That is, it is outwith real space and real time, and, consequently outwith real natural and social history. Absolute reason, in this its highest product, as a form of alienated science, is outwith all real development. This is also another reason why Engels argues that the laws of dialectics were imposed on nature and history by Hegel rather than deduced from them.

What Hegel contributes are these dialectical laws as a logical systematic whole; but a logical systematic whole that is absolute and fixed, impervious to all outside activity from whatever quarter. Marx, in the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 reflected this criticism at the outset of the thesis, where the result of the entire compass of philosophical abstraction was the dialectic of pure thought; as a self-enclosed totality of thought that eternally revolves within its own circle, hermetically and conceptually separated from real nature and real mind.

The new dialectical content, including that of the laws generated by Hegel's thought, as Engels put it, had to be saved and retained, but the idealist form of the laws of dialectics put

on an evolutionary materialist foundation. The laws of motion of contradiction, and hence the laws of dialectics underpinning any system, have then to be open-ended and evolving.

The fundamental theoretical question, to return to it then is, does a materialist dialectic, and hence view of contradiction and laws of motion and development, differ in any substantial sense from an idealist account of contradiction? This, despite the fact that Hegelian contradiction is the source of all dialectic? How can these seemingly contradictory aspects of Marx's view be reconciled?

The further and related question generated by this is whether the systematic operation of the laws of Hegelian dialectics can theoretically accommodate, in a generalised form, the process of decline and supersession into a new systematic form of operation. Are they capable, in their present nomological expressions, of capturing this process of decline and supersession, or do these nomological forms have to be either re-jigged or added to, or both, in order to capture this process of decline and supersession?

4. Law and Systematic Totality.

The first thing to ascertain is how these general laws of dialectics actually operate in a systematic fashion for Hegel. This entails working out how the dialectical laws of motion in Hegel operate as a systematic whole, in order to investigate if and if so how these same laws could possibly accommodate decline and supersession. Let us then look at the former before going on to discuss the latter. How then do these laws proceed to interconnect, interact and progress towards a substantial whole?

Laws of dialectics, to give them their general character, are themselves the general processes that express the laws of motion that underpin the movement and development of the specific ontological contradiction contained in a systematic subject.

The relation of these nomological forms is that they express the laws of motion of the systematic movement of the contradiction contained in the determinate activity of the subject under investigation. The driving force for the whole structure is the methodical unfolding of the movement of the positing and resolving of the specific contradiction applied to the predicational forms of the universal categories, qualities, and relations inherent to all substantial being.

In broad terms, the substantial ontological divisions of motion in Hegel are those of immediacy, mediation, and being for self. These stages of substantial motion find their reflection in the further conceptual divisions of the universal, the particular, and the individual. In turn, the conceptual categories of the universal, the particular, and the individual are reflected in the primary ontological categories of the Logic of Hegel, namely, being, essence, and notion.

Furthermore, there is a direct and respective correlation between these three central categories of the Logic and the three core laws of dialectics. What we have is the development and movement of a contradiction seen in its necessary ontological and nomological divisions.

In line with the divisions outlined by Engels, the category of being relates primarily to the law of transformation contained in the dialectic of quality and quantity. The category of essence relates primarily with the law of the interpenetration of opposites. Finally, the category of the notion relates to the law of negation of negation. This third law figures, in Engels analysis, "as the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system."²⁴¹

However, these three analytical distinctions of the nomological forms of activity should be understood in general terms, and not viewed as rigid, separate, and unconnected in both their relation and application. The three separate expressions of nomological activity operate

²⁴¹ F. Engels. *Dialectics of Nature*. Progress Publishers. (1982.) P.62.

in all three primary logical categories within their evolving and developing ontological and predicational limitations.

That is, their interrelation is determined by the operation of the primary logical category, in this case, being, essence, and notion, and its specific conceptual forms of predication, with the dominant law in operation in the three logical categories maintaining its relation and own determinate form of expression that, at the same time, pertains and relates to the laws as a systematic whole.

Furthermore, the contradictions within each of the three primary ontological categories are themselves the product of the posited and resolved contradiction that marks off each successive stage of the determinate development of the substantial subject. This driving ontological contradiction, and its determinate forms of inner interconnections and external relations, are the expressions and reflections of the developing and evolving relations and connections contained within the laws of dialectics.

We have already seen some evidence in Hegel that would tend to support this view of the dynamics of the process. When we were discussing the dialectic in Hegel's method for developing the categories from their simple to more complex forms; here the conceptual evolution contained not only the positive form of the category, but also its own negative form. Moreover the resolution of this categorial contrariety lay in the unity of both forms and their transition into a higher form of category, which then posits its own form of negation, and so on, and so on. The dynamic of this process continues till the systematic whole of categories is established.

The positing and resolving of contradiction is then the motor force that operates on both a systematic level, and at the level of each of the specific dialectical laws that make up that systematic whole. It is, therefore, also in operation in the categorial relations that make up each primary ontological category and specific dialectical law. That is, each of the laws of dialectics has its own specific form of that architectonic of negation and negation of the

negation inherent in the dialectic, and contained in the process of subsuming that specific stage of the contradiction.

The law of the negation of the negation is the foundation for the whole system because it is the law that underpins and resolves the contradictory activity of both the determinate parts that make up the whole, and resolves their integration into a systematic and substantial whole. As the architectonic of negation and negation of negation operates in the specific parts and in the systematic whole, it necessarily both sublates and retains the other dialectical laws.

What is the key to a fuller comprehension of this process is to ascertain how the analysis of contradiction operates at each stage of its ongoing and interconnected development with the other dialectical laws. That is, these nomological divisions should not, and this is of fundamental import, be viewed or interpreted as being abstractly kept apart; they do, in fact, interrelate and universally interconnect.

This they do in a twofold form. The primary law in operation contains the others as a subordinate or secondary expression of its own specific nomological form. Secondly, each of the dialectical laws successively builds upon and integrates and sublates its nomological antecedent.

In my analysis, the law of the transformation of quality into quantity, and vice versa, also contains its own variations, pertinent to the development of its own specific ontological categories, of both the law of the interpenetration of opposites and the law of the negation of the negation.

These operate, as outlined above, in the generalised dialectical form of the negation, as the positing of the positive and negative poles of the relation, and the negation of the negation, that resolves that polar contradiction in their higher unity in a new dialectical category. This

dynamic pertains to all the predicational categories, and allows them to posit and resolve the contradiction pertaining to its specific and determinate nature.

That is, though the law of quality, quantity, and their transition to measure, is the primary law in operation in the category of being, the outlining of the movement of the contradiction in this law also requires, though subordinate in their ontological and predicational expression at this point, these generalised methodological forms of the law of the interpenetration of opposites, and the law of the negation of the negation.²⁴²

The law of the interpenetration of opposites both sublates the law of the transformation of quality and quantity, and their dialectical resolution and higher unity of measure; at the same time it contains the law of the negation of the negation necessary to resolve the contradictions posed in each successive categorial development of the contradiction contained in the category of essence, where the law of the interpenetration of opposites is now the operational and nomological primary form.²⁴³

Finally, the law of the negation, as well as operating as the resolving of the specific categorial contradictions contained in the ontological forms of predication relevant to the other two dialectical laws, also sublates the previous two laws and contains them as moments or determinations of its own form of systematic operation.²⁴⁴

²⁴² The dynamic contained in the category of being, for Hegel, is the process of how a specific form and totality of being coheres itself as a universal form and by doing so makes the transition to its essential and universal form. The characteristic and defining activity of this category and law of the dialectic of quality, quantity, and measure both “brings out the totality of being” for Hegel, and “abolishes” the immediacy of the form of being.

²⁴³ The dynamic contained in the category of essence, for Hegel, is that it brings out the contradiction contained in being, and poses the contradiction as an objective, external relation. “In essence everything is relative.” Essence is the sphere, for Hegel, where the contradiction in being is made explicit.

²⁴⁴ The conceptual evolution of Marx’s value theory outlined in the thesis materially reflected this totality of process. The law of the transformation of quality, quantity, and measure was the primary law in operation in the analysis of the substance and form of value. The application of this dynamic lay at the heart of Marx’s analysis of how the commodity form, through the dialectical opposition and evolution of the relative and equivalent forms of value, coheres itself in the universal value form of money. The operation of the negation of the negation lay in their dialectical result of measure, the unity and resolution of quality and quantity.

The importance of the relation of the parts to the whole, in this case each of the specifically defined general laws, have also then, to be related and integrated within the evolving and systematic ontology that integrates the totality as a whole. The law of the negation of the negation plays this fundamental role in both the relations within the parts, and the relation of the parts to the whole.

From the subject's simplest initial universal form, to a complex totality of determinate forms and specific relations that expresses the process of the development of the primary ontological contradiction pertaining to its substantial and specific determinate nature. The laws of dialectics, if they are to be validated as a correct scientific method, should be able to encapsulate the dynamic forms of motion of those determinate, particular, and opposing forms of activity contained in the contradictory evolution of a systematic and specific subject.

The question now is whether and if so how, do these dialectical laws operate in the process of decline and supersession? Furthermore, if they do continue to operate in the process of decline and transition, then how does this operation affect the relationship, outlined above, within the systematic relations of the Hegelian laws of dialectics themselves? Moreover, how does this impact on the fundamental contradiction in Hegel's idealist dialectic, that between method and system?

The law of the interpenetration of opposites was the primary law in operation in the twofold forms of the circulation of the commodity and money forms. The interpenetration of the opposition of commodity and money, of purchase and sale, in the twofold forms of exchange is Marx's application of this Hegelian law. The operation of the negation of the negation finds its expression in the circularity of motions contained in c-m-c and, in particular, as it is the refluxing act of a single subject, m-c-m.

Finally the law of the negation of the negation was the primary law in operation of capital as a systematic interrelation of production and circulation for value's self-expansion. This does not, of course, rule out the operation of the other laws of dialectics in each of these processes, but as now the sublated nomological expressions of the active determinations and relations as a systematic whole.

5. Lenin, Trotsky, and the "Algebra of Revolution"

Trotsky defined dialectics as the logic of motion, development, and evolution. In his view, the abstract laws and formulas of Hegelian Logic expressed the view that everything becomes the way it is as a result of law-like development.²⁴⁵ These abstract formulas being the general laws and ontological forms inherent to any process of motion and change. It is this very foundational area of dialectical method that I have attempted to elucidate as a core constituent of the thesis.

There is here, in the analysis of this evolutionary process, an interesting distinction between Trotsky and Lenin that can be drawn out between their respective views on the laws of dialectics, and on what they consider to be the essence and core of the nature of dialectics itself. The character of this apparent difference between Trotsky and Lenin can be characterised in the following manner and form.

For Trotsky, the transformation of quantity into quality was the fundamental law of dialectics, in that it outlined the essential form for all evolutionary change and development.²⁴⁶ Though Trotsky poses the dialectical transitions of quality and quantity as the expression of the movement of qualitative change and transition, he also makes the point that this logical kernel of evolutionary development of "the transition of quality into quantity and the reverse presupposes the transition of one quality into another."²⁴⁷

Lenin, on the other hand, considered that the unity and struggle contained in the interpenetration of opposites was the most important law of dialectics; this doctrine of the

²⁴⁵ L. Trotsky. Trotsky's Notebooks. 193 - 1935. C.U.P. (1986.) P.96.

²⁴⁶ "It must be recognised that the fundamental law of dialectics is the conversion of quantity into quality, for it gives [us] the general formula of all evolutionary processes - of nature as well as society." L. Trotsky. Trotsky's Notebooks. 1933 - 1935. C.U.P. (1986.) P.88. See also P.90.

²⁴⁷ L. Trotsky. Trotsky's Notebooks. 1933 - 1935. C.U.P. (1986.) P.89.

unity of opposites is regarded by him as the essence and core of dialectics.²⁴⁸ The difference between them lies in the following relation. Lenin views the transition of quantity into quality and vice versa as itself an example, one that is ultimately subordinate to, the unity and interpenetration of opposites.²⁴⁹

However, the law of the dialectical transitions of quality and quantity and vice versa is, and here Trotsky is undoubtedly correct, absolutely indispensable and the central law in operation for the analysing of the contradictions and evolutionary ruptures and transformations that pertain and inform all natural, social, and cognitive processes and their interrelations. Without this law playing a fundamental role, no coherent analysis of the leaps, ruptures, and transformations would be able to be cognitively appropriated.

Nevertheless, as the transition of one quality into another not only presupposes, as Trotsky notes, the transition of one quality into another; then Lenin's emphasis on polar opposition would also appear to have real validity in this area, as the process favoured by Trotsky, is interpreted here by Lenin as only a specific expression of the law of the interpenetration of opposites. In this particular case, according to Lenin, the law is manifested through the dialectical opposition of the categories of quality and quantity.

Again, like Trotsky's nomological preference, there is undoubtedly a large measure of truth in this that is undeniable, but there is also the danger of reducing and collapsing dialectics into the law of the interpenetration of opposites. This would, like Trotsky's emphasis, be tantamount to an error in my view, especially when this specific law, though absolutely fundamental and essential to dialectics, is at the same time, and like Trotsky's preference, still part of a wider nomological process.

²⁴⁸ See V. I. Lenin. Collected Works. Volume 38. P.222. "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." V.I. Lenin. Collected Works. Volume 38. Progress Publishers. (1972.) P.223.

²⁴⁹ V.I. Lenin. Collected Works. Volume 38. Progress Publishers. (1972.) P.222. Points 9 and 16. Point 9: "9) not only the unity of opposites, but the *transitions* of every determination, quality, feature, side, property into *every* other [into its opposite?]" - Point 16: "16) the transition of quantity into quality and *vice versa* ((15 and 16 are *examples* of 9))"

A process that is contained within the systematic expression of all three laws of dialectical motion, and which are consequently expressed in the manifestation of evolutionary change through contradiction. To their credit, what Lenin and Trotsky are both attempting to grasp is what they regard as the essence of evolutionary and revolutionary change from the perspective of dialectics; in that sense both highlight differing but fundamentally important aspects of this process of evolutionary and revolutionary transformation inherent within all processes of change.

One could, however, dispute that the attempt to posit the essence of dialectics, in the form of the primacy of one of its nomological forms, is not necessarily the best way to proceed in analysing the interrelation of the evolving totality into a new qualitative form of expression.

Certainly, it would be unacceptable, without thoroughly and critically analysing the interrelation and development of the laws of dialectics as a totality, before a coherent argument could be put forward as to the primacy or otherwise, of any specific form of expression of the laws of dialectics in the process of decline and transition into a new systematic form of activity.²⁵⁰

The real question regarding this characterised distinction between Lenin and Trotsky is the following one; is this transition of one quality into another quality the same thing as the expression of the law of the interpenetration of opposites? Does the transition of one quality into another rest solely on the law of the unity and struggle of the interpenetration of opposites as Lenin would logically have to maintain, given his preference in nomological primacy? The answer to this, in my view, is both a yes and a no.

²⁵⁰ As to whether Lenin and Trotsky had definitively carried out this work seems doubtful from the evidence we have at our disposal. This did not, however, stop both from highlighting two differing but fundamentally key areas of importance in a brief but illuminating manner. The question is why pose the relationship here in terms of a nomological and ontological priority of any specific form of expression of the laws of dialectics?

One could argue though, against the differing positions of both Lenin and Trotsky, that in order to grasp the full picture of systematic evolutionary change, it is not only, as in Trotsky, that quantitative alterations to quality lead to the transformation into a new quality. Nor, as in Lenin, that it is the interpenetration of opposites that is presupposed as the force and law in operation behind the transition of one quality into another. Both are, in a sense, right, and at the same time wrong.

My preference is to attempt to analyse the process of evolutionary change as the combined account of the systematic movement of the laws of dialectic, but to view their nomological connections in a form that is different from Hegel's idealist analysis of the laws of motion of a systematic whole. This requires attempting to understand those interacting laws, and how they operate in different forms and relations, in the process of evolutionary transition. That is, in the form of the decline of one systematic form and its transition to another systematic form.

In my analysis the law of the negation of the negation also plays a vital role in this process of the development of a new qualitative transformation. This form of the dialectic of negativity also lies behind the presupposition of the transition of one quality into another quality. Nevertheless, in order to do so, the law of the negation of the negation, as we shall see, requires a twofold interpretation of the operation and expression of the law; one that is not reflected in the logical evolution into a systematic idealist totality in Hegel.

Lenin, however, also makes a further distinction within his emphasis on the importance of the law of the interpenetration of opposites; a distinction, that is itself both useful for the present discussion, and derived from Engels view of dialectics as a form of absolute change. The distinction is of that between the relative and the absolute expression of the forms of operation of the dialectical law of the interpenetration of opposites.

“The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.”²⁵¹

This formulation of Lenin’s is precisely the core of what needs to be systematically developed in order to begin to answer this important question of laws of transition. Engels’ criticisms of Hegel’s idealist system are also pertinent here to the beginnings of an understanding of this complex process. The question then becomes what are the processes here that lie behind the relative becoming absolute, and at the same time positing a new form of the relative?

Dialectics is about the laws of motion of an evolving contradiction. The movement of these laws of dialectical contradiction provides the ontological foundations for the ongoing activity of a specific and systematic subject. What is more problematic is how the dialectical laws operate in the process of decline and transition into a new systematic form; this is the nub of the theoretical dilemma inherited from dialectics.

Hegel’s blunting of the dialectical method, and hence the nature of contradiction itself in the interests of an idealist system, cannot resolve or contradict the very nature of dialectical change itself. Engels expresses this contradiction in Hegel’s dialectical thought process in the following form.

“Thus the Hegelian proposition turns into its opposite through Hegelian dialectics itself; All that is real in the sphere of human history becomes irrational in the process of time, is therefore irrational by its very destination, is tainted beforehand with irrationality; and everything which is rational in the minds of men is destined to

²⁵¹ V.I. Lenin. Collected Works. Notes on dialectics. Volume 38. Progress Publishers. (1972.) P.360. Lenin also makes the point that this dynamic of mutually excluding opposites and their reciprocal relation “furnishes the key to the “self-movement” of everything existing; it alone furnishes the key to the “leaps,” to the “break in continuity,” to the “transformation into the opposite,” to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new.” (Ibid.) P.360.

become real, however much it may contradict existing apparent reality. In accordance with all the rules of the Hegelian method of thought, the proposition of the rationality of everything which is real resolves itself into the other proposition: All that exists deserves to perish.”²⁵²

The difficulty in analysing the laws of motion of evolutionary change is highlighted by the fact that the process of decline, transition and supersession to a new form, is more dialectically complex than the analysis of the operation of the laws of dialectics when they are applied to the systematic operation of a determinate subject. This process is, and has to be in my view, necessarily reflected in the more complex interrelation of the laws of dialectics that pertain to the decline and supersession of a systematic whole.²⁵³

Before investigating this further, let us see how Hegel describes the process of the transformation of quantity into quality. There are, for Hegel, two possible outcomes in the quantitative process inherent in measure. Alteration in this process can effect the quantitative aspect of measure in either of two ways. The quantitative aspect of the dialectical relation may be altered without it effecting a change in the quality of measure, or the changes in the quantitative relations alter the quality of measure itself.

“A quantitative change takes place, apparently without any further significance: but there is something lurking behind, and a seemingly innocent change of quantity acts as a kind of snare, to catch hold of the qualityIf the quantity present in measure exceeds a certain limit, the quality corresponding to it is also put in abeyance. This however is not a negation of quality altogether, but only of this definite quality, the place of which is at once occupied by another. This process of measure, which

²⁵² F. Engels. Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of classical German philosophy. Marx and Engels. Selected Works. Volume 2. Lawrence and Wishart. (1950.) P.327 -328.

²⁵³ The only person who has done any serious work on this central theoretical question of dialectics is H.H. Ticktin. In particular see his articles in Critique, numbers 16, 17, 26, and 30-31.

appears alternately as a mere change in quantity, and then as a sudden revulsion of quantity into quality, may be envisaged under the figure of a nodal (knotted) line.”²⁵⁴

This is why Trotsky posits that this process contains a presupposition, the transformation of one quality into another quality. The question is what processes are involved that lead to this quantitative change that posits a new form of quality? There could be no new emergent and determinate quality, in my view, without the operation of the law of negation of negation also being integrated into this process.

This dialectical law is also inherent in all evolutionary change, and, as such, it necessarily has to be integrated into the account of the process, in order to more fully express the quantitative and qualitative break and transition from one form of the relative unity of opposites, and the positing of a potentially higher form of a new relative unity of opposites.

The process of decline and transition requires to be analysed, to borrow a proposition from Engels, in “accordance with all the rules of the Hegelian method of thought.” The theoretical problem is in understanding the nature of the development of the contradictions that both posit a certain form of substantial activity at one moment in time, and at the same time also posit its ultimately ongoing inability to continue to resolve that contradiction; the dialectical nature of this process leads to the potentiality for the contradiction to now resolve itself in a higher and opposite form.

A new form that is already contained within, and whose very conditions of existence are developed by, the old form; this is the crux of the theoretical problem in dialectics bequeathed by the work of Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. To pose the question and solution to the problem in another manner we need to consider the following.

²⁵⁴ G.W.F. Hegel. *Logic*. O.U.P. (1975.) Paragraph 108z. P.159, and Paragraph 109z. P. 160 respectively.

The resolution of the contradictions contained in any systematic dialectical form is resolved through how the subject both posits and resolves its contradiction, that is, through the operation of the law of the negation of the negation. By doing so, it affirms itself as the autonomous subject of the whole process; this is how it dialectically operates as a determinate and specific form and systematic mode.

This would be an example of the unity of a relative form of opposites, to pose it in Engels and Lenin's terminology. This is one form of the expression of the law of the negation of the negation as applied to a systematic whole.

To take an example from Marx's critique of value and capital to illustrate this, here we find the following dynamic. Marx's analysis of capital, in the first few chapters of volume one, is the attempt to develop the conceptual understanding of the dynamics that underpin the subject of value as a systematic whole. What Marx outlines is the concept of value and capital. In that sense, value both posits its contradiction or negation, and at the same time overcomes it or negates it, by doing so it affirms itself as the determinate subject of the process.

Capital, in its classical form, the form conceptualised by Marx in volume one of *Capital*, is a system based on value that both posits and resolves its contradiction by pumping out surplus value from the direct producers. The system can do this in its developing and mature forms of expression. Commodity and money, production and circulation manifest themselves as a dialectical unity of opposites, and capital as the subject of the process that takes these twofold forms, can operate in its laws of motion without the system and its laws being fundamentally challenged.

Here the dialectical expansion takes a spiral form, where the development of the forces and relations of production, not without generating their own forms of tensions, bitter struggles, and episodic setbacks, nevertheless, continues to develop and extend the material conditions

for value in its characteristic activity and principle of change and alteration to operate in its own determinate forms of the dialectical laws of motion.

The laws of motion of the system do this through the umbrella of the law of the negation of the negation. The expression of this law, that integrates all the determinate parts of the process into a systematic whole, is not however fixed or static in its nature. Neither is it also the product of the movement of the ideal category either.

As dialectics is change that is inherently absolute in its nature, then nothing can ultimately stand in the way of the unfolding of the contradictions within any determinate form of substantial and systematic activity. Hegel's idealist balancing of the contradictions contained in the concepts cannot prevent, the real contradictory movements that affect all forms of material and substantial polar interpenetration, from developing and changing their nature.

The dialectical contradictions in its material conditions of activity are themselves changed and transformed by the very nature of the systematic activity itself. The systematic nomological activity of the determinate forms of the subject increasingly finds it problematic to posit and resolve the real material and social contradictions within its activity.

The material poles of the contradiction, unlike their idealist forms of expression, do not remain in the same symmetry or determinate form of relation; as a conceptual unity of opposites that is automatically resolved through the negation of the negation. The material poles of the contradiction are in a process of constantly evolving and changing, there is then, also an inherent asymmetry in their material relations and operation; no amount of idealist balancing of the concepts can therefore halt this changing relationship of the material poles of the contradiction.

Like the distinction between the relative and absolute nature of change, the symmetry of the poles are relative and transitory, their asymmetry is absolute. This entails that the polar relation itself is constantly in an evolving process of being, as Trotsky would correctly posit it, subject to quantitative and therefore qualitative alterations.

These quantitative material changes within the polar opposition characteristic of its activity, are changes that threaten the very qualitative nature of that systematic polar opposition. The polar forms, through acting upon each other to resolve the contradiction of the subject are thus subject to alteration, in both a quantitative and qualitative fashion.

These quantitative alterations must then impact on the qualitative nature of the negation of the negation that characteristically resolves them as a systematic unity. However, it could also be argued that the negation of the negation is the dynamic that leads to these quantitative shifts in the alteration of the poles that posits a potentially new qualitative nature of the subject.

As dialectical laws outline the movement of the positing and resolving of the contradiction inherent to a determinate and systematic subject, it necessarily already contains within the operation of the systematic movement of the laws of its fundamental contradictions, the seeds of its own destruction.

To briefly return to the example of Marx's critique of value; it was by showing the contradictions within the determinate forms of expression of value and capital that Marx was able to do not only one, but two things.

He not only showed how value as abstract labour sublates concrete labour and its product in order to pose its own systematic activity, at the same time he showed how the systematic positing and resolving of this contradiction also posited the ongoing material dynamic for its further development; dynamics that are expressed in its own specific and determinate forms of decline and supersession.

As the forces and relations of production historically develop, then the inverse of this systematic positing and resolving of the contradictions begins to manifest itself; that is, value as capital finds it increasingly problematic to posit and resolve its contradiction of creating value and surplus value. Here, not only is the spiral form of development of its arising and mature forms curtailed, but the ability to continue to negate its own specific and determinate forms of opposition is increasingly undermined, by the very conditions posited by the system's own development of the forces and relations of production.

This process is manifested in the decline of the substance of value, abstract labour and the money form, and a growing crisis in the ability of the system to maintain the rate of profit. This is the phenomenal reflection of the changes within the organic composition of capital in the production process, with the quantitative emphasis of capital shifting to the development of the forces of production at the expense of the living labour employed in the production process.

This inherent bias or asymmetry, generated by this shift in the quantitative relation of the polar opposites of constant and variable capital in the production process, is manifested in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall or decline. That is, capital can no longer operate in its classical form, and value finds it increasingly more problematic to characteristically act as value. Capital, from being a systematic unity of production and circulation for value accumulation is driven to take on the increasingly parasitic and ideal form of finance capital.

The system of accumulation becomes increasingly prone to more periodic and longer expressions of the slumps brought on by overproduction and underconsumption, where commodity production and its realisation in money, fail to mutually interpenetrate rather than, as before, displaying a vitality and unity of a systematic process. This is manifested in conjunction with the growing inability of capital to halt the above tendency of the rate of profit to decline.

These phenomenal expressions, in turn, entail that the relative unity of opposites tends to pull apart or become mutually exclusive, rather than mutually reciprocal. This is reflected in the increasing antagonism of the polar oppositions in their entire characteristic forms and relations. Those of concrete and abstract labour, of use and exchange value, of production and circulation, and ultimately in the social relation between capital and commodified labour power.

The result of this process is the decline of the laws of motion pertaining to the specific and substantial nature of this systematic activity. The polar opposition of the contradiction is, in its old characteristic principle of change and alteration in decline, and a new form of polar opposition, a new principle of change and alteration is evolving and arising from within it. The problem is though, to understand the dynamic nature of the shift within these evolving twofold forms of polar opposition that develop within the driving contradiction pertaining to the determinate forms of a systematic totality.

This evolutionary shift is qualitatively different from the polar interpenetration pertaining to the nomological activity of a systematic whole, in that the new qualitative forms of the polarity only emerges as the result of, not only as Trotsky correctly points out, the dialectic of quality and quantity, nor solely, in Lenin's postulation, of the growing struggle of mutually exclusive opposites, it also requires something more. It requires the integration of the law of the negation of the negation into this process of qualitative and quantitative transformation.

What we have here is an evolving process, one that ultimately manifests itself in the inverse expression of all the Hegelian laws of dialectics. One that will, for an adequate and fuller explanation of the process, fundamentally require the systematic integration of all the laws of Hegelian dialectics. This is due to the unfolding of the following dynamic that is reflected in the nomological forms of the principle of change and alteration of the subject.

The decline in the systematic activity of the laws of motion of the subject creates the shifts in the material and social conditions that manifest themselves in the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the very nature of the subject itself. What we in fact have is a conflict between two differing forms of polar opposites, one that was formally dominant but now declining, and one that is emerging in, its proto-forms of expression, from the real material changes in its conditions of existence.

Both these irreconcilable and asymmetric polar expressions of the contrary forms of the laws of motion of dialectics are, however, still fundamentally interrelated as they are the manifestation of the further evolution of the primary and essential contradictions characteristic of the subject in its further evolutionary change, expressed in the form of a transition from one social form of nomological activity into another nomological form of social activity.

This is a more complex form of dialectical opposition and interpenetration of opposites. The polar opposites are themselves in the process of doubling in form, though still asymmetric in their contradictory forms of expression. These contradictions, of what are ultimately mutually exclusive and irreconcilable opposites, are themselves uneven and combined in their qualitative and quantitative forms of development. It is the unfolding of this dynamic that leads to the absolute struggle of polar opposites, reflected in the increasing contradictions within the old polar opposition. All these forms of expression are symptomatic of a system in decline.

In the process of this evolutionary change and transition, the laws of dialectics manifest a tendency to invert into the opposite forms of their systematic expression. This movement towards the opposite and inverse form of motion, encapsulated in the contradiction between the law of value and the law of planning, first manifests itself in the decline of the old characteristic forms of active motion, and the positing of the arising out of it, its potentially contrary form of motion. This it does, for Marx, through the further development of the material poles of the contradiction.

The dialectic of quality and quantity no longer resolves itself in its characteristic measure. The relative unity of opposites become increasingly mutually exclusive rather than reciprocal, and finally, the law of the negation of the negation no longer resolves these other forms of dialectical laws in the systematic manner that formerly posited the totality of the relations characteristic to the laws of motion and activity of the determinate dialectical forms of the subject.

It is the systematic operation that is undermining itself; as the law of the negation of the negation is the form that is fundamental for the construction and operation that coheres the laws of motion of the system as a whole, it must manifest itself as a key aspect of the process of, not only decline, but also transition to a new form.

The result is a terminal crisis and inability for the laws to continue to operate in positing and resolving the particular activity of the systematic subject. This development posits the conditions for the necessity of an absolute struggle of these mutually exclusive opposites that are no longer, as in the classical or mature form, mutually reciprocal.

That evolutionary leap is itself, with all its quantitative and qualitative changes, only fully resolved when the new form negates its old form, and at the same time posits a new set of conditions whereby it can now develop its own specific and systematic form of the negation of the negation. It is through this process that the law of the transformation of quantity into quality congeals into a new form of existence, a new qualitative form of dialectical interrelation and interpenetration of opposites that has its own systematic form activity and specific characteristic determination.

This process also entails that for the new relative form of the law of the interpenetration of opposites to successfully emerge, there also has to be another form of the determinate expression of the law of the negation of the negation; that is, in the process of superseding the old oppositional form and its replacement with the actualisation of its more evolved

potentiality. This is the second form of the law of the negation of the negation that operates in the process of transition, of decline and supersession.

This manifests itself in a new form of qualitative measure, a new form of the interpenetration of opposites, and a new form of the negation of the negation. The expression of the law of the negation of the negation is then fundamental for the analysis of the process of the decline and transition to a new and higher systematic form of the historically evolved subject.

This process only culminates when the dialectical laws, taken as a whole, congeal into a new systematic form. A new form that has grown within the central contradiction of the old, and whose conditions of existence have been posited and developed within the old form. These are the necessary conditions for the dialectical processes whereby evolutionary leaps can begin to assert themselves in an absolute rather than relative sense.

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